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to the fond memory of
Antonio Garnica Silva
(1931-2016),
first editor of *Atlantis*
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The Comic Tragedy of Mere Men and Women: The Ambiguously Distracting Use of Laughter in *The Castle of Otranto* and Its Prefaces

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This paper attempts to analyze the curious effects of the comic scenes in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) through a close reading of Walpole's famous prefaces to the novel. The comic scenes evoke an incongruous dramatic response and contradict the claims made in the prefaces, according to which comic elements highlight dramatic ones. While being often thought of as indicative of a general aesthetic failure, the comic elements in this foundational text of the Gothic are indeed subtle, complex and artful. More precisely, Walpole's curious use of laughter makes a complex appeal to an extra-dramatic level which undercuts the reader's identification with the dramatic situations represented in the novel.

Keywords: Horace Walpole; *The Castle of Otranto*; comedy; drama; Gothic novel; prefaces

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La tragicomedia de los hombres y las mujeres corrientes: usos ambiguos y distractores de la risa en *The Castle of Otranto* y sus prefacios

En este trabajo se estudia la llamativa función de las escenas cómicas en *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), a partir de una lectura detallada y minuciosa de los prefacios que Walpole escribió para acompañar la novela. Las escenas cómicas evocan una respuesta dramática incongruente que contradice las afirmaciones efectuadas por Walpole en los prefacios, en el sentido de que la función de los elementos cómicos es resaltar los recursos dramáticos. Frente a su valoración tradicional como aspectos estéticos fallidos, los elementos cómicos en este texto fundacional de la novela Gótica se utilizan de forma sutil e intencionadamente artística; en concreto, el recurso a la risa por parte de Walpole desencadena una respuesta compleja más allá de la lectura dramática, amortiguando así la identificación de los lectores con las situaciones dramáticas recreadas en la novela.

Palabras clave: Horace Walpole; *The Castle of Otranto*; comedia; drama; género Gótico; prefacios

1. Introduction

It is an open secret in Gothic criticism that what it takes to be its foundational text is hardly a serious work. There have been countless efforts to force *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) into the mold of serious fiction that can carry the noble mission of performing the origin of an entire genre. I am afraid, however, that the implausibly high-minded interpretations, which work to divert from the irrepressible frivolity of Horace Walpole's work, ultimately run the risk of incurring the critical judgment of frivolity upon themselves.[1] As Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik note, "[t]he critical reception of Walpole's work as the first Gothic novel seems to have involved turning a blind eye to its more comic moments, as if these were somehow an embarrassing element in a text which provides the templates for the conventions of Gothic fiction" (2005, 5-6). There are perhaps no more than a handful of studies that do the basic but honest work of referring to the lack of seriousness in *The Castle of Otranto*. Frivolity, however, is not considered an aesthetic value, and pointing out the comic elements in the text is almost always understood as pointing out a failure. Regrettably, we are made to side either with the lofty interpretation that elevates *The Castle of Otranto* to the honorable heights of a relevant critique of the Enlightenment or a subtle contribution to English political discourse, or with the not-so-serious interpretation that too quickly dismisses the work's strange aesthetics which incongruously blends the dramatic with the comical.[2] To counter the former, it is high time we did what is perhaps a bit too obvious and therefore rather superfluous, and reveal the open secret once and for all: *The Castle of Otranto* is as much a comic work as a Gothic one. To counter the latter, however, we need to argue that the comic elements of the novel constitute an aesthetic value that is far from insignificant or facile, and that Walpole's use of such elements is artful, subtle and complex. Admittedly, the comic elements in the novel do not support the dramatic ones, and the overall effect of juxtaposing comedy with drama is one of incongruity. In this regard, the famous prefaces, in which Walpole claims to have used comic elements as supplements to the sublime drama in his fiction, are entirely misleading. Such incongruity, however, does not necessarily result in aesthetic failure. As I argue in this paper, Walpole's curious use of laughter makes a complex appeal to an extra-dramatic level that undercuts the reader's identification with the dramatic situations represented in the novel.

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[1] See Watt (1999, 12-40) for a historical discussion of the frivolity of Walpole's oeuvre in general and of *The Castle of Otranto* in particular. Focusing on the novel's context of production and reception, Watt stresses that Walpole often "drew attention to the frivolity of his work" in his correspondence with his friends. (32) Unlike the reception of the novel as serious historical allegory in the twentieth century, Watt notes that "most critics and reviewers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries recognized the status of Walpole's work, for good or bad, as frivolous diversion" (25).

[2] E. J. Clery's interpretation of the novel, which can be found in her seminal work on the rise of the Gothic, is a case in point (1995, 67-79). Clery initially notes the "hedonistic, self-gratifying aesthetic pleasure" (66) in Walpole's work, but she does not comment on the comic elements. She then quickly moves on to a reading of the novel as a social allegory, claiming that "*Otranto* was not simply a backward-looking evocation of a feudal order […] it represented, in fantastic but recognizable form, aristocratic ideology as it persisted in modern times" (73).

The use of laughter, in other discussions of *The Castle of Otranto*, has been associated with some defect in the writing of the novel or, more positively, with the novel's *camp* sensitivity. Stefan Andriopoulos, for instance, remarks that "the frequency and monstrosity of supernatural interposition lead to a loss of authorial control in Walpole's novel, undermining its 'principal engine'—'terror'" (1999, 742). He goes on to quote Clara Reeve, who remarks that the supernatural scenes in Walpole's work "excit[e] laughter […] instead of attention" (1778. Quoted in Andriopoulos 1999, 742). Rather than using laughter as a rhetorical strategy, Walpole's fiction, in this view, inadvertently induces laughter because of its poorly written, laughable scenes of terror. In a similar vein, George Haggerty notes that "[w]e find ourselves laughing again and again" as "Walpole's ghost marches 'sedately.'" According to Haggerty, such laughter arises from the novel's confused intention of imparting a sense of novelistic realism to supernatural Gothic material (1985, 381). Max Fincher underscores Walpole's personal sense of humor, i.e., his "self-conscious theatricality and bitchy humour that we might be tempted to see anachronistically as evidence of a camp sensibility" (2001, 232). Marcie Frank suggests that Walpole's fiction be viewed as "comic or satiric—or parodic" in that it "articulate[s] a form of parody whose gestures we might find more recognizable under the label of 'camp'" (2003, 434). Kathy Justice Gentile claims that "Walpole's drag performance [and] his tongue-in-cheek use of hyperbole," destabilize the masculine conceptualization of the sublime (2009, 24). Remarkably, however, none of these studies directly addresses the very conscious use of laughter in *The Castle of Otranto*, which is indeed a major concern of Walpole's two prefaces to his novel.[3]

Walpole's use of laughter is neither as inadvertent nor as implicit as these readings would suggest, and cannot be merely sought in our response to the hyperbolic nature of its supernatural scenes. In a brilliantly attentive and currently unchallenged close reading of the novel that *does* comment on the comic scenes, Elizabeth Napier argues that Walpole's use of laughter contradicts the critical claims of his second preface, according to which the comic scenes serve to enhance the tragic aspect of the work (1987, 79-81). For Napier, this contradiction reflects a more general aesthetic failure: the persistent confusions in the tone of both the comic *and* non-comic scenes make it impossible to determine whether Walpole is serious or ironic.

I agree with Napier's description of the work as "essentially comic in character" (1987, 78). In contrast to Napier, however, I believe that the tonal confusions, as well as the other curious stylistic elements that Napier is critical of in Walpole's work such as exaggeration, frenetic pace and rapid characterization, constitute the success of the

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[3] Walpole wrote two prefaces for his novel. The first preface, which was part of the first edition (1764), is a renowned literary hoax, where Walpole hid his identity and pretended to be the translator of a Gothic romance written by an Italian priest named Onuphrio Muralto, a humorously Italianate rendition of his own name. After the success of the first edition, Walpole revealed his identity in the second edition and wrote a second preface (1765) in which he explained the hoax and defended his artistic choices. Both prefaces are usually included in the modern editions of *The Castle of Otranto*.

work rather than its failure. *The Castle of Otranto* is not the kind of unintentional comedy in which we laugh condescendingly at the poor execution. Rather it is a comedy that is exquisitely designed by Walpole in order to give the impression that it is not a comedy. The incongruous, odd, some might say, poorly written *dramatic* scenes, of which there are admittedly many examples in the novel, are essentially comic, both at heart and in design, and very accomplished at that. It is likely that such scenes were poorly written intentionally for the purpose of invoking a comic response, or more precisely, a mixed response that wavers between comedy and drama. It would therefore be unfair to judge Walpole's work according to serious dramatic criteria and criticize it for being too frivolous when the work's only serious intention is its frivolity.

In this article, I examine the more obvious comic elements in the novel, which Walpole acknowledges as such and addresses in his prefaces. I start with a brief discussion of a comic scene at the beginning of the novel in order to illustrate how comic scenes sit oddly with the dramatic elements. As the prefaces make explicit, Walpole is both self-conscious and specific about his own use of laughter, although his particular arguments on the function of comedy may appear poorly substantiated if taken seriously (Walpole may, however, be playing a joke on literary criticism). While arguing through Walpole's claims in the second preface, I formulate my own arguments regarding the function of the comic elements and develop them further through an analysis of a key comic scene towards the end of the novel which is explicitly mentioned in the first preface. I intend to show that there is complex art in Walpole's use of laughter, and argue that the comic distractions make an appeal to the reader's sense of plausibility outside the framework of the dramatic actions in the novel.

2. The Comic Scene of Jaquez and Diego: The Speechless Servants

Reading *The Castle of Otranto* can be a hilarious experience: the scene in which Manfred questions his two domestics Jaquez and Diego about their encounter with the supernatural, for instance, is a brilliant piece of artfully constructed dramatic comedy fit for the stage. These domestics have just seen a giant leg in armor moving around unattached to a proper body. They are overly shocked and confused, and have tremendous trouble in their reporting of their experience to their master, who naturally becomes frustrated by their ineptitude. They commit many an error as they deliver their report: they begin to talk at the same time, become needlessly reverential, frequently interrupt each other, mix up words, repeat their own words, echo each other's words, evade direct answers, give unnecessary information regarding the circumstances and engage in endless circumlocution:

> "My gracious lord," said Jaquez, "if it please your highness to hear me; Diego and I according to your highness's orders, went to search for the young lady, but being comprehensive that we might meet the ghost of my young lord, your highness's son, God rest his soul, as he

has not received Christian burial—" "Sot!" cried Manfred, "is it only a ghost then that thou hast seen?"—"Oh, worse! worse! my lord!" cried Diego; "I had rather seen ten whole ghosts. Grant me patience! said Manfred; these blockheads distract me." (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 34)

It must be remembered that the narration did not follow these lowly servants around during the event in question, making it impossible for the reader to develop a clear sense of their firsthand experience of the freely-moving giant limb. In keeping with the spirit of high-minded neoclassicism, the narration refrains from focusing on the consciousness of mere servants and from allowing the reader to identify with their experience. The abrupt intrusion of the inept domestics into the scene and their unbearable verbal ineptitude have a strange effect on the reading experience: the servants distract us, readers, just as they distract Manfred. As we laugh at the servants, we give up aligning ourselves too closely with their master and realize that we have been tricked by a narration that refuses to satisfy our curiosity and does so in an entirely inappropriate manner.[4] Despite the inferiority of their rhetorical delivery, there is something decidedly plausible about Jaquez and Diego's stunned situation. These domestics are perhaps a bit too plausible, too real: one might say that they are as confused and tongue-tied as anyone would be in extraordinary situations like the supernatural sighting of gigantic limbs in motion. The comic scene with the laughable servants then hints at a complex interaction between comical distraction and plausibility, and it is precisely such an interaction that the second preface addresses in its arguments regarding the use of laughter, which I will analyze at some length in the next section.

3. The second preface

Walpole's arguments concerning the use of laughter in his second preface are couched in terms of a particular discussion where Walpole also wants to justify his use of supernatural elements. In his ambitious literary project of blend[ing] the ancient and the modern romance, Walpole intends to bring both his use of the supernatural and laughter under the prestigious rubric of neoclassicism (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 9). More specifically, he wants to show that his use of the supernatural and laughter does not fully violate the dramatic criterion of plausibility.

The justification of the use of the supernatural in view of the criterion of plausibility appears no less than a paradoxical feat, given that the notion of the supernatural represents the very opposite of plausibility. Walpole attempts to achieve this goal through a rather imaginative argument at the beginning of his preface: in Walpole's estimation, *The Castle of Otranto* represents a happy union between nature and fancy,

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[4] As Robert B. Hamm Jr. also notes, the episode, in which "terror take[s] a backseat to comedy," reveals that "the servant's language and his lack of control over it are useless to convey terror" (2009, 684).

between modern and ancient romance, and hence between the supernatural and the plausible. Despite its fanciful use of the supernatural, the novel stays true to nature in the way it plausibly represents its actions, sentiments and conversations, even when these latter stem from encounters with the supernatural. As Walpole says in his preface, referring to himself in the third person:

> Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability, in short, to make them think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 9-10)

There is a perceivable shift here from a largely genre-unspecific discussion of the romance to one that more specifically addresses the genre of drama. This shift fits well with the overly dramatic, theatrical nature of *The Castle of Otranto* and with the rest of the preface, which is devoted to an extended critique of Voltaire's negative assessment of the inclusion of comic scenes in the tragedies of Shakespeare. It also results in a discussion of the novel in the critical terms borrowed from drama. Walpole intimates that his blend of the ancient romance and the contemporary novel may be seen as a dramatic work that largely adheres to the neoclassical rules of dramatic form and deviates from them only to the extent that it deploys a higher dose of 'interesting situations,' by which Walpole means supernatural events. He observes that he has intended to "make [his characters] think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions" ([1764/1765] 1998, 10).[5] The implicit claim is that his blend of modern and ancient romance *plausibly* reflects how "mere men and women" would act if they saw an enormous helmet fall from the sky or a severed giant limb moving around in an isolated part of a castle.

The category of 'mere men and women,' however, may be as elusive as the standards of plausibility. Among the characters of an excessively fast-paced novel whose attention span to individual character and characterization appears to be significantly deficient— judging, that is, by dramatic rather than comic criteria—one may point to three broadly diverging subcategories within the more general category of "mere men and women": nobles, knights and servants (Walpole refering to the latter as 'domestics' or 'subalterns'). The kind of actions fitted to these different subcategories varies: the conduct of the nobles proceeds according to the general pattern of a tragedy; the valorous and hot-tempered knights are sketchy adaptations from medieval romances and supposedly act like romance heroes; and the senseless servants are side-characters drawn from comedy. These three modalities do not seem to be harmonized; rather, they

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[5] This point could also be found in the first preface where Walpole claims that "all actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation" ([1764/ 1765] 1998, 6).

are brought into deliberate and deliberately absurd discordance. This results in the reader's bafflement as to what code of plausibility, if any, could be applied to unite all the disparate modalities of comportment displayed by the novel's characters. Indeed, Walpole dedicates the remainder of his second preface to the justification of the striking discordance between the comportment of the nobles and servants:

> With regard to the deportment of the domestics [...] I will beg leave to add a few words. The simplicity of their behaviour, almost tending to excite smiles, which at first seem not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only improper, but was marked designedly in that manner. My rule was nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one, and the *naïveté* of the others, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels, while delayed by the coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors from arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves that he has been artfully interested in, the depending event. (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 10)

Notably, this is also the point where Walpole begins his discussion of the use of laughter in his novel. As Walpole attempts to justify his inclusion of the "coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors," he acknowledges that the category of "mere men and women" cannot simply be regarded as a unified class and must be thought of as being stratified. The simplicity of the vulgar domestics, Walpole admits, is decidedly not consonant with the solemnity of the dignified nobles. *The Castle of Otranto* is concerned with both "sublime" (and "dignified") sensations of princes and heroes, i.e., of tragic and romantic characters, as well as the "sublime" style through which such emotions are properly expressed.[6] The naïveté of the sensibilities of the domestics, accompanied by the naïve (but also "coarse" and "vulgar") style through which they express themselves, make their inclusion seemingly improper (or fanciful) when juxtaposed with the "sublime" representations of the more elevated characters that adjectively relate to the representations of "grave," "melancholy," "dignified," "serious," "important," "pathetic" sensations. Therefore a reason or even an apology must be offered for the inclusion of the seemingly improper domestics and of their laughter-inducing antics, and Walpole's lengthy explanation is intended precisely to perform as such an apology.

In a statement, which constitutes the main argument of his apology but remains vague without the examples he draws from Shakespeare in the following pages,

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[6] For an insightful discussion of the sublime in relation to *The Castle of Otranto*, see Morris (1985). On the influence of Burkean sublime on the work, see Mack (2008, 375-376).

Walpole remarks that the naïveté of the domestic characters "sets the pathetic [of the sublime of the princes and heroes] in a stronger light." This statement, however, is hardly consonant with the example that he draws from his own fiction: the coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors, as we have seen in the scene of Jaquez and Diego and as we will also see in the scene with Bianca, do not set their delayed announcement in a stronger light. The announcement of the supernatural events by the domestics becomes "pathetic," not in the sense of any "pathetic sublime," and in no way reminiscent of whatever is "grave" and "important," but perhaps in the ironic, more contemporary way of referring to the pathetic as that which is laughably ridiculous, inadequate and improper.

Walpole's implicit focus in his justification of the use of laughter in *The Castle of Otranto* is the emotional response of the reader, which he seems to align with the "sensations of the princes and heroes." But the alignment is decidedly discordant: it is not clear how the reader could harmonize the sublime of the aristocratic characters with the ridiculousness of the servants. Jaquez and Diego do seem to play a practical joke on the reader, frustrating their desire to arrive at the hidden knowledge regarding the "important catastrophe." To make the introduction of such inappropriate laughter conform to the neoclassical requirements of plausibility, Walpole comes up with two explanations: (1) the improper comportment of the domestics "perhaps […] heightens […] the depending event" or (2) "[it] certainly proves that [the reader] has been artfully interested in" the same event (10). In the first scenario, which reenacts the previously mentioned "setting of the pathetic in a stronger light," the reader becomes effaced. The prolonged suspense heightens the situation without bringing any attention to the process of reading the fiction. In the second scenario, however, the focus shifts towards the consciousness of the reader and highlights the process of reading: the reader cannot help becoming conscious of their being "artfully interested in the depending event." Here we have an intimation of aesthetic distance: the reader moves away from an all too ready identification with a particular fictional situation to the recognition of the *artful* processes that are used to shape it. In other words, the consciousness of suspense gives way to the self-consciousness of being manipulated by the art of suspense. Walpole appears to acknowledge this second scenario with more certainty than the first scenario, which "perhaps" is the case.

It is possible to read Walpole against Walpole and claim that his use of laughter in *The Castle of Otranto* serves to lay bare the fictional artifice used to create suspense. Walpole seems to admit that laughter elicits a predominantly intellectual response, which might detract from the proper, i.e., dramatic, response that grave, important, sublime events are supposed to occasion. In the remainder of the second preface, Walpole attempts to fend off the suggestion that the use of disorienting laughter might compromise the sublime aspect of the work. He resorts to the authority of Shakespeare's work in order to defend the simultaneous use of the comic and the tragic, launching a drawn-out counterargument against Voltaire, who disapproves of

such use.[7] As such, he finds fault with Voltaire's lower estimation of Shakespeare in comparison with French dramatists like Corneille and Racine, who, according to him, properly adhere to the neoclassical rules of representation without adulterating the pathetic with laughter:

> Let me ask if [Shakespeare's] tragedies of Hamlet and Julius Caesar would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of Polonius, and the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens were omitted, or vested in heroics? Is not the eloquence of Antony, the nobler and affectedly unaffected oration of Brutus, artificially exalted by the rude bursts of nature from the mouths of their auditors? (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 11)

In the use of humor in Shakespearean drama, rude nature exalts refined nature, and the opposition between the vulgar and the sublime becomes resolved in the further elevation of the sublime, which also accords with Walpole's earlier statement that the same opposition sets sublime pathos in a stronger light. This would surely be a powerful argument only if it were merely formulated as a critique of Voltaire's assessment of Shakespeare and not framed as a justification for the use of laughter in Walpole's own fiction. The frustratingly speechless, half-witted domestics of *The Castle of Otranto* are radically different from the punning, witty and articulate gravedigger in *Hamlet*; their frolics may thus be thought to deflate the sublime, rather than heighten it.[8]

While Walpole's attack on Voltaire's critique of Shakespeare is well-formulated and witty, it remains unclear how "the moral dialogue between the prince of Denmark and the grave digger" ([1764/1765] 1998, 14) in *Hamlet* might at all relate to the terribly awkward scenes in *The Castle of Otranto*, which contain the servants' comically frustrating accounts of the supernatural. Unlike Shakespearean tragedy, which Walpole enlists in his second preface as authoritative precedent, the novel's use of comic elements *dramatically* fail to bring the sufferings of the tragic characters into sharper relief. The servants' impossibly long winded, comically stuttering articulations of their horrid discoveries to their master do not so much advance the plot, create suspense or lead to the Aristotelian emotions of fear and pity, as disorient the reader.

The comic distractions therefore destabilize Walpole's attempt to elevate his work critically through the strategic deployment of neoclassical vocabulary and the enlistment of Shakespeare as influence and precedent. But such dramatic deficiency is countered by subtle *comic* achievement: the use of laughter serves to deflate the higher station of the novel's noble characters, and this happens by way of artful distractions

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[7] For a discussion of the Shakespearean influence on *The Castle of Otranto*, see Shapira (2012) and Hamm Jr. (2009, 674-681). A great account of Walpole's relations with Voltaire might be found in Finch and Allison Peers (1920).

[8] Napier also argues that Walpole's implicit comparison between his fiction and Shakespeare's tragic plays is so implausible and far-fetched that his discussion of Shakespeare hints at an intentional burlesque (1987, 81-82).

from the actions represented, which also gives way to the reader's self-consciousness. Different from its use in Shakespearean drama, laughter in *The Castle of Otranto* seems to create an *excess* of self-consciousness in the reader, who finds him/herself artfully implicated in the rhetorical devices of deferral and suspense.

How, then, does such excessive self-consciousness, which leads so blatantly to distraction from the dramatic events in the novel, relate to the idea of plausibility? The second preface fails to explain the connection between comic distraction and plausibility: comic distraction seems to render the dramatic elements less plausible. In the next section, I would like to explore the possibility of a different kind of plausibility, which does not obliterate comic distraction, by way of analyzing a conspicuously comic scene in the novel that is explicitly mentioned in Walpole's first preface.

4. The Foibles of Bianca

In an argument on the use of laughter which is almost identical to the one in the second preface, in the first preface Walpole makes a direct reference to the scenes that finiceature Bianca, a female domestic, who comically interrupts the flow of narrative and frustrates the nobleman Manfred's designs just prior to the final catastrophe, i.e., Manfred's murder of his daughter Matilda after mistaking her for his love interest, Isabella.

> Some persons may think the characters of the domestics too little serious for the general cast of the story; but besides their opposition to the principal personages, the art of the author is very observable in his conduct of the subalterns. They discover many passages essential to the story, which could not well be brought to light but by their naïveté and simplicity: in particular, the womanish terror and foibles of Bianca, in the last chapter, conduce essentially towards advancing the catastrophe. (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 7)

Contrary to Walpole's statements in this passage, Bianca's contribution to "the advance[ement] of the catastrophe" is at most negligible. Bianca's humorous interruption leads to distraction on behalf of the reader, who is made aware of their being suspended in the middle of frantic action. There are two subsequent scenes which immediately precede the final catastrophe and where Bianca comes to the foreground. In the first, Manfred questions Bianca as to whether she has any knowledge concerning the true nature of the relationship between Isabella and Theodore, his rival, the brave young peasant who is revealed to be an aristocrat and an implicit contender for the principality of Otranto (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 100-102). Throughout the scene, Bianca remains unyieldingly vague and somewhat manipulative, managing to extract a present from Manfred, who is in need of her services as a spy. In the second scene, which almost immediately follows, and which may more adequately be called a scene of laughter, Manfred encounters a stunned Bianca who has just seen a gigantic, armored

severed hand moving around. Bursting into Manfred's room, Bianca interrupts his conversation with Frederic, one of the rightful heirs to the principality and the father of Isabella. Manfred's aim in this conversation is to secure the hand of Isabella, and thus endure his rule and settle the disputes regarding his legitimacy as the prince, which would also signify the intermarriage of contending interests.

Bianca's presence in this latter scene is entirely inadequate for Manfred's purposes: unlike Jaquez and Diego, who frustrate Manfred by delaying the account of what they have seen, her too immediate revelation of her sighting of the ghastly hand has the potential effect of ruining his marriage prospects by alerting Isabella's father that the castle has been haunted by unseemly ghosts who seek atonement for past crimes. Manfred therefore wants to summarily dismiss the stunned Bianca from the presence of Frederic, but Bianca will simply not be ordered away until she concludes her fragmented and senselessly prolonged account of the terrifying experience, during which she divulges to Frederic, to Manfred's dismay, that Manfred has been secretly spying on Isabella. Though Manfred frequently interferes to diminish the import of Bianca's revelations, Bianca insists on continuing with her delightful jabber:

> At that instant Bianca burst into the room, with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror. "Oh! my lord, my lord!" cried she, "we are all undone! It is come again! It is come again!"—"What is come again?" cried Manfred amazed.—"Oh! the hand! the giant! the hand!—Support me! I am terrified out of my senses," cried Bianca,"I will not sleep in the castle to-night. Where shall I go? My things may come after me to-morrow. Would I had been content to wed Francesco! This comes of ambition!" (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 102)

The code with respect to the conduct of "mere men and women" changes dramatically: the grave and sublime mode of "princes and heroes," of tragedy and romance, is interrupted by the sudden "burst" of the unorganized and undignified conduct of the naïve domestic. Bianca's naiveté (and Walpole's *art* of representing it) is truly disorienting; it disorients not just Manfred, but also the reader. Her improper bursting into the scene subjects the reader to some rather intimate details of her life that are completely irrelevant within the development of the plot. As readers, we are superfluously introduced to the inner workings of Bianca's mind, to her wayward stream of consciousness that runs counter to all principles of dramatic necessity. We learn, for instance, that she interprets her sighting of the gigantic moving limb as a divine punishment for having rejected the marriage proposal of one Francesco, who is mentioned for the first time in the narrative here, and who, given the impending final catastrophe, will never surface as a character. "This comes of ambition!" reveals Bianca's sense of guilt concerning her ruined matrimonial prospects, but it might also be seen, within the context of the plot, as a judgment on Manfred's inexorable ambition to retain his rule over the principality of Otranto despite the evidence of the disapproving higher powers that haunt the castle in the ghastly

shape of giant severed limbs. But the resulting connection does not project a stronger light on the sublime, which, in this context, could be understood as the representation of Manfred's tragic predicament. Rather, it results in the debasement of the pathetic sublime and its degeneration into the utter mundane. The tragic cast of the work and its supposed propriety are discarded through the vulgarizing connection forged between Manfred's princely ambitions and Bianca's domestic one.

This flagrant incongruity between the different styles of domestics, princes and heroes does seem fanciful, and Manfred's intent to have Bianca dismissed from the scene may be understood as an attempt to also dismiss the sense of stylistic disorientation in the representation of the scene:

> "Saw what? Tell us, fair maiden, what thou hast seen," said Frederic. "Can your highness listen," said Manfred, "to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them?"—"This is more than fancy," said the marquis; "her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus."—"Yes, my lord, thank your greatness," said Bianca; "I believe I look very pale; I shall be better when I have recovered myself." (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 103)

This dialogue between Manfred and Frederic regarding Bianca's "fancy" may be thought an ironic reflection on the representational strategies of *The Castle of Otranto*. Manfred, who knows very well that the castle is being haunted, makes a false appeal to the presumably enlightened consciousness of Frederic, indicating that Bianca's story must be understood as "the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them." The kind of "delirium" exemplified by Bianca's undignified conduct is not how princes and heroes express their sensations "[h]owever grave, important, or even melancholy" such sensations might be (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 10); it must therefore be dismissed as mere fancy. Frederic's response to Manfred's appeal becomes significant precisely because it makes an appeal to a rhetorical strategy that rules the representation of nature in the scenes that depict the foibles of the domestics in *The Castle of Otranto*: Frederic observes that Bianca's stunned response and her state of terror cannot be fancy since they are "too natural" and so cannot be the "work of imagination," which also connotes art, artfulness and fiction. This reference to naturalness, and more implicitly, to nature may also be seen as a reflection on the notion of plausibility that is a major critical concern of both prefaces.

Within the context of the scene, however, it is clear that the too-obvious sense of nature in Bianca's response may only be thought of in terms of the "supernatural" event (the sighting of the moving severed hand). This implication of the supernatural specifically entails the work of imagination, along with its artful inventions and fanciful machinations, in the reference to nature: it is impossible to make a clean separation between the natural and the supernatural in the way Walpole does in his prefaces between natural conduct on the one side, and supernatural events on the other,

implying thus that nature can somehow be thought untouched by the sense of the supernatural. Frederic implies that nature, as reflected in Bianca's terror, must be "more than fancy;" yet, in view of the supervening supernatural, such nature cannot be but the work of more fancy, more imagination.

The sense of nature being more than fancy may only become possible with the supplement of the reader. Frederic's statement—"her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination"—may be seen as an appeal not just to Manfred, who is *in* the fiction, but also to the reader *outside* the fiction, in precisely the same way as Walpole makes an appeal to his readers both in the first and the second preface, urging them to expand their sense of probability or their rule of nature so that they may accommodate the supernatural: "Allow the possibility of the facts, all actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation" (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 6). The hypothetical mode, which makes an implicit appeal to the fancy of the reader, may also be observed in Walpole's affirmation that his actors "think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions" (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 10). The reader, who is already disoriented and distracted due to not just the laughable response of Bianca, but also the discrepancy in the representational mode between the domestics and the nobles, should become the arbiter of "the possibility of the facts" or the rule of nature, by way of hypothetical fancying or imagination.

In view of the supernatural, however, the rule of nature becomes ever more fanciful. It becomes hard to retain nature as standard when the reader is made to allow the possibility of supernatural facts: the supernatural confounds the natural. Of course, there would not be any problem if the rule of nature was simply out there, in the nature of things to be merely imitated, as when Walpole wants to relegate Bianca's response to her class (and gender) inferiority, which supposedly exists in the universal rule of nature independent of the reader. Recalling Walpole's observations on the rule of nature in his second preface: "The simplicity of [the] behaviour [of the domestics], almost tending to excite smiles, which at first seem not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only improper, but was marked designedly in that manner. My rule was nature" (Walpole [1764/1765] 1998, 10).

In order to judge whether Bianca's terror is natural (which also means, plausible), the reader will have to take the rule of nature into account in order to decide whether Bianca comports herself "as persons would do in her situation" or whether she thinks, speaks and acts as "it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions." This would perhaps not be so difficult if Bianca did not inhabit a world haunted by ghastly apparitions: the plausibility of her behavior would then be decided through a fairly objective comparison with the phenomenal world. In a supernatural world, however, the question What do persons plausibly do when they see giant severed limbs in motion? can only be answerable through recourse to the sheer fancy of the reader, which becomes the sole basis for the rule of nature.

"Allowing the possibility of the facts," Bianca's response is perfectly natural, perhaps, "too natural": any person would be utterly stunned and laughably scattered afterwards in a way not so different from Bianca if they ever witnessed a severed giant limb armored and in motion. The reader is made to identify with Bianca, not because of any dramatic necessity, not from the framework of identifications within the narrative, which refrains from following the mere domestic and showing her encounter with the giant limb. Rather, the reader's identification happens from outside, that is, from the fanciful and largely non-dramatic consideration regarding how any person would seem after having been exposed to the supernatural. Such identification is comically dissonant with the supposedly sublime representations of the tragically supernatural events in the text: in fact, the identification takes place outside the text. Despite the purportedly serious drama that is unfolding in the novel, an *extra-dramatic* level of identification emerges between the laughable Bianca and the reader, who would plausibly appear as laughable and as confused as Bianca after a frightening encounter with the supernatural.

Consequently, the dramatic inadequacy of Bianca's response and the resulting distraction from represented actions become tempered with the reader's extra-dramatic identification and resulting sense of plausibility. The reader's consciousness of having to negotiate a sense of nature in view of the supernatural results in the fanciful production of a sense of *hypernature* (or hyperreality) that shortcuts dramatic identification as though it did not need this work of drama or literary fiction.[9] So, when Frederic states that "[Bianca's] terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination," we might reread this statement as an appeal to hypernature, which is extrinsic to any dramatic development in *The Castle of Otranto*. Bianca's terror is hypernatural, in other words, *too* natural, insofar as it is based on the reader's extra-dramatic rule of nature. Notably, this comic sense of the hypernatural further detracts from the sublime, tragic and pathetic aspects of the work of imagination contingent upon the "development of the catastrophe" or of the plot.[10]

The incongruent juxtaposition of Bianca's laughable response with the dignified response of princes and heroes further destabilizes the category of "mere men and women." Ironically, the rule of *hypernature* also enables an extreme sense of (hyper) reality, i.e., of plausibility, to burst into the scene in an as unruly way as Bianca does, opening up a perspective which, being completely indifferent to the sublimity of the unfolding drama, equalizes the differences between the domestics and the nobles. The category of "mere men and women," which often functions as a rhetorical veil that dissimulates the preference for that which is noble, high, dignified or elevated in art

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[9] Jerrold Hogle also uses the word "hyper-reality," albeit in an entirely different sense, to generalize about particular Gothic effects that suggest the Lacanian "Real" and Kristeva's understanding of the "abject" (2010, 169).

[10] In a similar vein, Marcie Frank notes that Walpole's fiction "require[s] us to reconsider the short step that separates the sublime from the ridiculous" (2003, 435). I believe such a short step is enabled by the effect of hyperreality in Walpole's use of laughter.

and nature, is hence reproduced and reimagined not through the dignified conduct of the nobles but through the vulgarizing spectacle of Bianca's laughable terror, which the reader is made to identify as "too natural" from their position outside the narrative.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to show that the aspect of comedy in *The Castle of Otranto* is far from being simple-minded, and that there is considerable art in the work's frivolity. In particular, I have underscored two elements introduced by the comical distractions in the work: (1) the reader's self-consciousness and intellectual response regarding the use of suspense and (2) the sense of hyperreality and of the (hyperreal) plausibility of the servants, which result from the reader's identification with them from a position outside the dramatic course of the narrative. Such elements reinforce the reading of *The Castle of Otranto* as a self-conscious comedy rather than a tragedy. In other words, the foundational text of *Gothic* fiction must be understood as a comedy.

So, what do we do with the foundational text of Gothic literature if it is not serious and cannot be made serious? In this paper, I have proposed that it be appreciated as an artfully written comic text and argued that such artfulness consists in the subtle way in which the text both incites comic distraction and engenders an extra-dramatic sense of plausibility. It is curious that *The Castle of Otranto* is a comedy given that, in its more typical manifestations, Gothic fiction can be morbidly serious. It must be remembered that Walpole, in his first preface, stresses "entertainment" as the proper mode in which his fiction should be read by his contemporaries. Just like the priest in the first preface, Walpole's recourse to the imagination serves to create interesting and extraordinary situations that tantalize and enthrall, only in order to conform to the ancient desire of a reading populace to be tantalized and enthralled. *The Castle of Otranto* is undoubtedly exploitative with its various objects of horror that are simply there, not for the advancement of the plot, but for the facile thrill they may transitorily offer. But as Walpole's artful use of laughter shows, it is done self-consciously, which makes the reading experience of *The Castle of Otranto* all the more remarkable and contemporary.

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"Shaving the Tale": Barbers and the Narration of Racial Relations in Melville's "Benito Cereno" and Chesnutt's "The Doll"

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This essay argues that Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855) and Charles W. Chesnutt's "The Doll" (1912) elaborate narrative form from the racial US trope of the shaving scene. The stories present innovative uses of narrative frameworks, simultaneous silenced and spoken narratives, and misperception and delusion in order to produce a narrative ambivalence that contains the conflict of African American barbering as a trade. The essay traces the historical controversy about barbering within African American political debates and the development of the trade from the eighteenth century up to the twentieth so as to disclose the ambivalent position of African American barbers serving white costumers. Black barbers saw themselves as businessmen helping to build an African American middle class, but were eventually accused of servilism and compliance with established racial hierarchies. This essay demonstrates that by deploying the shaving scene and the razor as the epitome of this ambivalence, these stories offer a narrative form that singularly expresses this particular conflictive labor and racial situation.

Keywords: African American literature; narrative theory; labor history; barbers; race relations

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Barberos y la narración de las relaciones raciales en "Benito Cereno" de Melville y "La muñeca" de Chesnutt

Este ensayo argumenta que "Benito Cereno" de Herman Melville (1855) y "La muñeca" de Charles W. Chesnutt (1912) elaboran su forma narrativa a partir del motivo norteamericano de la escena del afeitado. Ambos relatos presentan usos innovadores de los marcos narrativos, con narraciones simultáneas relatadas y silenciadas, y de las técnicas del engaño y la percepción equívoca, generando una ambivalencia narrativa que a su vez expresa muy bien el conflicto laboral de los barberos afroamericanos. El ensayo traza el debate sobre los barberos

en el contexto de los debates políticos afroamericanos y el desarrollo de este oficio desde el siglo XVIII hasta el XX, dando cuenta de la situación controvertida que afrontaban los barberos afroamericanos que atendían a clientes blancos. Estos barberos se consideraban a sí mismos empresarios que ayudaban a formar una clase media afroamericana, pero se les acusó a menudo de servilismo y de complicidad con las jerarquías raciales. En este ensayo se demuestra que, al utilizar la escena del afeitado y la navaja de afeitar como el epítome de esta ambivalencia, "Benito Cereno" y "La muñeca" presentan una forma narrativa que encapsula magistralmente esta situación racial y laboral tan particular.

Palabras clave: literatura afroamericana; teoría de la narración; historia del trabajo; barberos; relaciones interraciales

When the protagonist of Richard Wright's *Pagan Spain* (1957) enters a barbershop in Barcelona for a haircut, he is taken aback by the cordial conversation quite naturally struck up by his "dark-complexioned little barber in a soiled white coat" ([1957] 2008, 90).[1] He is so perplexed by this that he feels the urge to confess: "'I hesitated about coming into your shop,' at which the barber recoiled, gaped in astonishment, and wished to know why. 'Well, you know [...] some people have very strong racial feelings.' The barber eagerly replies: 'But that's insane! [...] You are a man, a human being. Why should I refuse to cut your hair? The cutting of hair is my profession. I've heard that in some countries such things happen [...] Look, sir, the sun made your hair crinkly; the cold made mine straight. All right. Why should that make such a difference?'" (Wright [1957] 2008, 92). In stark contrast to this, a foreigner in the United States is readily made aware that barbershops, especially African American ones, are loaded with cultural value. Richard Wright's anecdote brings up at least two key features that have converted barbershops into cultural motifs. In the first place, as he notes, African American barbershops have historically served as intimate loci of intra- and inter-racial relations, offering relaxed and supportive public forums to black costumers, or, often, becoming the site of heightened tensions when white customers are attended. The second aspect alluded to by Wright is that barbershops are places where conversations and narratives take place within a rather conventional framework.

While haircuts were an important part of the barber's trade, shaving became a venerated skill, which came to encapsulate the tension inherent in US race relations. As Douglas Walter Bristol Jr. documents in his path-breaking study *Knights of the Razor: Black Barbers in Slavery and Freedom* (2009), in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century barbering became one of the most productive businesses for African Americans, who often learned the trade as domestic slaves, even earning their freedom and being able to start their own businesses. Since shaving and hairdressing in this period were considered luxury services, the customers were generally white.[2] Black barbers' extremely successful invention of the luxurious first-class barbershop in the first half of the nineteenth century facilitated and generalized what would become a typical encounter, namely of black barbers shaving and hairdressing wealthy and influential white costumers. Both in its slave form, and that of the independent free barber, the practice of shaving constituted a significant challenge to the existing racial order, of which the razor and the very act of shaving became telling images. As Eric Sundquist declares: "The razor [...] is a charged icon of African American resistance and revenge, and the black barber the simulacrum of the loyal retainer with mask torn off and revealed to be a murderous rebel—almost" (1993, 452). Yet both razor and

[2] Different from the US context, up to the early nineteenth century, in Brazil barbers were normally slaves who practiced healing methods, and were known as surgeons, as part of the trade legacy from West Africa. De Carvalho Soares explains their crucial role on Brazilian slave ships and in cities (2013).

shaving were ambivalent images. Indeed, shaving became a curious concatenation of slave revolutionary power and slave intimate fidelity towards and care of the master. After Emancipation, on the other hand, it became the image of black fear as well as the instrument of an independent, albeit ambivalent, business.[3]

This essay analyzes the understudied shaving motif in the short story "The Doll" (1912) by Charles W. Chesnutt comparing it with Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855). As an elaborated racial motif foreshadowing violence and slave revolt in American literature, the razor, especially in the shaving scene, historically appears to indicate moments of hightened racial tension, from Herman Melville to William Faulkner to Alice Walker. By comparing "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll" I will argue that the shaving scene as a racial motif has striking effects in narrative form. Its apparent relationship to storytelling is obvious, since what does anyone do in a barbershop other than engage in conversation and storytelling? Storytelling is, indeed, one of the main functions of barbershops, as shown most recently in Craig Marberry's compilation of stories, *Cuttin' Up: Wit and Wisdom from Black Barber Shops* (2005). However, this function serves a different purpose depending on historical context, and on the racial configuration of slaves and masters, or barbers and customers—a subject that deserves further investigation. While historical investigation of the subject is still scarce, this is especially true in regard to narrative form. Trudier Harris (1979) and Hortense Thornton (1979) have contributed notably to the study of the motif, focusing on black barbershops serving black customers, a recurrent theme in African American literature. Thornton extended the discussion to beauty parlors, drawing a neat definition of gendered parallel spaces. Even though I only refer to male barbershops, and will not go into the important discussion of gender relations, the reinforcement of gender in this space is fully relevant and deserves further attention.[4] Harris and Thornton rightly read the space of the barbershop as a private sphere where black men can voice their personal problems, which frequently extend to their social and economic concerns, and build a strong sense of community through supportive storytelling. In Thornton's words:

> Like the Black church, the barbershop and beauty parlor provide an environment conducive
> to unrestrained community expression. Through recreating this environment, in which
> hair is cut, pressed, curled, or "conked," in which nails are manicured and other tonsorial
> matters attended to, in which the patrons bring themselves up-to-date on community
> gossip (many times amusing themselves with racy, good-laughing-lies), and in which not
> only personal issues, but community concerns are aired, Black American writers provide

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[3] Martha Banta (1995) analyzes the definition of pistols and razors as icons for white and black crimes as represented in *Life* magazine in 1896-1907, and discusses them in William Faulkner, associating the razor with questions of black identity.

[4] Barbering has also been historically related to gender. In Europe barbering and depilation were associated, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with "barbarism," and to notions of effeminate men and sodomy attributed to the Ottoman Empire and to North Africa. See Patricia Parker (2004).

their readers with an intimate view of a significant Black institution, often forgotten, which effectively services the real and imagined needs of the community. (1979, 76)

The shaving performed in the context of the barbershop, or the slave-master relationship, as well as beauty services, produces different effects from the self-shaving motif because it is performed by others. In contrast to self-shaving, as portrayed for instance by the poet Robert Lowell and studied by Thomas Austenfeld (2012), being shaved by others destabilizes the private bathroom space in which the shaving takes place, so that the practice and the space become partially public. Only partially public because the shaving by others still remains a gendered sphere of male intimacy, at the same time as becoming the site of a male public forum. These conditions contribute to the reinforcement of patriarchy both in the private and public realms.

Even though the literary trope of shaving demands fuller research, in this essay I will concentrate on the conflictive act of the shaving of white customers by black barbers, and the highly ambivalent narrative situation that this literary motif produces. Because of its historical development, this particular encounter differs from the situation of black barbershops attending to black customers. For the reasons mentioned above, rather than comfort and intimacy, these interracial interactions provide an opportunity to portray in literature climactic moments of the highest racial tension. I argue that in most fictions the act of shaving provides a narrative framework, a predetermined setting for a narrative situation within which the story is told. As I demonstrate, the particular disposition and function of participants in the stories predetermines the conditions of the telling and the intricate interactions in the narrative. This cultural narrative framework exposes the complexity of race relations, and in particular the disjunction between racial discourse and actions, in a terrain prone to ambivalence and *double-edged blades*. "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll" reveal the narrative potential of the shaving scene as a racial motif. By relating shaving narratives to the history of barbering as an African American occupation, I would like to further emphasize the interplay between historical cultural practices and narrative strategies.

"Benito Cereno" tells the story of a slave revolt aboard the Spanish vessel *San Dominick*. The revolt is kept secret by the slave leader Babo and the rest of the rebellious slaves who pretend they have not revolted, while the American visitor to the ship, Captain Delano, fails to identify the actual rebellion and completely misreads the situation on board the *San Dominick*. Captain Delano becomes aware of the slaves' whisperings and increasingly relaxed attitude, and senses the anxiety of the ailing Spanish captain of the revolted vessel, Don Benito Cereno, and the whistle of the hatchets being polished. However, the American Captain suspects nothing more than a possible alliance between the slaves and the Spanish sailors against him.[5] With a

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[5] New sources for Melville's depiction of the hatchets and African music that contribute significantly to the misperception of the atmosphere aboard the *San Dominick* have recently been analyzed by Sterling Stuckey (2009). On the legacies of African stereotypes see Gloria Horsley-Meacham (1991).

number of suspicions rising to the surface, the crucial shaving scene where the slave Babo shaves captain Benito Cereno in Captain Delano's presence, deploys the cultural resonance of the motif to foreshadow the actual revolt on board. In this scene, the careful, trusted Babo "accidentally" cuts Benito Cereno's face, symbolically enacting the bloody revolt. Babo's cut of Benito Cereno replays the warning that transforms the silent, harmonious, and pleasantly intimate moment of the shaving into one that brings back Delano's perception in which "in the black [Babo] saw a headsman, and in the white [Benito Cereno] a man in the block" (Melville [1855] 1990, 74). The shaving scene is a microcosm of the brewing slave revolt aboard the ship—and beyond, of the *Amistad* revolt, and of the Haitian Revolution invoked by the vessel's name.[6]

"The Doll" on the other hand tells the story of Tom Taylor, the proprietor of the Northern Wyandot Hotel barbershop. Colonel Forsyth, a Southern Democratic politician, meets Judge Beeman, a Northern liberal, to discuss political candidates for the presidential campaign. From a desire to prove his theory that "the Negro's place is defined by nature" (Chesnutt [1912] 2002, 795), Colonel Forsyth invites Judge Beeman to accompany him while he is being shaved in Taylor's barbershop. Following several racist claims, the Colonel tells the Judge that: "The nigger [...] is the creature of instinct; you cannot argue with him; you must order him, and if he resists shoot him, as I did" (797). At this point he tells the story of him murdering his mother's former servant. The mother had kindly hired the ex-servant's daughter to wait on her, but she misbehaved, and upon receiving her due reprimand, the girl's father threatened both mother and son. The Colonel promptly shot him, and evaded punishment. The story takes a new turn when, by switching focus to the barber, the reader is told about the missing details, and the deviant tale, since Taylor happens to be the son of the murdered ex-slave. Taylor recalls the story of the abuse suffered by his sister at the hands of the Colonel's younger brother, the father's murder and the impunity enjoyed by the murderer. He has been waiting for the right moment to pay back some of the pain and anguish the Colonel has inflicted on the family, and finds himself with the perfect occasion for revenge. Yet his sense of duty toward his own daughter and his employees, who are making a living thanks to the barbershop, finally prevents him from using the razor to cut the Colonel's throat. On leaving the shop, the Colonel tells the Judge that Taylor is the son of the man he shot, his failure to react meant to serve as proof of the essentially submissive nature of blacks.[7]

As these literary texts seem to suggest, stories filling the chatter that breaks up the awkward silences during the shaving turn out to be crucial in narrative development,

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[6] On the slave revolt in "Benito Cereno" and the contemporary debates on American slavery see, among many others, the collection edited by Robert E. Burkholder, *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno"* (1992), and particularly the essays by Vanderbilt (1992), Adler (1992), Swann (1992) and especially Karcher (1992). For the historicity of the tale in relation to the Haitian Revolution, see Elmer (2008). A decisive discussion of the subject is provided in Sudnquist (1993, chapter 2).

[7] For an overview of Chesnutt's short fiction see Wonham (1998), and for the Northern short stories Duncan (2004).

enhancing the narrative potential of the shaving as a cultural motif. Several rituals enacted in the cultural practice of shaving in the US combine to draw a rich narrative situation. Of special interest for these stories are: discussion of racial matters, the participants' roles and interactions, the enactment of complex race relations, the narrative performance and exchange, delusion or misperception, and narrative and historical ambivalence. These cultural aspects draw the possibilities of a sophisticated narrative development. Certainly, neither Melville nor Chesnutt fail to take advantage of these shaving scene sources for their depictions of violent contemporary race relations.

During the shaving scene in Melville's "Benito Cereno," following the orders of slave leader Babo, Benito Cereno tells Captain Delano a made-up version of the *Saint Dominick*'s past difficulties, so as to hide the revolt to the American Captain visiting the ship, and explain the present disorder on board and his own poor condition. Captain Delano responds to this made-up version of past events:

> "Ah yes, these gales," said Captain Delano: "but the more I think of your voyage, Don Benito, the more I wonder, not at the gales, terrible as they must have been, but at the disastrous interval following them. For here, by your account, have you been these two months and more getting from Cape Horn to Sta. Maria, a distance which I myself, with a good wind, have sailed in a few days. True, you had calms, and long ones, but to be becalmed for two months, that is, at least, unusual. Why, Don Benito, had almost any other gentleman told me such a story, I should have been half disposed to a little incredulity." (Melville [1855] 1990, 75)

The conversation, ostensibly nothing more than a momentary diversion, becomes the crucial moment in which Don Benito makes an involuntary expression in response to Captain Delano's verbalization of the real falsehood of the story, which is immediately followed by a nick caused by the servant's unsteady hand—"the razor drew blood, spots of which stained the creamy lather under the throat" (75)—in which Don Benito foresees his own assassination: Captain Delano witnesses Benito Cerenos' expression of terror, yet he downplays the white fear of slave revolt present in the scene by settling on the comforting sentiment that "[p]oor fellow [...] so nervous he can't even bear the sight of barber's blood" (75). Ironically, the weapon of slave revolt here prevents the revelation of the real conspiracy that attempts to hide the slave revolt, thanks to the sense of harmony engendered by the servant's devotion and fidelity displayed in the shaving practice.

The story belonging to the conversation during the shaving scene is also key in "The Doll." The story told during the shaving is the crux of the short story, in a way that the shaving scene provides its only framework. The Colonel's story renders the topic of race relations dramatically, locating racial murder at the heart of the story. In this sense, the Colonel's narration already exposes racial ideology and racist violence, it brings up the failure of justice, and the tense relations between North and South. Chesnutt gives full weight to the story told during the shaving by tightening the focus on this particular moment.

As highlighted in Richard Wright's experience, the shaving moment implies not only the appearance of racial issues but also verbal exchange, in particular the narration of personal stories. More specifically, the moment creates a narrative framework, which predetermines special discursive conditions. In order to establish some technical basis for what follows, I will propose a definition of narrative framework drawing from the concepts of framed narrative and narrative situation, before proceeding to analyze its function in the shaving motif, and these stories in particular. According to the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, "[f]ramed narratives occur in narrative situations when events are narrated by a character other than the primary narrator or when a character tells a tale that, although unrelated to the main story, contains a moral message for the listener in the text" (Herman, Jahn and Ryan 2005, 186).

Before addressing the concept of narrative framework, I should turn to the sometimes-overlapping concept of narrative situation. The concept of narrative situation has more recently been understood as

> [c]ognitive 'frames' containing 'default' instantiations that predict presupposition-based interferences (Jahn 1997) [...] On this view, assuming or attributing a narrative situation is an interpretative strategy which can be employed to make sense of textual gaps and indeterminacies [...], or to 'narrativise' texts whose narrative status is uncertain. (Herman, Jahn and Ryan 2005, 365)

I use the term "narrative framework" to describe the way in which the moment of the shaving offers an embedded narrative in these stories, that is, a narrative within the broader narration. I will use the term because the shaving interrupts the action, stepping into an intimate moment of daily life and presupposes that there will be some kind of telling within it, its separation from the rest of the story also marked by crossing the physical threshold (frame) of the captain's cabin, or of the barbershop. From this understanding of narrative situations as frames I would like to borrow the idea that narrative frames provide default conditions of the telling. Yet I would like to add to Manfred Jahn's theoretical description of narratological conditions of the telling cited by Herman, other conditions that seem equally relevant, namely, historical conditions.[8] I understand the narrative framework created by the very space in which the shaving is conducted as generating a narrative situation in which the participants of the embedded narrative engage in a storytelling that is highly conditioned by the cultural and historical connotations of the physical space and the practice of shaving, including, for instance, domesticity, tools such as the razor, conversation, intimacy,

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[8] Manfred Jahn's broadening of the idea of the frame as applied to narrative situations marks a significant shift in our ideas on the functioning of embedded narratives and their interactions, drawing from concepts of cognitive narratology (1997). In "Conrad and Sebald: Aspects of Narrative Perspective and Exile," Jakob Lothe (2011) has argued for the importance of the relationships occurring between narrative situations and exile, in line with my present aim of historicizing narrative frameworks.

and race relations. These preconditions established by the narrative framework of the shaving intervene in the narrative situation that occurs within the shaving scenes. By incorporating the cultural and historical aspects with the narratological concepts of narrative framework, narrative situation and framed narratives this essay demonstrates the crucial role of history in the functioning of narrative technique.

With these concepts in mind, it is clear that the shaving scenes in these fictions enact a complex narrative. This narrative is partly an instance of a narrative mode of embedded narratives that, as Charles Duncan points out, extends to Chesnutt's *ouvre* as a whole (1998). Duncan notes the frequency of narrations framed by a third-person narrator containing other narratives, mostly told by African Americans, which in many cases relate an experience that contrasts with the main narrative. As he argues, this enabled Chesnutt to devise "a narrative framework that combines the advantages of a detached perspective with the immediacy of an eyewitness account" (Duncan 1998, 108).[9] Werner Sollors takes this even further in suggesting that "Chesnutt is precisely the American writer who manages to sustain an ambivalence toward two groups in the drama he presents, in which he succeeded because of very carefully devised formal structures (including such features as a carefully balanced frame narrative opening up multiple ironies)" (2010, 7). I concur with Duncan's idea that this narrative method enables the production of divided narratives, which contain multiple and often contending narratives; and, I agree with Sollors that the effect produced is ambivalence, as I aim to demonstrate. However, I would add two more aspects of this narrative composition that appear to be especially relevant to the shaving scene. First, that these scenes not only contain contending narratives, but they do so by presenting them in two different modes of narration—spoken and silent narration; and, secondly, that the relationship between the embedded narratives contained in the shaving framework is based on misperception as a narrative strategy. The combination of these factors, as we shall see, goes beyond producing division, since they establish the more complex nature of race relations through narrative and historical ambivalence.

Going back to my previous point, a first instance of the complex narratives that the shaving scenes produce is the fact that both scenes elaborate on parallel stories, the one expressed or vocalized in the scene, and another one not told, the relationship between which is essential to the narrative progression. In "Benito Cereno," the untold story is the actual revolt, which only becomes known through the eponymous protagonist's deposition. This story is present in Babo's and Don Benito's mind during the shaving but is repressed; while in "The Doll," the untold story is Taylor's own account of the murder. While the stories told during the shaving are relevant in that they define the contemporary racial context thematically, the untold counter-accounts are much more so, since the fictions endorse them as the accounts of true facts. In "Benito Cereno" the unspoken account

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[9] Edward Piacentino describes the origins of the embedded stories narrated by black slaves in the plantation literary tradition, which are the main source of Chesnutt's embedded narrations, especially in *The Conjure Woman*.

of the revolt during the shaving is only rendered textual authority at the end, by the attachment of the official trial documents that explain it. In "The Doll" the veracity of Taylor's tale is given textually, by his own narrative perspective, which enables the mental review of the missing elements and the real story after the Colonel has told a misleading tale, and is also given emotionally, by his intense contempt and efforts to withhold his emotions. As in William Faulkner's "Dry September" (1931) the casual shaving chatter becomes a complex interplay between the story told and that which is withheld.

Both silenced stories are withheld because of the moment of racially-charged tension being created, consciously or unconsciously, by the participants in the shaving. It is precisely the context of contemporary race relations that predetermines the roles and modes of narration composing the story. The complex racial interactions in the shaving moments are reflected by the complex interplay in their narration. The triangular relationship between barber, shaved person, and companion in these scenes produces a very peculiar narrative situation. In both scenes the barber is African American and the customer, white; in both, the customer is also a wealthy and powerful master/ Southern white. There are many nuances that make these two stories different in terms of their characters, yet in this essay I would like to emphasize commonalities in the motif, rather than differences. A third actor, a white companion of the person being shaved, is present in both as well.[10] In the shaving scenes, because of the racial status of the interlocutors, and the servitude proper to the job, the characters conducting the telling are white. In "Benito Cereno" Captain Delano recalls Don Benito's tale of the misfortunes of the *Saint Dominick* while the latter is discouraged from revealing anything by the sharp glittering blade in Babo's hand; in "The Doll," Colonel Forsyth tells the story while he is being shaved by Taylor's strained hands. Neither of the barbers respond to, or contribute to the telling—Babo only warning Don Benito, and Taylor struggling with how to proceed.

The narrative roles of these multiple participants produce a peculiar narrative situation in that at the intradiegetic level there is one main narrator, one narratee, and one implicit narratee—if I may call the African American barber that. It is peculiar, specifically, because neither of the stories is addressed to the barber, but rather to the other white person. However, the barbers are not only physically present, but the stories told directly affect their past, their present, and their future. They generate anxiety and contempt, which has to be suppressed.

Furthermore, the narrative framework of the shaving scene in these stories helps to accentuate the silenced pain of the stories behind the screen since what in another barbershop would have been a matter of racial etiquette becomes a matter of life and death in both "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll," and calls for some kind of action in

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[10] It is interesting to note that "The Doll" defines the racial profile of its characters clearly as black or white, a racial definition that is challenged in a substantial part of Chesnutt's fiction works. Indeed, Chesnutt's work very often strove to demonstrate the falseness of the color line, and the difficulties in racial relations, *passing* being one of his central themes. For an excellent collection of essays on *passing* in Chesnutt, see Wright and Glass (2010).

response. Listening to the doubts raised about his made-up version of the *San Dominick*'s misfortunes leads to Babo cutting Don Benito, in a violent act that goes against the calmed persuassive words spoken during the conversation. The inadvertent nature of this act has to be feigned to ensure that Captain Delano draws no link between the cut and the words just uttered, in order to prevent the failure of the revolt, which is otherwise going according to plan. Babo in turn famously pretends having being cut by Don Benito in response. He complains before Captain Delano: "'Ah, when will master get better from his sickness; only the sour heart that sour sickness breeds made him serve Babo so, cutting Babo with the razor because, only by accident, Babo had given master one little scratch, and for the first time in so many a day, too. Ah, ah, ah,' holding his hand to his face" (Melville [1855] 1990, 77). In "The Doll," similarly, the Colonel's unrestrained racist narrative is confronted by the barber's silent counter-narrative, which prompts action against the spoken words. At this point the disjunction between the spoken words and the silent pressure they exert on the barbers' own accounts of their respective stories is at its highest, making storytelling contend with actions.

Viewed alongside each other, the accounts in "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll"—spoken in allusion to the untold story, which weighs heavily on their minds during the shaving, and is the source of profound contempt—place the barbers in a crucible where action on their part is demanded. It is only demanded in reaction to their racial context, and it is unperceived by Captain Delano or Judge Beeman, who are unaware of the untold story. The silent listener becomes, therefore, the most important narratee of the tale, albeit implicit. The invisible man becomes here the central character, who is empowered by the brutal weapon of choice: the razor. Words, in both cases, are inversely related to deeds: those who are silent hold the razors, while those who speak produce the official tale, which the revolts aim to rewrite.[11]

Yet the power of the barbers is ephemeral, because the context beyond the shaving scene is marked by harsh racial hierarchies, and although these do not prevent racial revolt, they demand brutal punishment of the rebels. On the one hand, Babo has decided to lead a revolt that, at the moment of the shaving, comes close to being prematurely revealed and undone. Failure will eventually result when multiple hints, and this particular scene itself, finally make Delano aware of what is brewing, and Babo is savagely punished. On the other hand, Taylor stops just short of rebellion against the racial order because he comes to realize the tragic repercussions that would ensue for his family and community. As Duncan notes, "whether one recognizes the heroism of Taylor's restraint or not, it is clear that *any* action he takes—even verbal—while Forsyth sits in his barber chair will result in dire consequences for the barber and his family" (1998, 114; emphasis in the original). The immense power of the black barber paradoxically relegates him to the obsequious subjugation that personal service has

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[11] Silence is an overpresent imposition in racial relations as well as the quiet moves previous to the revolt. For the revolutionary meanings of silence in "Benito Cereno" see, Swann (1992).

been historically loaded with. For this reason, barbering harbors an ambivalence born of empowering the black individual with a razor for a close shave, and yet repressing any impulsive usage of the tool of his trade. Using it as a weapon might lead to punishment, or even losing one's head, like Babo, whose "head, that hive of subtlety, [was] fixed on a pole in the plaza" (Melville [1855] 1990, 104) or foreshadowed in Taylor's daughter's doll who "can't hold her head up," and whose "arms won't work and her legs won't work" hanging upon a spike (Chesnutt [1912] 2002, 794).

The complex narrative form that I have just described reveals the historical ambivalence with which barbering came to be perceived. The history of African American barbering was deeply intertwined with its origins during slavery, and was embedded in the sphere of domesticity and personal waiting on the masters. The free black barbers' tradition of hiring slaves made the transition to the barbering trade easier for newly freed slaves. This created opportunities for barbers to eventually become independent, and turned barbering into an occupation that brought material reward, as well as security in the form of a "network [that] functioned almost as a guild" (Bristol 2009, 49). The trade developed rapidly during the nineteenth century, but from the very beginning this success presupposed the ability to offer white customers a congenial environment. In the antebellum period, Bristol observes,

> [b]lack barbers struck a bargain with white customers [...] The barbers may have conceded too much. They certainly wrestled with the consequences of their decision. Nevertheless, antebellum black barbers established ties to the white elite that would persist throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. The race relations of the barbershop hinged on black barbers' serving as reference points for their white customers. The barbers validated white privilege through elaborate rituals of deference, and, as the hosts of upscale businesses, they offered white customers an appropriate setting for demonstrating their own respectability. (2009, 42)

The barber's razors were double-edged, as they appear in literature, since they were at once the tools of personal service and manual work, and associated with African American revolt by white racists—and black barbers repeatedly used them as business weapons for the creation of an African American middle class. For these reasons, which permeated the history of the trade, barbering became a very controversial job.

Embedding the narratives in the shaving scenes, the fictions express this historical ambivalence. Indeed, shaving was viewed either as a practice threatening the racial order, or consolidating it. Both perceptions occurred simultaneously in relation to the same act. The two stories in particular make this their strongest point. Both achieve to portray the disquieting effect of shaving on race relations through the narrative technique of delusion or misperception. In "Benito Cereno," Captain Delano misperceives the slave revolt as a result of his paternalist conception of race and race relations. By keeping a narrative perspective close to Captain Delano's, yet at times drawing away from him, the narrator can subsume under the same narration not only

Captain Delano's experience of the events, but also the documents that disclose the real facts, thus revealing the delusion. Delano underestimates the slaves' power with his paternalist views, in front of Don Benito and Babo, who act out the invented account of the *San Dominick*'s past. In "The Doll," the shaving scene is also embedded in a broader narrative delimited by the omniscient frame narrator, who does not give voice to Taylor but who has access to his thoughts and feelings, through which the untold story is delivered to the reader. Inside the barbershop, Taylor and the reader are convinced that it is Colonel Forsyth who is deluded, since he is telling the story that provokes Taylor's internal reaction. However, the narrator accompanies the white men out of the barbershop, where the Colonel cynically reveals to the Judge that:

> "Well, judge [...] that was a good shave. What a sin it would be to spoil such a barber by making him a postmaster! I didn't say anything to him, for it don't do to praise a nigger much—it's likely to give him the big head—but I never had," he went on, running his hand appreciatively over his cheek, "I never had a better shave in my life. And I proved my theory. The barber is the son of the nigger I shot." (Chesnutt [1912] 2002, 803)

Even if softened by the Judge's skepticism, this is still a very distressing conclusion, since it informs the reader that it is not the Colonel who is deluded, but rather the barber, who was being perversely tested. One might even venture that delusion is tangentially tied to the imagery of acting in both cases—acting in the sense of playing or performing a role, as in theater. Even though I would never go so far as to directly associate barbering with acting or dissimulation, in both "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll" the imagery of concealment or trickery is present in a subtle way. This association is grounded in historical depictions of barbers. As Bristol observes, and Melville brings up in *The Confidence-Man* (1857), in the antebellum period barbers were stereotypically portrayed as hypocrites, who might be hiding avarice and duplicity. Furthermore, "in the slang of the period, *barber* meant a thief, who 'lathered up' or talked smoothly to his victim before 'shaving' or robbing him" (Bristol 2009, 56).

Melville and Chesnutt challenge this older stereotype, which by Chesnutt's time had progressed to the truer image of a polite and refined barber, especially when referring to black practitioners of the trade. To question this association, both authors ingeniously use the stereotype in order to subvert it. Both authors borrow the idea of duplicity or acting that to some extent accompanied the trade in the more positive sense noted above, and partly related to notions of etiquette. As we have seen, what is initially a professional attitude is later accentuated and complicated by the display of extreme racial tension, which, nonetheless, demands from the barbers a *pretended* indifference to spoken narratives in the course of shaving. While performative indifference is common to the barbers in both stories, Chesnutt gives a final twist to performance by conceding the actor-role to the Colonel. Specifically, the fictions borrow the stereotype of acting fake in the form of the aforementioned narrative delusion in order to accentuate a

hypocritical imperative in Babo's plan, and premeditated torture in the Colonel's narration, thereby mapping the internal violence of race relations. Arguably, the shaving scenes become the climax of the enacted plays.

Babo is indeed a stage director during Delano's visit on board since, as Benito Cereno details in his deposition, "in every particular he [Babo] informed the deponent what part he was expected to enact in every device, and what story he was to tell on every occasion" (Melville [1855] 1990, 111). Performing the slave barber, Babo forces Don Benito to play his master in order to keep the revolt hidden. Kermit Vanderbilt (1992) has rightly interpreted this exchange of roles as showing the permeable boundaries between master and slave, white and black, by playing someone else. In turn, this performance paradoxically befits the racial order of the times, since the temporary situation following the successful revolt had already reversed the order. Africans again play the slaves and European and US whites, the masters.

"The Doll" uses trickery in an almost inverse fashion. Although Taylor forces himself to play the loyal and deferential barber, the image of the doll hanging on the spike suggests a more perverse use of trickery. The doll is clearly meant to recall its function as a puppet. And yet, in Colonel Forsyth's view, the one moving the puppet's strings is not the barber in this case but the Colonel himself. Taylor is a puppet, which the Colonel pretends to have made act according to his own racist theories. In this sense, the doll would not only recall the sweet memory of his daughter Daisy, or the horrifying image of Taylor's eventual lynching and hanging, but also, and more so, the very image of his humiliating role in the puppet show that Colonel Forsyth is directing. While "Benito Cereno" broadens and intensifies the African Americans' power of dissimulation as a weapon of resistance through the shaving, "The Doll" downplays it, deflating the aspirations and advantages of double consciousness, and showing the naked critical reality of the early twentieth century.

Both stories use the shaving scenes to raise the question of rightness, and of the opportunities and constraints associated with interracial conduct. The ambivalence displayed in the counterposing of the two stories, told and untold, that give occasion to both Delano's and Taylor's misperceptions distils the debate on the strategies for the fight against racial exploitation and discrimination: against slavery in the transatlantic slave trade of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and against racial discrimination in the critical years around 1900. This controversy was not alien to the labor history of barbering. On a recurring basis, especially during the 1850s with Frederick Douglass's attacks on manual work, and later in the opening decades of the twentieth century with William Edward B. Du Bois's critique of Booker T. Washington's defense of this kind of labor, barbering became an occupation tinged with both defiance and deference, which on the one hand signified clear (professional and social) success, while on the other, undeniably identified it as a form of manual work and personal service to white people.[12]

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[12] For Chesnutt's concern with the ambivalences and difficulties involved in white patronage, see Sawaya (2011).

As exemplified in the 1850s controversy, even if black barbers shared with leaders such as Douglass their commitment to a more respected African American community, "they disagreed over how to achieve that goal. The barbers ultimately dissented from the orthodoxy of racial uplift, advocating separatism and self-help instead. Drawing on their identity as knights of the razor, black barbers argued for a conception of respectability that focused on obtaining the means for achieving a middle-class lifestyle and on celebrating how they embodied the virtues of small businessmen" (Bristol 2009, 114). If there was ever a social group less prepared to surrender their personal and collective gains, achieved through legitimate acquiescence to the prevailing nature of race relations, by revolting against racial discrimination and hierarchies, it was the barbers. However, their argument, as we have seen, comprised fraternal striving to create a successful business that would contribute to the creation of a respectable and prosperous African American middle-class.[13]

The question raised in both stories through the shaving motif is, precisely, about the best strategy for ending racially discriminatory practices which were inflicted on both slaves and free blacks. Adding to the barbering controversy over the possibilities of manual work in gradually garnering of social respect and rights, the shaving scenes suggest an alternative strategy to immediate revolt. Babo and the slaves on the *San Dominick* decide to revolt since they stand to lose much less than Taylor. In Taylor's case, however, his function as a conduit to business proprietorship and social respectability for himself and his employees dissuades him from open rebellion, in line with the barbers' tradition, and instead decides him to take the route of steady growth and security with the collective future in mind. As Sundquist remarks, "The Doll" condenses the debate over strategies of resistance that Chesnutt had previously developed in *The Marrow of Tradition* (1993, 450-454). "The Doll" "seems to affirm, at least in part, Booker T. Washington's advocacy for the advancement of African Americans by gradual degrees, by embracing manual labor and vocational education as the means by which to gain access to the American economic system" (Duncan 2004, 200). Arguably, the stories support both response strategies, given that the *San Dominick* revolt is successful for the length of the narrative until the very end, and that Taylor's decision calls for the slow yet determined march of progress.[14]

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[13] In the relations between capitalism and violent race relations, the barbershop business works inversely to the post-Reconstruction "spectacle lynching" and "cakewalk"—a dance originally performed by slaves in US plantations, later developed into a very popular part of minstrel shows, which greatly expanded racist culture against African American through the entertainment industry—in the sense that John Mac Kilgore (2012) has analyzed them in reference to *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901). Although both involved a profit, while the cakewalk and the spectacle lynching relied on open exposure to violence, the barbershop as a trade depended on the restraint of that violence, and the semblance of racial harmony.

[14] Chesnutt's complicated position on the strategies to end discrimination and violence against African Americans, which prompted Pickens to refer to him as a "progressive reformer," might feature in the ambivalence of the story (1994). Chesnutt's disagreements with Booker T. Washington were not always in perfect alignment with those of W. E. B. Du Bois, and the years just prior to and around 1910, in which Chesnutt was both a member of the Committee of Twelve and the Niagara Movement (on which the NAACP was based) seem to have been particularly difficult with respect to that point (see Pickens 1994, chapter one).

However, in "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll" misperception plays ambivalence. In "Benito Cereno" it is the white North American captain who is ridiculed for misunderstanding the whole situation, but the true story of the revolt, when it is officially exposed, only evokes its brutality and celebrates its final failure, for which the slaves receive due punishment. It is a grim ending for a story that had so intricately exposed the complexity of racial ideologies and race relations. It is grim in the future revolutionary paralysis it seems to portend in its configuration of the simultaneous, yet debilitating, possibility of success and failure condensed in the shaving scenes. Thus this "revolutionary paralysis" involves a "countersubversive threat of reversal, of a restoration of the old order" (Sundquist 1992, 162).

In "The Doll," the story seems to approve of Taylor's heroic refusal to succumb to vengeful impulses, withholding his version of the story and the possibility of his murderous revenge. Disturbingly, however, by the end of the story we learn that the Colonel had placed Taylor under this enormous strain on purpose, simply in order to provide a living example of his notion that blacks are predisposed by nature to submit to whites. In this vein, the Colonel ends the story claiming that Taylor's restraint was natural, inherited behavior rather than a political act. The argument, made in 1912, if only by its making manifest the constraints on any kind of black political action, condemns Taylor's decision to proceed cautiously by manipulating his action into one that nurtures the argument of natural, or voluntary, subjugation to the racial order. In this sense, "The Doll," while providing a model for the right way to undertake the struggle for civil and human rights, also portrays and foreshadows the difficulties and obstacles that African Americans were facing, and would continue to face in their harsh career against Jim Crow.

In conclusion, by innovatively elaborating narrative frameworks, silenced and spoken double narratives, and misunderstanding and delusion, "Benito Cereno" and "The Doll" display the conflictive situation of the trade of African American barbering in the nineteenth century. The narrative ambivalence resulting from the combination of these narrative elements serves to enact how barbers were historically caught between the opportunity to escape slavery and fight social and economic discrimination, and being accused of conformity or of complicity in reproducing the racial order. The stories reveal shaving to be the location of racial ambivalence and complex race relations, producing ill-adjusted narratives whose specific narrative form grows from the historical racial and labor debates that the shaving scene encapsulated.

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Tropes of Temperance, Specters of Naturalism:
Amelia E. Johnson's *Clarence and Corinne*

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The article investigates the intersection of temperance discourse and emergent naturalist aesthetics in Amelia E. Johnson's *Clarence and Corinne* (1890). Just as many novels published in the Black Woman's Era at the turn of the twentieth century, it parallels the tradition of white woman's fiction as defined by Nina Baym and the sentimental tradition as discussed by Jane Tompkins. In my analysis, I will show how Johnson's imagery resonates with both the drunkard narrative and seminal works of American naturalism, such Stephen Crane's *Maggie* (1893) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), and how *Clarence and Corinne* exemplifies salient—though rarely examined—interconnections between temperance discourse and naturalist aesthetics. Her appropriation and revision of hegemonic ideologies and fiction formats enables her to not only to engage in a critical dialogue with Victorian gender politics and the capitalist economy but also to relate to issues of specific relevance for the contemporary African American community, such as the rise of the retrogressionist discourse of black bestiality, post-Reconstruction failure of a free labor economy, and interracial patronage politics.

Keywords: temperance; reform movements; Amelia E. Johnson; Black Woman's Era; American naturalism

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Tropología de la abstinencia y fantasmas del naturalismo en
Clarence and Corinne de Amelia E. Johnson

En este trabajo se estudia la intersección entre el discurso de la abstinencia alcohólica y la incipiente estética naturalista en la novela de Amelia E. Johnson *Clarence and Corinne* (1890). Como otras novelas de la Black Woman's Era, en la transición del siglo XIX al XX, ésta establece un paralelismo con la ficción de mujeres blancas, definida por Nina Baym,

y con la tradición sentimental estudiada por Jane Tompkins. Mi análisis explora el modo en que las imágenes empleadas por Johnson contienen ecos tanto de narraciones sobre el alcoholismo de la época, como de obras seminales del naturalismo norteamericano, como *Maggie* de Stepehn Crane (1893) y *Sister Carrie* de Theodore Dreiser (1900), hasta el punto de que *Clarence and Corinne* podría ejemplificar algunas conexiones (poco estudiadas por la crítica) entre el discurso de la abstinencia y la estética naturalista. La apropiación y revision de algunas ideologías hegemónicas y de formatos ficcionales contemporáneos favorece el diálogo crítico de Johnson con la política de género victoriana y con la economía capitalista, así como con aspectos relevantes para la comunidad afroamericana, como el surgimiento del discurso regresivo del bestialismo negro, el fracaso de la economía libre del trabajo posterior a la Reconstrucción y la política del patronazgo interracial.

Palabras clave: abstinencia alcohólica; reformismo; Amelia E. Johnson; Black Woman's Era; naturalismo americano

How could she live, battered and beaten, and starved as she was, and by our father too; the one who could have made us all comfortable and happy. But instead of that made us miserable—no, it wasn't him either; it was that dreadful, dreadful stuff, whisky. Yes, drink ruined our father, and now it's killed our mother; and nobody cares for us because we're the children of a drunkard.

<div align="right">Clarence in Clarence and Corinne (Johnson [1890] 1988, 19)</div>

Building on studies of women's literature in the nineteenth century, nineteenth-century reform movements, American naturalist tradition and African American nineteenth-century fiction, I will investigate the uses of temperance in Amelia E. Johnson's *Clarence and Corinne* (1890). This relatively little known novel is an evangelical conversion narrative published by the American Baptist Publishing society. Since it features racially indeterminate characters and hence does not meet the expectations of authenticity set for African American literature, it did not attract much scholarly attention until the 1990s. Just as many novels published in the Black Woman's Era at the turn of the twentieth century, it begins with a disintegration of family, climaxes with a moment of *anagnorisis* and ends with an extended family reunion. As many critics have argued, to a large extent, *Clarence and Corinne* parallels the tradition of white woman's fiction as defined by Nina Baym (1978) and the sentimental tradition as discussed by Jane Tompkins (1986)—see also Spillers (1988, xxvii), Tate (1992, 5-6) and duCille (1993, 4, 17)—and it uses reform discourse aimed at the expansion of the private sphere (Tate 1992, 14; Foreman 2009, 3-4).[1] Following the gender critique embedded in the hegemonic tradition, Johnson's text analogously challenges unchecked patriarchal authority and women's financial dependence on men, rather than it simply "reiterate[ing] the conservative female gender prescriptions of white culture" as critics highlighting its conservative gender representations have argued (Tate 1992, 98-99).[2] In my analysis, I will show how Johnson's appropriation and revision of hegemonic ideologies and fiction formats may be read as meaningful and usable for the African American community at the turn of the twentieth century. Her text voices a trenchant if implicit critique not only of gender politics, but also of post-Reconstruction free labor, the capitalist market place and patronage politics. I will argue that the text's narrative parallels with the mulatta melodrama make it possible to read these challenges as specifically targeted against white privilege.

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[1] See also McDowell (1995, 29), Carby (1987), Epstein (1986), Dorsey (2006) and Parsons (2010).

[2] Tate also argues that despite the text's sympathy for the underprivileged, "there is virtually no interventionary discourse of direct feminine agency or female self-improvement" (1992, 98). Analogously, contrasting it with Pauline Hopkins and Frances Harper, M. Giulia Fabi argues that "Johnson does not overtly address the power disparity between the sexes and therefore effectively effaces any demands for the societal [...] empowerment of women" (1995, 240).

In the following analysis, I will specifically focus on Johnson's appropriation of temperance rhetoric and its gender politics. The presence of temperance tropes in African American literature dates back to the days of the abolitionist movement and could be easily explained as a residual trace of the close rhetorical and historical ties between different nineteenth-century reform movements. The frequency with which the theme recurs in the Black Woman's Era suggests, however, that it gained some additional usefulness for African American women activists and their literature at the turn of the century.[3] In general, tropes of temperance, in which reformers voiced their anxieties related to volition, compulsion and contentment (Parsons 2010, 9-17), enabled black writers to express the tension between structural determinism and symbolic self-determination which were central for the newly emancipated community, whose post-Emancipation optimism clashed with the social realities of Jim Crow segregation, disfranchisement, share-cropping and lynching violence. More specifically, P. Gabrielle Foreman convincingly shows that it is possible to read Johnson's temperance rhetoric, and images of white intemperance in particular, as a response to contemporary retrogressionist discourse of black bestiality and more specifically to Southern temperance discourse, in which activists such as Rebecca Latimer Felton warned against "liquor and lust-filled Black threats to the nation" (Foreman 2009, 166). Building on Foreman's insights, I will argue that Johnson's challenge to the racial and gender politics of white masculine authority, and her critique of the limitations of hegemonic femininity, stem not from her appropriation of woman's fiction and the rhetoric of the temperance movement alone. Her use of the additional force of the drunkard motif in the novel can be attributed to the rise of naturalist literature which coincided with the Black Woman's Era. The naturalist brute and the plot of decline closely related with it, as June Howard has convincingly argued in her seminal study *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism* (1985), express and manage the turn-of-the-century anxieties of proletarianization. The naturalist brute draws on the former myths of savages and wild men, yet the figure is "imagined as living not outside the bounds of human society, not in the wilderness […] but within the very walls of the civilized city" (Howard 1985, 80). These specters of atavism are primarily projected on the persona of the immigrant worker, who in the bourgeois imagination "easily succumbed to alcohol, sex, crime, and violence" (Dubofsky 1989, 24, quoted in Howard 1985, 80). Thus, naturalism internalizes representations of brutality and positions it on American territory, in American cities, or even within American bodies. Consequently, the brute becomes more immediately threatening than the distanced exotic otherness. On the other hand, naturalist discourse manages the anxieties of proletarianization: it ethinicizes the working class and contrasts it with the passive observer, a position that the text frequently encourages the reader to identify with (Howard 1985, 70-103).

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[3] For an analysis of temperance as used by Frances Harper, see Stancliff (2010).

The contrast between the brute and the observer is analogous to the tension between determinism and reformism, which is at the center of *Clarence and Corinne*.

Even though Johnson's novel was published before the American naturalist classics, Howard traces the origins of naturalist discourse in the United States back to 1877, the year of the first national strike (1985, 75). Such a reading adds additional support to Giulia Fabi's claim that *Clarence and Corinne*'s preoccupation with "the impact of the environment on the individual" and the representation of "urban outcasts ostracized by their poverty" can be referred to as "protonaturalist" (Fabi 2007, 14) and in this sense the book foreshadows canonical works of American naturalism. Additionally, Johnson's novel aptly illustrates how American naturalism emerges out of a dialogue with temperance discourse and its twin techniques of sentimental compassion and melodramatic excess. One of the most vivid examples of this intersection is found in the early presence of European naturalism in the US. Naturalism's entry into American cultural discourse predates the release of the first, pirated, translations of Émile Zola in the early 1880s and can be traced back to theatre adaptations of his 1877 novel *L'Assommoir*, a study of a family's decline due to alcoholism. Only two years after its publication in France, at least three different directors had adapted it for the American stage, and at the same time Charles Reade was successfully touring the United States with his British adaptation of the novel, *Drink* (Frick 2003, 169-170).[4] Although all productions highlighted melodramatic elements of Zola's text and significantly altered the narrative to make it more compatible with reform optimism, the works were received as "an example of Zola's sordid realism, rather than a resurrection of mid-century temperance melodrama" (Cummins 2008, 161). Reade managed to combine "the then-popular melodramatic mode with Zola's original naturalistic mode," which is considered to be central to the success of his production (Frick 2003, 174-175). Thus the introduction of Zola into the US illustrates the significance of temperance discourse for the emergence of American naturalism. This intersection, as I will demonstrate, is equally fundamental for Johnson's story. *Clarence and Corinne*, just like the theatre adaptations of Zola showcases the crucial interconnectedness of naturalism, sentimentalism and melodrama at the turn of the century.

Clarence and Corrine begins with images that prefigure the introductory chapters of Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), frequently listed as the earliest work in the American naturalist canon (Holton 1972, 37). In both cases, young children, a brother and a sister, are positioned at the threshold of the unfriendly and unsafe private sphere of the drunkard's home. Crane's novel opens with the protagonists, Maggie and Jimmie, in a Bowery street ([1893] 2003, 135-138). The significance of this image is highlighted in the depiction of their tenement, in which "a dozen gruesome doorways gave up loads of babies to the street and the gutter […] In the street infants played or

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[4] Frick lists David Belasco, Augustine Daly and Dion Boucicault as the three producers; however, he points out that Reade's venture was by far the most popular and influential (2003, 169-170).

fought with other infants or sat stupidly in the way of vehicles" (139). The building is represented as a woman in labor whose grotesque body, riddled with a "dozen gruesome doorways" and "an hundred windows," merges with the external world (139). Although the house rented by the Burton family in Johnson's novel is a cottage, not a tenement, the boundaries of its private sphere are equally volatile. "The rough door hangs on a single hinge" and is "half open"; the palings are broken and the gate is never closed (Johnson [1890] 1988, 5-6). The threatening character of the cottage (and its environs) is also conspicuously visible in the first illustration to the novel, which precedes the text. It shows that apart from the broken door many other elements of the house, such as shutters and drain pipes, need repairing. Clarence, the eponymous brother, standing on the threshold, about to enter the house, seems to hesitate, suggesting his sense of insecurity. Moreover, even though at other times he acknowledges the rules of etiquette (10), in the picture he is not opening the door for his sister Corinne to enter ahead of him. She is stopped one step behind him, which further indicates that the space they are about to enter is far from being secure.[5] The interior of the house is described as being even more dismal than when viewed from the outside. The narrator conscientiously lists a dirty, uncarpeted, broken floor, dusty and broken windows and rough and rickety items of furniture (Johnson [1890] 1988, 6), which foreshadow "the broken furniture, grimey walls, and general disorder and dirt" in *Maggie* (Crane [1893] 2003, 154). Both Johnson's and Crane's novels problematize the ideology of separate spheres and its easy equation of the safe idyll with domesticity and danger with the public realm. They also resonate with images from temperance discourse, which used analogous depictions of domestic ruin as a reformist argument.

Yet, whereas in popular temperance rhetoric the condition of the drunkard's home was reductively explained with statements such as "all the difference was made by […] the bottle" (Newton 1861, 78), in Johnson's text, the condition of the house is not wholly attributed to "the Giant Intemperance" (Newton 1861, 38) and its effects on the tenants. Even though Mr. Burton's intemperance is clearly the key factor that contributes to the family's decline, the dilapidation of "the wretched cottage" can be additionally explained with the parsimony of the landlady. As the narrator points out, the owner, Rachel Penrose, is primarily driven by pecuniary greed and as a result deprives herself, and "others, of the actual necessities of life, in order to lay away money for the sake of simply *possessing*" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 42; italics in original). Since her financial self-discipline is so obsessive, it actually turns into a voracious financial appetite, which is paralleled by Mr. Burton's insatiable appetite for alcohol. Thus the novel interestingly juxtaposes her stern respectability and his intemperance as the two factors that make the cottage "a blot upon a beautiful picture" (5). The polar contrast between the two characters and their villainy are

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[5] Men opening a door for a woman to pass through first was mentioned in etiquette manuals as a taken-for-granted common courtesy for which women sometimes even forgot to thank them (Moore [1878] 2008, 240).

melodramatic elements of the text, which simultaneously serve to express naturalist determinism as they point to systemic roots of the family's tragedy: alcoholism and economic exploitation by the owning class.

Even though the Burtons' home is far from the domestic ideal, Mrs. Burton can be read as a hyperbolic image of domestic femininity. Analogously to the "perverse patriarchs" in Gothic fiction analyzed by Kari Winter, she "fill[s] {her} role so exactly that {her} behavior calls attention to the injustice embedded in patriarchal ideology" (Winter 2010, 22). Radically relegated to the private realm, as Hortense Spillers has pointed out, Mrs. Burton "never leaves her chair" (1988, xxxi), where she is found dead in the second chapter by her daughter.[6] Almost all she does before her death is sit in the rocking chair, apathetic and listless. The continuous monotony of rocking is reinforced by Mrs. Burton's never-ending darning: she "draw[s] the needle and thread slowly back and forth" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 8). Even though the narrative does use the sentimental metaphor of the "last sleep," it devotes more space to depicting more naturalist details of her dead body: Mrs. Burton's "wide-open" "dull eyes" stare from her "stony face." Her son Clarence moves towards her "motionless figure" and lifts "one of the nerveless hands" (17-19). Limited to the non-progressive rocking indoors and the motionlessness of death, the drunkard's wife in Johnson's text emblematizes interiority, passivity, submission and non-productivity. Her exaggerated performance of Victorian hegemonic femininity highlights its tragic limitations.

The relationship of Mrs. Burton's representation to the discourses of nineteenth-century femininity can be further illuminated with an intertextual reading since her chair resonates with two influential literary representations of women rocking. On the one hand, it forms a dramatic contrast with the celebration of maternity expressed in a squeaking rocking chair in Beecher Stowe *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). "For twenty years or more, nothing but loving words, and gentle moralities, and motherly loving kindness" have come from the chair of an elderly Quaker mother, Rachel Halliday (Stowe 1852, 138). As Jane Tompkins claims, Rachel Halliday "rules the world from her rocking chair," which is the center of utopian matriarchal order rooted in motherhood (1986, 142).[7] Her domestic confinement is represented as a source of power in the form of moral suasion rather than an instrument of her oppression or symbol of domestic entrapment. Although Mrs. Burton is also represented as a mother in a rocking chair,

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[6] This contention, repeated later by Foreman, is actually not entirely correct. She does leave the chair to give bread to her children.

[7] More recently, Elisabeth Wesseling refers to the image as a "rhapsody on the maternal rocking chair" (2012, 211), whereas Bärbel Tischleder claims that it is "the epitome of the ideal home" (2005, 98). For a reading that focuses on the similarity between the rocking chairs in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Sister Carrie* see Kaplan (1992, 144). The power of Stowe's image stems from the contrast between the repetitive unpleasant sound the chair makes—"'creechy crawchy,' that would have been intolerable in any other chair"—and the limitless maternal kindness of the woman in it (1852, 138). It has been insightfully read as central to Stowe's sentimental politics and acquired, rather than inborn, ethics and aesthetics by Gregg Camfield in "The Moral Aesthetics of Sentimentality: A Missing Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1988, 319-345).

her figure stands in polar opposition to boundless maternal nurturance, care and moral influence. Her rocking chair is silent and not squeaky, but "her voice [rings] out sharp and harsh" (8). In the light of this reversal, Mrs. Burton's representation can be read as a critical rewriting of Stowe's utopian loving matriarchy. Rather than comfort or cure "head-aches and heart-aches," her inaction and endless rocking seem to be an expression of the death drive. As Freud has famously argued, the instincts "impelling towards death" are of a "regressive [...] character corresponding to a repetition-compulsion," and "their aim [is] the reinstatement of lifelessness" (1922, 54). Mrs. Burton's apathetic repetitive movement presages her imminent death.

Rather than follow Stowe's sentimentalist politics, Johnson's image prefigures naturalist imagery. The rocking chair, as numerous scholars of naturalist fiction have argued, at the turn of the century becomes a fundamental image of static, illusory motion.[8] Since its most famous rendering is the dreaming and longing of Theodore Dreiser's Carrie Meeber, the rocking chair image in critical discourse is closely linked to femininity. As Jennifer Fleissner argues, it exemplifies the key naturalist plot centered on "the modern young woman," which is characterized by "ongoing, nonlinear, repetitive motion [...] that has the distinctive effect of seeming also like a stuckness in place" (2004, 9). Despite the conspicuous difference in their conditions, both Mrs. Burton and Carrie embody a lack of contentment. In Carries's case, such continual lack of satisfaction motivates and leads to her social advancement from a poor second-generation German immigrant to a famous New York actress. For Mrs. Burton the final outcome is dramatically different. In light of the scant information that Johnson's narrative offers to the reader about Clarence and Corinne's mother—according to which she "[was] a giddy, thoughtless girl" and married James Burton against the advice of friendly people (Johnson [1890] 1988, 43)—we may assume that she falls into the category of the "speculative," "discontented" wife of a drunkard, who chooses "a 'flashy' and 'fast' young man for a husband" in hope of quick social advancement (Parsons 2010, 88-90). In contrast to Carrie's daring moves, Mrs. Burton's speculations are punished in the moral politics of Johnson's novel.

Dreiser's novel, however, features another character who frequently sits in the rocking chair, and who represents a plot of decline analogous to Mrs. Burton's. After Carrie leaves him when he is not able to maintain the lifestyle she has got used to, her lover George Hurstwood "[sinks] down in his chair" with "bereaved affection and self-pity." In the text, just as in Johnson's novel, his inertia is emphasized: "At midnight he [is] still rocking, staring at the floor" (Dreiser [1900] 2000, 436-437). The trajectory of Mrs. Burton resembles his plot of decline more closely than Carrie's rise to fame.

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[8] Very many studies devoted to naturalism or *Sister Carrie* make a reference to the significance of the rocking chair. It has been formalistically read as a fractal metaphor of cyclic, unprogressive narratives dominating the naturalist aesthetic (Pizer 1984, 21). When read as immobility from the Marxist and new historicist perspective, it has been linked to ceaselessly deferred satisfaction of consumerism (Fleissner 2004, 188) and paralysis (Howard 1985, 43, 99-102). See also Fisher (1985, 154-156).

More specifically, the last words of Hurstwood before he commits suicide by gassing himself with methane and the last words in the original version of the text—"What's the use?" (Dreiser [1900] 2000, 498)—strongly resonate with some of Mrs. Burton's scarce utterances. She repeats that "There's no use talking, and there's no use trying to be decent," and asks rhetorically, "What's the good of wishing for what cannot be?" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 7-8). Moreover, both characters' deaths are characterized by inertia rather than drama. Both die in the darkness of their rented rooms: Hurstwood stretched for "rest" in bed (Dreiser [1900] 2000, 498), and Mrs. Burton in her chair, though assumed by Corinne to be asleep (Johnson [1890] 1988, 17). These parallels encourage us to read the figure of Mrs. Burton through the prism of Hurstwood's suicide as an expression of the death instinct, a conjunction of repetition and regression. Instead of providing maternal care for her children and making the rocking chair an extension of her womb like Rachel Halliday did, she desires to return herself to "an earlier condition," to the womb (Freud 1922, 54). Her rocking towards death simultaneously foreshadows Carrie's lack of contentment and Hurstwood's final resignation.[9]

What further highlights Johnson's departure from the Quaker settlement of Rachel Halliday, which represents the Jeffersonian ideal of the self-sufficient homestead (Fisher 1985, 114), and underlines the similarity between Mrs. Burton and both Carrie and Hurstwood is the positioning of their chairs in a rented, rather than privately owned, space. As Amy Kaplan argues in her seminal study of the period, representations of rented spaces are central for late-nineteenth-century realism and naturalism since they epitomize "the threatening repository of the unreal" (1992, 12), which stems from the coexistence of "seemingly mutually exclusive realities" in the wake of late-nineteenth-century urban-industrial transformations (8-11). Rented spaces trigger bourgeois anxieties since they constitute the threatening realm of 'the other half.'[10] In the light of Kaplan's claim about the connotations evoked by representations of rented spaces, the positioning of Mrs. Burton's chair in a rented cottage further highlights the specter of the menace and anxiety of proletarianization in the text. In the novel, the continuity and changelessness of the rocking motion do not provide maternal comfort in those times of dramatic social changes, but are represented as a fatal paralysis, which prefigures naturalism's circular images of rise and fall.

The seemingly paralyzed Mrs. Burton, however, is not a sentimentalized victim and does not evoke the reader's compassion in the text. As the intrusive narrator critically comments, "[Mrs. Burton] had lost all energy and ambition, doing hardly anything save

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[9] The image of a rocking woman is also evoked for a brief moment in *Maggie*. Mary Johnson, drunk and vulgar, rocks "to and fro upon a chair, shedding tears and crooning miserably to the two children about their 'poor mother' and 'yer fader, damn 'is soul'" (Crane [1893] 2003, 142). Since here the mother is the drunkard and an emblem of hypocrisy, it may be read as a parody of Mrs. Burton's condition.

[10] The process of imagining and managing the reality of the urban poor and their rented spaces was most vividly represented in the photographic practice of Jacob Riis, who portrayed the tenements of New York's Lower East Side and used selected pictures in his *How The Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (1890), coincidentally published in the same year as *Clarence and Corinne*.

to sit and brood bitterly" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 42-43). This judgment is repeated more explicitly in the words of Miss Rachel Penrose, the owner of the cottage, and it is further reinforced on the narrative level through the story of children left unprotected. As Foreman states, "Mrs. Burton is situated as a poor victim and passive victimizer at best. At worst she is a bad mother complicit in her children's ruin" (2009, 161). Her failure is even more conspicuous as the novel contrasts her home with the ideal household of Helen and Mary Gray, two orphaned sisters, who eventually take over the responsibility for Clarence and Corinne. Their "picturesque white cottage" with a blooming garden is kept "neat, cool, cozy," even though the younger sister, Mary, who is the main housekeeper, is a "frail and sickly" invalid (Johnson [1890] 1988, 29). She is introduced, like Mrs. Burton, "sitting" in a chair, though she is placed "by the open window" and productively engaged in sewing (30). Likewise, her older sister, Helen, sits in a rocking chair after a day's work as a teacher (30). "Strangely"—as the text points out—the invalid "[i]nstead of giving way under the strain of nursing the sick child every day [...] seemed to gain strength" (83). In contrast to Mrs. Burton's self-absorption and her ultimate confinement to the home, the sisters are actively and generously engaged in the life of their community, and as Fabi argues, their household represents "a viable non-capitalistic relational economy" (2007, 18). Significantly, the model household of the two sisters foreshadows the novel's happy ending, which is also based on the relationships between two pairs of siblings. Thus the novel, although conservative in its representations of femininity, emphasizes the significance of woman's work and demonstrates the dangers of female passivity, dependence and the loss of ambition.

On the narrative level, *Clarence and Corinne* incorporates the drunkard narrative as defined by Elaine Frantz Parsons in *Manhood Lost: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (2003). In this formulaic story, a father's drinking problem as is typical, leads to the disintegration of the family (Parsons 2003, 11). In Johnson's novel, as a result of the father's intemperance, the mother dies and the children are left homeless and are separated. In his deathbed confession, reported in a newspaper, the father admits that "he had deserted [his children] at the death of their mother because he did not wish to be burdened with them" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 177). Whereas Mrs. Burton represents a hyperbolic embodiment of domestic femininity, her husband is a hyperbolic failure of male authority. As Parsons demonstrates, the effectiveness of the drunkard narrative was inherently connected with the anxieties about masculinity it triggered: the influence of alcohol became inextricable from the loss of masculine mastery, and such a correlation was recognized both by temperance activists and their opponents: "The drunkard [...] was not a true man because he was unable to exert his will over his body and interests" (Parsons 2003, 55).[11] Drunkard

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[11] Parsons argues that temperance rhetoric markedly differed from the critical representations of patriarchy in texts by Charlotte Perkins Gillman (1860-1935) or Kate Chopin (1850-1904), yet she admits that temperance activists, "who aimed ambiguously at the drunken husband, may well have done more to advance women's rights than those who set their sights, through the sober patriarch, on patriarchy itself" (2003, 172).

narratives evidence time and again that any man can become addicted to alcohol. "In a tavern [...] an angel could scarcely remain without corruption," to quote from the one of the most popular temperance texts, T. S. Arthur *Ten Nights in a Barroom* ([1854] 2000, 208). Accordingly, in *Clarence and Corinne* it is also emphasized that it is "that dreadful stuff, whisky" that leads to the tragedy at the beginning of the novel rather than any innate weakness of Mr. Burton (Johnson [1890] 1988, 19). Nevertheless, as historians have argued, the significance of the bottle metaphor and other tropes of temperance express anxieties that are not limited to intemperance (Epstein 1981, 100-103). In temperance discourse, men's addiction is exposed as one of the systemic weak links positioned at the juncture of patriarchal culture and capitalism, rather than treated as an individual and isolated phenomenon. Furthermore, although temperance literature highlights the problem of the "bottle," it needs to be seen in the wider context of nineteenth-century reform rhetoric of self-discipline, which metonymically links alcohol with other stimulants of appetites—from meat to modern urban lifestyle—and inebriety with other weaknesses, forces and desires—from sensual passion to pecuniary greed (Epstein 1981, 125-127; Dorsey 2002, 116-120; Parsons 2003, 78-81). When read as an element of such extended disciplinary discourse, Johnson's representations of intemperance automatically evoke a whole family of ideas, many of which rhetorically target two interconnected loci of power: masculinity with its passions and capitalism with its speculative marketplace. Their interconnectedness explains also why the text assigns the roles of villains to such polarized figures as intemperate Mr. Burton and accumulating Miss Penrose. As I will argue in the last part of the paper, these can be additionally linked with the racial privilege of whiteness in the novel.

In temperance narratives, masculine authority is further challenged as the fallen drunkard's complement is a "redeeming woman," who through her temperance work can gain access to the public sphere and control of the lower-class neighborhoods (Parsons 2003, 51-52). Accordingly, in *Clarence and Corinne*, the neighboring women take over the control of the Burtons' house and children. As many texts representing "woman's fiction," the novel juxtaposes good and bad guardians (Baym 1978, 37). Miss Penrose, the antagonist in the novel is represented by a middle-class, financially secure woman, whereas the good guardians, the earlier mentioned Gray sisters, are extremely poor. Such juxtaposition can be read as an expression of anxiety over the bourgeois control of lower-class neighborhoods guaranteed by the former's economic privilege. The novel exposes the limits of compassion of privileged reform activists by representing a respectable woman with a complete lack of empathy for her disadvantaged protégée, whose condition clearly alludes to slavery. After Mrs. Burton's death, Miss Penrose takes Corinne to her house and trains her as a domestic. The girl is "overworked and underfed," while the guardian "pays her no wages" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 47) and forbids her to leave the house. Even though the novel represents a reformist strand of literature, Johnson is wary that reformist protection might easily turn to economic exploitation. What further intensifies the antagonist's exploitative

attitude is the fact that she owns the house in which the children live, and that the rent is not commensurate with the dilapidated conditions of the cottage. The Burtons "paid but little, but more than the place was worth" since it "was only fit to be torn down" (44). After the mother's death and father's abandonment, the children are told "it would be no longer their home," even though the cottage is closed up rather than rented to someone else (40). Such positioning of the capitalist landlord and reformer in the same person foreshadows the depiction of the Dalton family in *Native Son*, Richard Wright's naturalist classic published in 1940, exactly fifty years after Johnson's novel.

Apart from its parallels with the sentimental drunkard narrative, the depiction of Mr. Burton also resonates with the discourse of the brute as analyzed by Howard. "Drink-maddened," he "knocks and beats about" his wife, who as a result has a swollen eye and other signs of "ill-usage" (7-8). After he falls asleep, he becomes a dehumanized object, a "figure," a "form of a man" (15-16). In the narrative, he is just as immobilized as his wife. In the evening, the children find him lying upon the bed unconscious. In the morning, he is in the same position: "on the bed, across which he had thrown himself, hat, boots, and all" (17). He does not utter a single comprehensible sentence, which is in contrast both to the well-developed grammatical statements that come from his children and to the general eloquence of the drunkard in temperance literature, where he frequently becomes the chief speaker against alcohol (Parsons 2003, 23-24). After the children ask him about the reasons for their mother's death, Mr. Burton mutters a brief "I dunno" and leaves the room not to be mentioned until the end of the novel (Johnson [1890] 1988, 18). This ideally fits Howard's characterization of the naturalist brute as "necessarily inarticulate," "the animal who does not use language and is named but never names" (1985, 81). Mr. Burton's representation thus evokes analogous hegemonic anxieties to those triggered by the brute: the specters of proletarianization and masculine insecurities that vexed the American imagination at the turn of the century. These fears, however, are not mediated by any othering devices that characterize naturalism. Mr. Burton is not ethnically marked; he is not an inhabitant of the slums. He is a nondescript all-American male like characters in the drunkard narrative.

Another element which emphasizes the novel's affinity with naturalist images of drinking and signals a departure from the drunkard narrative is its lack of sympathy for the husband, which is central for the drunkard narrative (Parsons 2003, 21). In temperance literature, the white and middle-class identity of the protagonist encouraged the target reader's identification with the inebriate. Additionally, the reader's sympathy was evoked by the narrative's focus on the moment of the fall of the "finest young man in our neighborhood," to quote again from *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (Arthur [1854] 2000, 11). In contrast, as Foreman has pointed out, "Johnson offers no backstory to affirm Mr. Burton's essential goodness" (2009, 168). Moreover, whereas the typical drunkard narrative focuses on the causes, *Clarence and Corinne* represents only the results. Since, as Philip Fisher claims in his analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "To give the narration a

past is to recognize and implicitly adopt the point of view of the oppressor," the shift from causes to results sharpens Johnson's challenge to masculine authority (1985, 116). Mr. Burton is represented only at the beginning of the narrative and he is only barely conscious, hence the narrative represents a much less sympathetic and more critical image of the patriarch than the typical drunkard's story. In temperance discourse, the seductiveness of alcohol was frequently gendered feminine (Parsons 2003, 110) and positioned in the multiethnic metropolis, where the young man arrived from an innocent village (Dorsey 2002, 91-92). The rhetoric capitalized on the long-standing dichotomy between the innocent country and corrupt city and conflated it with residual representations of the temptress (Parsons 2003, 86, 100-125). Mr. Burton, however, is not tempted to take his proverbial first sip in a town saloon by a scheming foreigner or a prostitute. Even though, as Fabi points out, the family's deterioration follows its urban migration (2007, 14), Mr. Burton is already "given to hard drinking" before his marriage (Johnson [1890] 1988, 43). Thus Johnson's novel complicates the standard rural-urban dichotomy. The origins of patriarchal intemperance are located in the country, and it is only transferred to town by the forces of urbanization.

Johnson's text, therefore, draws on the drunkard narrative, which is primarily visible in Mr. Burton's lack of ethnic markedness and the narrative logic, in which intemperance leads to family disintegration. The novel, nevertheless, incorporates the emergent naturalist discourse of the brute, which is evidenced by Mr. Burton's violence, inarticulacy and immobility as well as the narrative's lack of compassion for his fate. Due to such a combination, Johnson's text evokes the contemporary anxieties of proletarianization without projecting them onto ethnic minorities, problematizes middle-class reform activism, and rejects urbanization and European migration as the primary origins of intemperance. Also, gender criticism of the novel draws much of its significance from such recasting of temperance rhetoric and its blending with the emergent naturalist aesthetics. Johnson uses the image of the fallen drunkard to challenge patriarchal order and represents exaggerated hegemonic femininity to highlight its absurd limitations.

Since the gender and class politics in American culture is always necessarily entangled with race politics, an analysis of Johnson's tropes of temperance also requires the scrutiny of this intersection in the novel. As different readings of her output demonstrate, the use of racial indeterminacy by a black author may paradoxically serve as a factor that highlights the raced character of whiteness and strips it of its invisibility. Although Hortense Spillers argues that race is not a key intratextual factor in Johnson's text and the novel does not respond to any "putative urgencies of coeval black life in the United States" (1988, xvii), many later critics see racial neutrality as an efficient political weapon for the black woman author at the turn of the century (Christian 1988, xxvii; Tate 1992, 12; duCille 1993, 62). As Fabi argues, it allows Johnson to deal with the issues of urban poverty and discrimination, and at the same time, does not perpetuate specific racial stereotypes of black vice and squalor (2007, 14). Racial indeterminacy in

the novel, she points out, is radical and subverts the automatic assumption about the whiteness of the portrayed community: "if nothing indicates the character's blackness, nothing indicates their whiteness either" (Fabi 1995, 239). She also emphasizes the potentiality of blackness of Johnson's indeterminate characters. Specifically, Johnson's focus on the characters' dark eyes encourages black readers to identify with them (Fabi 2007, 10). Tate accordingly includes Johnson's female characters as examples of what she labels "the black heroine's text" of self-determination and fulfillment (1992, 4). Foreman, although she posits that racial indeterminacy is an example of "simultextuality," claims that the narrative gains more political power and gives more narrative pleasure for black readers when its milieu is read as specifically white (2009, 162).[12] She argues that Johnson's depiction of a dysfunctional white family challenges contemporary southern temperance rhetoric, which racialized drink and positioned "the drunk black man" as the threat to the white household, especially to the mythical purity of white womanhood (164-168). It might be added that Johnson is able to engage in a dialogue with the black brute rhetoric more effectively because her narrative combines the sentimental drunkard's story with naturalist imagery of the brute. If the father, positioned as a menace rather than a victim or the object of reformers' sympathy in the novel, is read as white, he constitutes a more pinpointed response to the black brute rhetoric than a typical protagonist of the drunkard narrative.

The failure of the white father, which leads to family disintegration, also intricately resonates with the popular abolitionist narrative of the separation of slave families. In the 1890s, the motif was revived in Black Woman's Era fiction, mostly in the mulatta melodrama, where the termination of the white father's control results in a reversal of the daughter's fortune. This *peripeteia* can be summarized as "To-Day a Mistress, To-Morrow a Slave," a chapter title from William Wells Brown's *Clotel; Or, The President's Daughter* (1853, 143). In a few versions of the plot, when patriarchal control is terminated the daughter learns that she is black and not white, and in some cases the narrative moves from a degenerate Anglo-Saxon setting to an African American community to showcase black self-determined identity and self-reliance. Mr. Burton's failure to protect his family analogously forces his daughter into slavery-like servitude. This narrative parallel may help further complicate the claims about racial indeterminacy in the novel. If Johnson's text is read in conjunction with the changes in racial identities of characters in novels such as Julia C. Collins's *The Curse of Caste: Or, The Slave Bride* (1865), Frances Harper's *Minnie's Sacrifice* (1868-1888) and *Iola Leroy* (1892), or Pauline Hopkins's *Hagar's Daughter* (1901-1903), the race of the original milieu can be read as connotative of whiteness and the final destination of characters' narrative trajectories as connotative of blackness. Such an experimental intertextual reading would diachronically reconcile divergent synchronic readings of racial indeterminacy

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[12]Simultextuality is an interpretive mode Foreman uses to stress the multivalent meanings in African American women's writings (2009, 6).

in Johnson's novel. The text would then potentially criticize white patriarchy, and the limitations of hegemonic feminine domesticity at the beginning and end would envision a happy, extended, horizontal black community, made of brothers and sisters.

Before the community is built, however, the eponymous brother and sister need to face many oppressive experiences. Corinne's life after her mother's death and her father's abandonment of the family brings clear associations with slavery. As I have mentioned before, she is heavily exploited by stern Miss Penrose, who does not pay her and forbids her to leave the house. The child is constantly hungry, and there is not "a moment of the day which she [can] call her own" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 47). Furthermore, Corinne's guardian, although a member of the church herself, does not allow the girl to attend, which showcases not only her religious bigotry but also her inability to see in Corinne a fellow human being, possibly due to the race difference. Characteristically, Miss Penrose is the only character in the novel whose eyes are described as gray rather than dark or unspecified, and thus she might be positioned as white (50) in contrast to black-eyed Corinne (9; see Fabi 2007, 10). Hence Johnson's novel evokes the specters of slavery and uses them primarily to comment on the conditions of contemporary domestic service and child labor. If we read the race of the children as black, the text more specifically comments on the post-Reconstruction failure of free labor ideology (Foner 1988) and other elements of the emergent Jim Crow system, which W. E. B. Du Bois referred to as "a second slavery" ([1903] 1990, 7).

These associations with slavery are less visible in Clarence's plotline, which parallels the mulatta melodrama's focus on female characters. Yet Clarence's declaration of his desire to "run away" (Johnson [1890] 1988, 9) in a dialogue with his sister does recall black male's dilemmas in slave narratives.[13] Both exemplify the conflict between a wish for escape and devotion to female relatives. Most of Clarence's images of oppression highlight powerlessness stemming from his class and age, but also his heredity. He claims that "people don't even want to give" to "'old drunken Burton's boy'" because of his parentage (19-20). Later, after he experiences the competition and corruption of the capitalist marketplace and finds himself homeless and penniless, he is afraid that a naturalist plot of decline necessarily awaits him: "I was born to be down-trodden—crushed!" (116). In Clarence's plotline, intemperance and capitalism are juxtaposed as two obstacles to the boy's self-determined success, which reflects the positioning of his father and Miss Penrose as villains in the novel. Ultimately, just as Reade in his adaptation of Zola lets the female protagonist live and ends the play in a triumph of reform optimism, Johnson's protagonists overcome the limitations of heredity, and the novel ends in the founding of an extended household of Clarence and Corinne and their spouses, who also happen to be siblings. The brotherly and sisterly bonds guarantee greater gender equality than the traditional heterosexual romance. Additionally the four brothers and sisters represent the favorite professions of woman's reform literature: a minister, a teacher and a doctor.

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[13] See for example Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slavegirl* ([1861] 2010, 19).

In contrast to the turn-of the-century black male text, which as Tate argues, dramatizes "the frustrated moral claim of black patriarchal desire" (1992, 67), black women's novels repeatedly represent white patriarchal failure. This is also exemplified by Johnson's novel if we read the opening milieu as connotative of whiteness. Her rhetorical strategy to draw on temperance discourse and recast it so it foreshadows the emergent naturalist aesthetics enables her to challenge white masculine authority and expose its lack of mastery. Her assaults on masculinity play into a wide range of interrelated turn-of-the-century anxieties of the dominant classes: proletarianization, the sense of crisis of hegemonic masculinity and Southern fears of black supremacy. Johnson rewrites temperance scripts to voice anxiety about the reformers' patronage politics and the abusive aspect of economic privilege. What she represents as a foundation of the happy ending in the corrective vision of her novel, is in fact a horizontal cohesive community of brothers and sisters, which emerges as a response to the vertical power structures of capitalism and patronage.

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"I Am Just As Much Dead as He Is": Community, Finitude and Sibling Intimacy in Katherine Mansfield

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The present study aims to explore sibling intimacy in Katherine Mansfield as an alternative communitarian experiment that emerged after the utter failure of the community of lovers, both in her life and fiction. Thomas De Quincey's idea of "the palimpsest of the mind" and his trip down memory lane to exorcize his sister's death in *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) can be used to shed light on the interplay between autobiography and fiction in Mansfield. The analysis of Mansfield's short stories "The Wind Blows" (1920) and "The Garden Party" (1922) will show her manipulation of sibling intimacy after her brother Leslie's sudden passing. Anxiety towards death triggers her desperate search for a primordial self, similar to De Quincey's, which she camouflages behind the disruptive community of lovers/ friends envisioned by Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot. My objective is to investigate Mansfield's post-mortem relationship with her brother—which has rarely been examined closely in Mansfield studies—to prove a paradoxical yet effective combination of *operative* and *inoperative* communitarian traits—terminology used by both Nancy and Blanchot. Mansfield's writing of the body, or what Nancy calls *corpus*, will provide an interesting way to channel De Quincey's palimpsest into a writing model that aims to approach death without symbolic filters.

Keywords: Katherine Mansfield; community; death; sibling intimacy; incest; Jean Luc Nancy's *corpus*; palimpsest

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"Estoy tan muerta como él": comunidad, finitud e intimidad fraternal en Katherine Mansfield

El presente estudio pretende explorar la intimidad fraternal en Katherine Mansfield como una alternativa al experimento comunitario que surgió tras el fracaso de la comunidad de

amantes en su vida y en su ficción. El "palimpsesto de la mente" de Thomas De Quincey y su recreación de la muerte de su hermana en *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) serán el punto de partida para entender la interacción entre autobiografía y ficción en Mansfield. El análisis de sus relatos "The Wind Blows" (1920) y "The Garden Party" (1922) mostrará la manipulación de la intimidad fraternal que Mansfield lleva a cabo tras la muerte repentina de su hermano Leslie. Su ansiedad frente a la muerte le hará buscar desesperadamente una esencia ontológica, similar a la de De Quincey, que camuflará tras su experimento con la comunidad perturbadora de amigos/amantes, tal y como la teorizan Jean-Luc Nancy y Maurice Blanchot. El objetivo de este trabajo es investigar la relación post-mortem de Mansfield con su hermano Leslie para demostrar una combinación paradójica pero efectiva de rasgos comunitarios *operativos* e *inoperativos*, según la terminología de Nancy y Blanchot. El uso en Mansfield de una escritura del cuerpo, *corpus* en palabras de Nancy, ofrecerá una interesante forma de canalizar el palimpsesto de De Quincey a través de un modelo de escritura cuya intención es acercarse a la muerte sin filtros simbólicos.

Palabras clave: Katherine Mansfield; comunidad; muerte; intimidad fraternal; incesto; *corpus* Jean Luc Nancy; palimpsesto

1. COMMUNITY IN MODERNIST FICTION. THE CASE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Literary Modernism has been widely perceived as asocial and solipsistic. In "The Ideology of Modernism" Georg Lukács states that, for the leading modernist writers, the human being is "by nature solitary, asocial, unable to enter into relationships with other human beings" ([1962] 1963, 20). Recently, however, seminal studies have contested that, as stated by Michael Levenson, Modernism cannot be fully apprehended if the communal impulse is ignored, as "[a]ny encounter with an artwork occurs within a social world, a world vastly larger than a momentary contemplation" (1991, 8). Jessica Berman, in turn, acknowledges the constant (re)imagination of community in high modernist fiction and the direct engagement of this literary movement with early twentieth-century historical and political transformations of community (2001, 2-3). Berman's study opens up new avenues of research in modernist fiction by highlighting its "meaningful alternative models of community," which she meticulously explores through a revision of communitarian theory. This influential book in modernist communitarianism, together with others that exploit the tension between individual autonomy and communal cohesion, will be key to the investigation of Katherine Mansfield's highly questioned communitarian drive—which, with a few exceptions (O'Sullivan 2008, vii-viii), has barely been discussed in literary criticism (Worthington 1996; Mao and Walkowitz 2008; Martín Salván, Rodríguez Salas and Jiménez Heffernan 2013).

Mansfield's "sense of unutterable loneliness" ([1927] 1954, 5), which binds her to Modernism as an asocial literary movement, might explain her preference for dual communities—lovers and siblings. Even when she embarks on broader communitarian projects—such as the community of artists—the social drive is ultimately reduced to private binary communities of friends/writers that form a separate, disruptive union inside and outside the artistic microcosm.[1] Mansfield's binary communitarian drive is problematic, but worth exploring. Her rationale coincides with Jean Luc Nancy's ([1986] 1991) and Maurice Blanchot's ([1983] 1988) dichotomy between *operative* and *inoperative* communities. The former comprises self-enclosed individuals, who crave the immanence of a shared communion, and create a contract, society or community based on myths, or what Nancy calls "substance": homeland, blood, nation, family or mystical body ([1986] 1991, 14-15). The latter rejects essential and communal immanence, and replaces pre-existing individuality with singularity, which is not self-enclosed, but rather exposed to an exteriority that it partakes with the other singularities by their shared mortality (16). Death becomes the defining feature of communities. The *operative* community avoids direct confrontation with death and redeems it through essentialist inflation and mystical tropes, which are fabricated in order to protect the community from death while the *inoperative* community, in contrast, acknowledges the

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[1] I have explored binary communities in other studies, which complement the present work on sibling intimacy: the community of lovers (Rodríguez Salas 2013) and the community of women artists (Rodríguez Salas, forthcoming).

"impossibility of making a work out of death" (15). The community of lovers becomes the perfect alternative to unwork the *operative* model, as it appears as an "antisocial society or association" that has the ultimate goal of destroying society, because "[f]or the community, lovers are on its limit, they are outside and inside" (40).

Mansfield eagerly attempts to question traditional, *operative* communities, and aims to test the potential of the community of lovers. However, as I have concluded elsewhere, the unworked community of lovers theorized by both Nancy and Blanchot—which detaches from the general organic community—is never attained in Mansfield's fiction (Rodríguez Salas 2013). All the lovers invariably prove to be victims of society's gender norms, which prevent them from being truly "natural" and spontaneous, and corporeity is always tainted with restrictive societal rules. Mansfield's pessimism as regards man/woman relationships is, however, alleviated in the more innocent depiction of sibling intimacy. This nexus offers an alternative exploration of the community of lovers that complements Blanchot's perception of this community as formed by "friends" or "couples" ([1983] 1988, 33). Mansfield's idyllic connection with her younger brother, Leslie Beauchamp, was truncated by the young man's accidental death in 1915 during the Great War. In her fiction, Mansfield elaborates an intimate link between brother and sister that is "calibrated on death" and "indissociable from community, for it is through death that the community reveals itself" (Nancy [1986] 1991, 14). The present study aims to explore another binary communitarian drive in Mansfield, which emerged after the utter failure of lovers, both in her life and her fiction, and ultimately displays the disruptive effect of the community of lovers as envisioned by Nancy and Blanchot.

2. "Lose Myself to Find You": Sibling Intimacy and Communion

In a letter to her father (6 March 1916), Mansfield confessed that her brother's loss had changed the course of her life "*for ever*" ([1903-1917] 1984, 252; italics in the original). With the exception of a few articles dealing directly with the relationship between Mansfield and her brother, apart from recognizing Leslie's death as the turning point in Mansfield's journey to literary maturity, only scant attention has been paid to their relationship (Hankin 1983; Darrohn 1998; Kimber 2013; Mitchell 2011; 2014). This gap in Mansfield studies might be explained by Leonore Davidoff's exploration of sibling intimacy in literature, which she traces within a historical context. Her conclusion is that, despite its centrality, sibling intimacy "remains strangely neglected, relegated to a fragmentary footnote of the historical record" (2006, 18). This idea is supported by Valerie Sanders in relation to English literature in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where sibling relations are "an undeservedly neglected guide to understanding the complexity of gender relations at that time" (2002, 2). In Mansfield, it certainly proves to be a central communitarian drive that might offer the key to her original quest for an *inoperative* community.

The interplay between Mansfield's autobiography and fiction is pivotal to understanding her original perception of sibling intimacy and her way of coping with Leslie's death. Thomas De Quincey's resurrective fantasy, *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845), is one of the few literary sources that delves into the exploration of sibling intimacy, as he revisits early memories of childhood, marked by the death of his beloved sister Elizabeth. Rising with a prophet-like halo, he aims to secure her immortality through a series of mystical visions that come from his notion of 'the palimpsest of the brain':

> Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet, in reality, not one has been extinguished [...] in our own *heaven-created* palimpsest, the deep memorial palimpsest of the brain, there are not and cannot be incoherences. ([1845] 1850, 217; my italics)

De Quincey's palimpsest is endowed with *operative* traits, following Nancy's and Blanchot's terminology. The writer's prophetic voice uses essentialist inflation and mystical tropes, which are fabricated in order to avoid direct confrontation with death. His palimpsest is a unifying canvas with mystical resonance—'heaven-created'— that "fuses" life's eclecticism into the "harmony" of a primordial self, and does "not permit the grandeur of human unity greatly to be violated" ([1845] 1850, 217). The result is a mystified "resurrection," very much resembling that of Christ, where, "by the hour of death," all the memories in the brain "can revive in strength," since "they are not dead, but sleeping" (219). This palimpsest is De Quincey's way of facing "a crippling metaphysics of absence," which is exorcized through "the hermeneutics of art" (Snyder 1986, 697) and the imaginative possibility of a "rapturous reunion" (704). De Quincey will share with Mansfield the belief in imaginative literature as connecting humans with "the infinite" or a "dark sublime" (Snyder 1986, 691). Thus, art is not "a mere embellishment of life," but "one of its deep-sunk props" and the "shadowy meanings" of the brain activate "the deciphering Oracle within [one]" (Masson 1896-1897, vol. 1, 42; vol. 11, 88). Through an excavation of memory, De Quincey "approaches literature as both a transcription and a transcendence of personal experience" (Snyder 1986, 709).

Mansfield's case is similar, as she also exorcizes her brother's death through the interplay of life and literature. However, her exploration of sibling intimacy is different in that she combines traits of both *operative* and *inoperative* communitarian impulses. To begin with, the term "fraternity" is a problematic label to explain Mansfield's relationship with Leslie. Jean Luc Nancy and Sarah Clift (2013, 119-120) warn about the negativity of the term, which has been discarded from political theory in the last forty years because it is "closely tied to a romantic sensibility" and has "too many familial connotations." Nancy and Clift explain that Blanchot used it to enhance the affective dimension of community and was reprimanded by Derrida because the term

was "at once familial, masculine and sentimental" with "strong Christian undertones" (Nancy and Clift 2013, 119). In its association with the family, as a traditionally masculine and paternalistic socio-political model, the fraternal privileges "a masculine one-sidedness" that is superseded by the term "sorority," which moves in the sphere of nourishment and affect (121). Thus, fraternity and sorority intersect and the result is the term *sibling*, which does not necessarily signify a manly brotherhood. Indeed, Nancy and Clift clarify the difference between brotherhood—"subjects that tend to be identical because they are identified by a function, a trade or a role"—and siblings or family—"only the combination of chance (an encounter) and an embrace (desire)" (122). In contrast with this caveat, Mansfield's relationship with Leslie inevitably begins as a romantic, communal, mystified, familial fraternity, with the Christian undertones described by Nancy and Clift—very close to De Quincey's prophetic revision of his deceased sister. However, it progressively evolves towards the sibling sphere of chance and embrace with an ulterior and direct confrontation with death that eventually destroys the initial mysticism—as will be clarified in the next section.

Autobiography and fiction in Mansfield are listed in the taxonomy of sibling relations that Valerie Sanders (2002) traces in post-Romantic writers from Jane Austen through to World War I authors, where the brother-sister relationship was given intense emotional significance in English literature and cultural history. It is a contradictory relationship, though. On the one hand, because it is based on the myth of twin souls that leads to gender completion and, on the other, due to an implicit rivalry, which is explained in patriotic terms when contextualized in the period of the war, as is the case with Mansfield.[2] Derrida offers the key to understanding this dichotomy in his essay *The Politics of Friendship* (1994), where he connects the figures of the friend and the brother, who "seem spontaneously to belong to a *familial*, *fraternalist* and thus *androcentric* configuration of politics" ([1994] 2005, viii; italics in the original). He proposes going beyond the principle of fraternity—or the friend as a reflection of oneself, but never a threat or a genuine other—and explores the potential for enmity in his distinction between the "brother friend" and the "brother enemy" in the process of fraternization (106).

This dichotomy is subtly present in Mansfield and Leslie's relationship. While gender inequality and the brother's superiority are not evident between them, there are certain gender positions in relation to the war that might subtly prove this point. Leslie's patriotism and war duties weighed heavily on him in the months prior to his death, such that the period when he and Mansfield were closest was marked by Leslie's ulterior motive. In a letter sent to Mansfield on 11 March 1915, Leslie showed his participation in patriotic feeling, therefore displaying glorification through military sacrifice:

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[2] This problematic relationship is not present in De Quincey, who obsessively replicates the myth of twin souls in Elizabeth through mystification. He views "noble" Elizabeth as his "leader and companion" ([1845] 1850, 151) wearing "a *tiara* of light or a gleaming *aureola*" (154; italics in the original).

> Today I had a charge of about forty men in field manoeuvres and was congratulated on
> my work—consequently I am feeling fearfully bucked. Being in command of men is a
> wonderful sensation—one feels absolutely Napoleonic—and to lead a bayonet charge must
> be glorious. (Beauchamp n.d. 02, 30-31)

Mansfield's only surviving letter (25 August 1915) to him reveals her indirect
involvement in what MacCannell terms "The Regime of the Brother" (1991) through
her extolling of military patriotism in Leslie: "It meant a tremendous lot, seeing you and
being with you again and I was so frightfully proud of you" ([1903-1917] 1984, 197).
This patriotism is enhanced in the same letter, when she mentions several symbols for
which she "would cry for joy"—one of them a flag, which she links with the childhood
nostalgia that connects them.

The adverbs 'fearfully' and 'frightfully' in the letters of both reveal that, behind
proud patriotism, there is real fear of human loss. Behind the general perception of
sibling identity as forged through identification, "the double-faced image" can also
hide rivalry when the brother is considered "hated second-self or savior" (Sanders 2002,
128). Mansfield might have been left with a feeling of impotence after admiring her
brother's patriotism. Her writing, like that of Virginia Woolf, ultimately questions, in
Madelyn Detloff's words, "the construction of believing, heroic, sacrificial, even fascist,
subjects willing to fight and die in order to belong to a larger collective entity" (2009,
4). Sanders sheds light on literary sibling relations after the war:

> The War itself left sisters in a state of permanent moral defeat: unable to claim equality with
> brothers who had died for their country, they were emotionally immobilized, symbolically
> adrift. Jealous retaliation was no longer an option in a society where it would be unthinkable to
> complain of men as the favored sex. The chance to answer back was finally cancelled. (2002, 155)

Mansfield tries to cover her sense of guilt with Christian images of communal
fusion—very similar to De Quincey's with Elizabeth.[3] Mansfield thus replaces one
substance—patriotism—with another—religious mystification: "I want to write about
my own country till I simply exhaust my store […] because it is 'a sacred debt' that I
pay to my country because my brother and I were born there" ([1927] 1954, 93-94).[4]
Although she is not apparently looking for patriotic equality with her brother, their
"do your remember game" while together in London is part of her attempt to share
with Leslie a nationalistic feeling grounded in New Zealand childhood nostalgia. Apart
from unleashing her own palimpsest of the brain by excavating memory, this game is
ultimately part of Derrida's schematic of filiation.

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[3] Speaking about the "old war" she confesses: "its never out of my mind & everything is poisoned by it. Its
here in me the whole time, eating me away" (1987, 54; italics in the original).

[4] The concept of "substance" is used here following Nancy's idea that in operative communities death is
turned into some "substance or subject" that leads to communitarian mystification (1991, 14-15).

As stated by Davidoff, the myth of Narcissus is echoed in siblings and leads to the myth of twin souls, where "[t]winship confounds the sense that each person must be unique but also plays to the longing for perfect understanding" (2006, 21), and is frequently linked with cross-dressing transgression.[5] Probably in relation to this myth, G. W. F. Hegel regards the brother-sister bond as based neither on desire nor on dependency (1910, 451). As clarified by May, "[i]n its purity and freedom, the sibling relationship models the kind of voluntary reciprocity that will be embodied in the ideal political community" (2001, 41). Hegel's ideal community is ultimately modeled after the "fraternity" previously discussed, as he recognizes the imbalance between the brother's central desire and the sister's abnegation (1910, 451-454), an imbalance that leads to MacCannell's "Regime of the Brother" in Leslie's triumphant military ego. In her approach to Leslie's death, Mansfield initially replicates the pattern of *operative* communities, thus avoiding direct confrontation with death through essentialist inflation. In Nancy's words, she *operates* death into some "substance" (1991, 14-15). In Mansfield's remembrances of Leslie after his death, the predominant image is the substance of blood—"We are of the same blood" ([1927] 1954, 157). It will be after this initial exorcising "operation" that Mansfield eventually discovers that the *inoperative* community is "calibrated on death as on that of which it is precisely impossible to *make a work*" (Nancy [1986] 1991, 15; italics in the original). In spite of an effort to transcend communitarian essentialism, the narrating self in Mansfield ultimately gives in to communitarian delusions—homeland, religion, family. Fabricated to protect us from death, these substances ultimately blur and distort reality through "myth-making."

Following Nancy and Blanchot, in Mansfield a community is formed when the untimely death of her brother opens her to the exploration of a community of two, in her case a double exposure, since she was diagnosed with tuberculosis two years after her brother's passing. With Leslie, then, there was an intimate knowledge of death that she never experienced with any of her lovers. Mansfield marks her finite bond with Leslie in contrast to her marriage:

> I am just as much dead as he is [...] I want to write down the fact that not only am I not afraid of death—I welcome the idea of death. I believe in immortality because he is not here, and I long to join him [...] To you only do I belong, just as *you* belong to me [...] You have me. You're in my flesh as well as in my soul. I give Jack my "surplus" love, but to you I hold and to you I give my deepest love. Jack is no more than anybody might be. ([1927] 1954, 85, 86, 89; italics in the original)

In most of her journal entries after Leslie's death, she idealizes him and the resulting union is not a balanced community of equals, where singularities are respected, but rather

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[5] Antony Alpers (1980, 182) pointed out Leslie's "strong resemblance" to Mansfield and how he was even mistaken for her at a fancy-dress ball (quoted in Mitchell 2014, 37).

a community of fusion with the sacred image of the dead brother. The end-product is a discourse of abnegation and possession that reveals an immanent ontological position, an artificial communication of Mansfield with herself, where alterity disappears: "Each time I take up my pen *you* are with me. You are mine. You are my playfellow, my brother, and we shall range all over our country together" ([1927] 1954, 96; italics in the original).

Mansfield and Leslie's alternative community seems an illusory bond that Mansfield 'calibrated' on his death following religious essentialism. Indeed, the predominant motif is the religious trope of communion that she elaborates in the poem "To L. H. B." (1916) dedicated to her brother, where she elevates him to the position of Christ:

> By the remembered stream my brother stands
> Waiting for me with berries in his hands . . .
> "These are my body. Sister, take and eat." (1923, 55)

Mansfield's use of the *ecce homo* motif connects with Nancy's perception of the body as a cultural product saturated with signs: "our old culture's latest, most worked over, sifted, refined, dismantled, and reconstructed product" (2008, 7). The Christian motto *hoc est enim corpus meum*—reproduced in Mansfield's poem—is the source of formidable anxiety, since, as stated by Nancy, "that *the thing itself* would be there isn't certain," and "[s]ensory certitude, as soon as it is touched, turns into chaos, a storm where all senses run wild. Body is certitude shattered and blown to bits" (5; italics in the original). Ironically, this is exactly what happens to Leslie's body after the accidental explosion. Mansfield participates in Nancy's anxiety, the desire to see, touch, and eat the body of God—her own particular version of God through Leslie. She thus adheres to the sacrificial body, where the effluvia and fluxes sanctify him—in her poem aesthetically inflated with the reference to the berries.

Instead of rejecting the patriotic sentiment that led Leslie to death, Mansfield connects patriotic and religious sacrifice to find solace in her loss, and then channels the resulting substance through her writing. Closely resembling De Quincey's palimpsest of the brain, Mansfield uses Leslie's death to '*make a work*.' Although Mitchell aptly provides evidence to the contrary, Mansfield's reaction to her brother's death has been considered by several critics as "histrionic" owing to what they perceive as the lack of any real attachment between them (2011, 28). Regardless of whether her feelings about Leslie's death were truly genuine, there is evidence of myth-making in her fictional reconstruction of his passing. In a letter to S. S. Koteliansky (19 November 1915), Mansfield quotes Leslie's close friend, James E. Hibbert, from a letter that has not survived. There he stated that Leslie "said over and over—God forgive me for all I have done" and, before he died, he said: "Lift my head, Katy, I can't breathe" ([1903-1917] 1984, 200). As Mitchell argues (2011, 36), there is, however, no evidence that Hibbert was at the scene of the accident, since he was not mentioned in the incident report

and Leslie was instructing a company other than the one he and Hibbert belonged to. However, four years after Leslie's death, Mansfield still uses Leslie's seemingly final words in a letter to her husband John Middleton Murry (11 December 1919), where she concludes: "they seem *mine*" ([1919-1920] 1993, 154). Mitchell's closing words serve to clarify Mansfield's work on her brother's death: "Leslie was never safer as an object of affection than when dead, but he was also never more useful to her as a writer" (2011, 38).

With Leslie, Mansfield *creates* an alternative community of lovers, where the sexual drive is absent and the purity of love is enhanced by the confrontation with death.[6] However, she explores its disruptive potential by suggesting incest: "I wanted J. to embrace me. But as I turned to speak to him or to kiss him I saw my brother lying fast asleep, and I got cold" ([1927] 1954, 95). Hankin clarifies that, since Mansfield's relationship with John Middleton Murry did not fulfil her expectations, Leslie became "a kind of imaginary companion and lover," who gave her emotional stability and independence from Murry, with almost "incestuous overtones" (1983, 112).[7] This incestuous side points at the destabilizing effect of the *inoperative* community of lovers. However, Davidoff highlights its mystical substantiation for siblings: "While incestuous brother-sister relationships evoke horror with the implication of familial and social chaos, they also hold strong fascination," and are seen as standing for "perfect oneness in a somehow purer and spiritual union" (2006, 23). Hence, together with the myth of twin souls, incestuous overtones operate in Mansfield's narrative to mystify sibling intimacy and to suggest the trope of communion.

3. "An Oily Smile": Writing the Body and Triumph over Death

Nancy's theory of the body in *Corpus* sheds light on Mansfield's ambiguity in her communitarian excursion with Leslie. Nancy's perception of the body as eucharist, foreign and saturated with signs (2008, 5, 7) responds to Mansfield's mystical version of her brother. Nancy rejects the Christian discourse on transubstantiation, and proposes an alternative writing, or *corpus*, which he defines as follows: it touches upon rather than signifies; it is marked by *exscription* of the body, which is not substance, flesh or signification, but is inscribed-outside, the text itself being abandoned and left at its limit; it presents the body not as some kind of fullness or filled space, but as an open space where death is not an essence; it moves from a there to an out-there in the right-here; it does not grasp or take in hand but touches something outside, hidden, displaced, and respects alterity in that contact (9-19). Nancy thus presents *corpus* as a fragile, fractal prose, a *clinamen* or a writing that "would get out and see" (53, 55).

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    [6] Her perception of this sibling community is similar to De Quincey's with Elizabeth, when he speaks of the "holy love between two children" illuminated in "the hour of death" ([1845] 1850, 163).
    [7] Incestuous overtones are also suggested in De Quincey, when he kisses his sister's lips and then "slunk like a guilty thing with stealthy steps from the room" ([1845] 1850, 161).

Indeed, this writing requires ontological doubling, which is central to Mansfield's manipulation of Leslie's death.[8] This departure leads to exposition, "[a] body becoming other" (37). The doubling quality of siblings, both in Mansfield and Leslie and in their fictional representations, can, then, be understood, not as a mere receptacle of the trope of communion, but as Mansfield's strategy to reproduce Nancy's *corpus*, to expose herself not only to the death of another (Leslie), but to her own death, which is then projected, exscribed, onto a strange body which is simultaneously familiar. Thus, in Mansfield, De Quincey's palimpsest of the brain is channeled into a writing of the body, where the interplay between life and fiction veers towards an *inoperative* model of community.

Discussing Virginia Woolf, Detloff describes her style as "radial" or "seismographic"— "able to communicate the experience of pain by tracing its effects" (2009, 25-28). Mansfield shares this radial style and, in writing poetic prose, she explores a lyrical realm where only the great moment exists, and which solidifies into "substance" or "a symbol that is illuminated throughout" (Lukács [1920] 2000, 190). Lukács clarifies that "only in lyric poetry do these direct, sudden flashes of the substance become like lost original manuscripts suddenly made legible" (190). My contention is that Mansfield's lyricism allows her to use a symbolism where alterity—in this case the secret of death—is confronted, although not understood, through a potent and un-signified corporeity. This proves that death's secrecy is unspeakable but not incommunicable—i.e., Laura and Laurie in "The Garden Party" (1922). I disagree with Lukács, because symbols in Mansfield are not merely a hint of substance. They are used to write the body, and serve to project the alterity of death, but its final secrecy rejects any substantiation. Maybe the fact that Mansfield produced the hybrid genre of lyrical prose explains that her fiction ultimately fulfills Lukács's expectations about the novel as "abandoned to its immanent meaninglessness" and "seeking and failing to find the essence" ([1920] 2000, 210-211, 217). Mansfield embraces the "opaque, impenetrable incognito" of death (Lukács [1962] 1963, 27) and smiles and triumphs over finitude.[9]

In her sibling stories, corporeity is prevalent and consciously detached from clothing, which represents cultural signification. In "The Wind Blows" (1920) Mansfield projects Leslie's and her own nostalgia for *les temps perdu* in a phantasmagoric scenario where two siblings, Matilda and Bogey,[10] temporarily connect. The description of Matilda's attendance at a music lesson and the walk with her brother to the esplanade on a windy

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[8] Nancy states: "*corpus is never properly me*. It's always an 'object' […] as soon as *I* is extended, it's also delivered to others. Or again, I'm the extension that *I am* by being withdrawn, subtracted, removed, and ob-jected" (2008, 29; italics in the original).

[9] This is not De Quincey's case. In the description of his sister's death, he speaks of "symbols" that are "pathetic of life and the glory of life" ([1845] 1850, 156). Although he longs for a demystified image of his sister, which is "not spiritual, but human" (166), the opposite effect is achieved, as all the symbols that he uses are artificially devised to turn Elizabeth into a mystified being: "heavenly lips," "solemn wind," "marble lips," "frozen eyelids" (159).

[10] Mansfield used the pseudonym Matilda Berry while working for the journal *Signature*, and Bogey was one of the nicknames she used to call Leslie. The autobiographical connection is evident.

day leads to a fantasy of the siblings sailing away and revisiting their lives through memories. When the narrative voice opens the story with "Something dreadful has happened" ([1920] 1981, 106),[11] it appears to confer Mansfield with visionary power as the story was published two days prior to Leslie's death. The imagery used to describe the siblings suggests ontological fusion and complementation, highlighted by their projected image in the mirror: "Bogey's ulster is just like hers"; "they have the same excited eyes and hot lips"; "they stride like one eager person through the town" (109-110). This fusion is completed in "The Garden Party" (1922), where even the names of the siblings, Laura and Laurie, suggest symbolic twinship. The basis for Mansfield's relationship with her brother, therefore, is communal fusion tainted with nostalgic and religious overtones: "Lose myself, lose myself to find you, dearest" ([1927] 1954, 98). An *operative* communitarian drive and religious mystification are thus the predominant notes in Mansfield's initial approach to her dead brother.

In "The Wind Blows"—as will be explored later—the wind signifies an uncontrollable death force. At the beginning of the story, the wind is connected with death through the symbol of the chrysanthemum. When one of the neighbors runs into the garden to pick the chrysanthemums before they are ruined, the wind exposes her corporeity beyond what is acceptable within the cultural taboo, thus suggesting that with death there is no possible substantiation: "Her skirt flies up above her waist; she tries to beat it down, to tuck it between her legs while she stoops, but it is no use—up it flies" ([1920] 1981, 106). As a general rule, hats in Mansfield's fiction represent cultural artificiality. In the story, both siblings "pull off their hats" and, through a vivid corporeal sensation, Matilda experiences death, associated with the wind and the ocean, without the filter of cultural signification: "her hair blows across her mouth, tasting of salt [...] the inside of her mouth tastes wet and cold" (110).

In "The Garden Party" corporeity and the significance of hats are more thoroughly developed. The story exposes bourgeois frivolity, as the Sheridan family is preparing a garden party that is not interrupted in spite of receiving news that their working-class neighbor has died. After the success of the event, Laura, the protagonist daughter of the Sheridan family, is sent to the neighbors' house with a basket of leftovers. She confronts death with her exposure to the corpse, and tries later to share that unique experience with her brother Laurie, but she cannot find the right words. Both siblings wear hats: Laurie's is linked to the social sphere of work—"the office" ([1922] 1981, 248)—and Laura's to feminine delicacy and sophistication—"the big hat with the velvet streamer" (259). Corporeity is highlighted: "Suddenly she couldn't stop herself. She ran at Laurie and gave him a small, quick squeeze [...] he squeezed his sister too and gave her a gentle push" (248). The wind motif also appears in this story. Although the placid atmosphere of the preparation of the party is initially located in a "windless, warm sky without a

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[11] All references from Mansfield's short stories are taken from the Penguin edition, *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1981).

cloud" (245), the reference to "little faint winds […] playing chase, in at the tops of the windows, out at the doors" (249) foreshadows the imminent death of the neighbor and points at Laura's embracing of the alterity of death. An excess of corporeity is projected onto the imagery of flowers ("Nobody ever ordered so many," 249), an excess of "pink lilies" bought by the mother that provokes the following super-sensorial effect in Laura: "the sound was like a little moan. She crouched down as if to warm herself at that blaze of lilies; she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing in her breast" (249).

Right before Laura's exposure to death through her viewing of the corpse, the confrontation of singularities is enhanced in her meeting with the neighbor's sister. Laura is presented as "a stranger," an assertion that seems to go beyond class differentiation. The woman's exposure to her dead brother leads Mansfield to use a synesthesia to describe it—her face "tried an oily smile" (260). This rhetorical device reflects another level of corporeity, where societal signification—represented by Laura's hat—is not possible. Right after this confrontation with death, Laura meets Laurie in a final scene where their corporeity is enhanced: "She took his arm, she pressed up against him"; "Laurie put his arm round her shoulder" (261).

In *Corpus*, Nancy links the body with the mysterious *epopteia*, or complete revelation of a transcendental truth, which is "properly and absolutely a vision of death, an absolute, mysterical desire that cannot be fulfilled without blasting bodies apart" (2008, 45). Nancy points at an aspect which is central to understanding Mansfield's ultimate revision of her sibling intimacy as an example of the *inoperative* community: the impossibility of understanding the secret of death, and her triumph over finitude by finally confronting it without mystification. In his *Gift of Death* ([1992] 1996) Derrida elaborates on the notion of secrecy and death. Using Jan Pato ka's ideas, Derrida makes a distinction between "demonic mystery"—where the sacred as enthusiasm or fervor for fusion leads to the loss of the sense of consciousness and of responsibility, what Pato ka calls "orgiastic irresponsibility"—and the "*secretum*"—which "supposes the constitution of this liberty of the soul as the conscience of a responsible subject" ([1992] 1996, 20). In other words, responsibility and freedom—the gift of death in Derrida's words—are achieved when the demonic or orgiastic fusion is channeled into responsibility. There is an ulterior secret about death that cannot be apprehended— what Derrida calls the "*mysterium tremendum*" (6). This mystery cannot be revealed, but responsibility and, along with it, freedom require triumph over death or, as Derrida would have it, the triumph of life. For Derrida, the exercise of responsibility leaves no choice but "paradox, heresy and secrecy. More serious still, it must always run the risk of conversion and apostasy: there is no responsibility without a dissident and inventive rupture with respect to tradition, authority, orthodoxy, rule or doctrine" (27).

In Mansfield, the demonic or orgiastic mystery of communing with her brother's transfigured body leads to Derrida's *secretum*, and it is her responsibility, which becomes literary responsibility in the face of Leslie's and her own death—"only a mortal can be responsible" (Derrida [1992] 1996, 41). Religious essentialism gives way to

Mansfield's own creed, which is her fiction. She becomes a dissident and inventively disrupts orthodoxy and tradition in her search for an (artistic) ethics of truth, which converts her into a "resistance figure," borrowing Alain Badiou's words. For Badiou, resistance figures do not belong to any social group and break away from dominant opinions, thus suggesting a subtraction of these figures from the community (2009, 9). On numerous occasions Mansfield admitted that her fiction was her religion and, although her first impulse was to channel childhood nostalgia through Leslie's passing, in the face of her own imminent death she underwent what Judith Butler theorizes as subject formation through reappropriated and displaced melancholic rage. In other words, a survival that "requires directing rage against the lost other, defiling the sanctity of the dead for the purpose of life, raging against the dead in order not to join them" (Butler 1997, 192-193). Mansfield's reaction to death shows her survival instinct justified by her responsibility as a writer: "Oh, yes, of course I'm frightened [...] I don't want to find this is real consumption [...] and I shan't have my work written. *That's what matters*" ([1927] 1954, 129; italics in the original). Beyond her initial religious and patriotic transfiguration of Leslie's finite body, she eventually learns the lesson of death: "dying can never be taken, borrowed, transferred, delivered, promised or transmitted [...] [T]herein resides freedom and responsibility" (Derrida [1992] 1996, 44). The certainty that Mansfield was looking for in Leslie's mystified body gives way to heresy and secrecy, which materializes in her fiction and her role as a literary deity who replaces the god-shaped void: "my love of work—my desire to be a better writer—takes the place of religions—it is religion—of people—I create my people: of 'life'—it is Life" ([1927] 1954, 161). In spite of being death-stricken, her survival instinct is used to triumph over the two deaths: Leslie's and her own—"Then why don't I commit suicide? Because I feel I have a duty to perform to the lovely time when we were both alive. I want to write about it, and he wanted me to" (90). Rather than panicking before the *mysterium tremendum*, she does indeed tremble at "what exceeds [her] seeing and [her] knowing" (54).

In "The Wind Blows" the protagonist's trembling is conveniently linked to the image of the wind: "It is only the wind shaking the house, rattling the windows, banging a piece of iron on the roof and making her bed tremble" ([1920] 1981, 106); a tremble that anticipates the ending, where she confronts death directly by touching the wind: "The wind is so strong that they have to fight their way through it, rocking like two old drunkards" (109-110). The moment of confronting death belongs to the unspeakable, although in this story it manages to be communicated when the siblings escape their cultural signification—represented by their projected images on the wall, which they abandon temporarily: "Good-bye, dears; we shall be back soon" (109). Language is useless to express this exposure: "Bogey's voice is breaking"; "The wind carries their voices—away fly the sentences like little narrow ribbons" (110). Exposure to death can only be expressed through direct corporeity, without any signification—as when Matilda tastes the wet, salt water of the ocean

and feels the wind so strongly on her body—and through lyric symbolism—which didactically directs the reader to death, but there is no other signification beyond this, nor any attempt to make a work of death.[12] The story is scattered with imagery that, in showing the effects of a rough wind, points at the violent impact of death, without mystification: "Leaves flutter past the window, up and away; down in the avenue a whole newspaper wags in the air like a lost kite and falls, spiked on a pine tree" (106). The final image of the big black steamer suggests the siblings as subjects-in-process. The lights that magically illuminate the boat making her "look so awfully beautiful and mysterious" (110) point to the nostalgic, saturated vision of Mansfield's childhood and mystical bond with Leslie. However, this mysticism—highlighted by the idea that the boat is not stopped by the wind—is interrupted by the information that it leads to somewhere although the direction is not provided in the original text. The ideal image is engulfed by the repetition of "[t]he wind—the wind" (110), which closes the story. Death is ultimately confronted by Mansfield through her literary responsibility and her *corpus*, where the body is exscribed and death is offered as such through radial imagery.

In "The Garden Party" Laura, who is described as "the artistic one" among the sisters ([1922] 1981, 246), evokes Mansfield's *corpus* with a subtle reference to writing—"the inkpot" highlighted by a sunspot—and how "[s]he could have kissed it" (249). Laura's being confronted by her neighbor's corpse displays Mansfield's ambiguous approach to death. The girl's vision is filtered through her adolescent eyes, so that she cannot help making a work out of it—just like the rest in the room, who think he "looks a picture" (261):

> There lay a young man, fast asleep—sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy [...] happy [...] All is well, said the sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content. (Mansfield [1922] 1981, 261)

The girl tries to come to terms with death through reductive, *operative* images that alleviate the sudden impact of confronting finitude directly: the dead man's mystic dream rather than his unpleasant inert presence as a corpse. Even the dead man's corporeity is presented to cover the dark reality of death with the reference to his blind eyes. She perceives this mystified image of death as a 'marvel' in contrast to the everyday

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[12] This symbolism linked to direct corporeity differs from De Quincey's in the description of his deceased sister (see above).

routine of the neighborhood. It seems that the transcendental moment, filtered through covert religious substantiation, offers the limitation proper to an adolescent girl, as her maturity is questioned through her childish sob.

However, in spite of continuous calibration on death in Mansfield's fiction, "The Garden Party" offers her ultimate—or at least, desired—view on death, firmly accepted as unworkable. No operation can be done on death because there is no way it can be transfigured into an immortal or transmortal truth. Right after this significant confrontation, Laura meets her brother in the closing scene. Prior to this encounter, the story suggests the siblings' liminality,[13] which joins them in their openness to exteriority: "But still one must go everywhere; one must see everything. So through they went" (254). After the confrontation with the neighbor, the expectation in the final scene is that Laura will find solace in Laurie's arms, since both of them were previously able to step outside communal immanence. However, the family—as one of the substances pointed out by Nancy and reflected in the siblings' bond—is not the ultimate solution. Despite the siblings' similar identities, their connection through death is clearly unsuccessful and they end up failing to communicate their confrontation with death beyond corporeal contact.

> "Was it awful?"
> "No," sobbed Laura. "It was simply marvelous. But, Laurie—"She stopped, she looked at her brother. "Isn't life," she stammered, "isn't life." But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood.
> "*Isn't* it, darling?" said Laurie. (Mansfield [1922] 1981, 261; italics in the original)

Being aware of the autobiographical incursions in the story, we realize that this dialogue is actually a monologue that Mansfield is having with herself, while pretending to converse with her dead brother. The neighbor's death is projected onto Leslie/Laurie, who seems to understand because Leslie himself is dead and is supposed to know. However, Laura is unable to explain her confrontation with finitude. The very emphasis on the final negation is a way to show that death cannot be operated on, but simply confronted without substances. Although Laura is unable to escape substantiation—principally religion and family—we have the impression that the understanding between brother and sister ultimately happens intuitively beyond essentialist shaping, accepting the *secretum* that endows Mansfield with literary responsibility.[14] In Mansfield's relationship with Leslie, the trembling before death is clear, as stated in this annotation of her notebook from January 22, 1916:

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[13] Laura and Laurie's liminality is represented by their meeting "at the corner of the lane" (Mansfield [1922] 1981, 261) and their childhood rebellion against the family prohibition to cross the borderline that separated their upper-class world from the poverty-stricken neighborhood.

[14] Christine Darrohn's opinion differs. For her Laurie no longer understands Laura because she has been irrevocably changed by her encounter with the corpse (1998, 521).

> I want to write poetry. I feel always *trembling* on the brink of poetry. The almond tree, the birds, the little wood where you are, flowers you do not see, the open window out of which I lean and dream that you are against my shoulder [...] but especially I want to write a kind of long elegy to you—perhaps not in poetry. No, perhaps in prose. (2002, 33; my italics)

Here Mansfield has performed an act of reoccupation. By transferring the trembling before death at the end of "The Garden Party" to the trembling before her art, she has accommodated Leslie's death to her own through an act of replication reflected in the symbolism of the window as a liminal place connecting the two dead(ly) bodies. Even though Mansfield mentions an elegy, with its nostalgic and mystifying undertones, the reference to lyrical writing and symbolism is key to completing her communitarian enterprise with Leslie through a writing of the body and an ultimately undecipherable secret.

4. CONCLUSION: "OUT INTO THE OPEN"

In her poem "The Butterfly" (November 1918), Mansfield imagined her embracing of death, just like the butterfly that wanted "to go out into the open" ([1927] 1954, 151). The present study has discussed Mansfield's initial construction of Leslie's death by combining the saturated discourses of patriotism and religion. However, she ultimately pursued an ethics of truth, which converts her into a resistance figure. In her communitarian exploration with Leslie, Mansfield goes beyond the mystifying discourses of patriotism and religion. Does she subtract herself from the community as a resistance figure? Does she use Leslie as a tool to create an alternative literary community of one with a dialogical mirage through sibling intimacy? The answer, if any, might be traced in her approach to love. Mansfield seems to follow Nancy's perception in "Shattered Love" that "[l]ove is not a feeling. Rather it is a simultaneous opening and obliging of the self: an opening of the self to something that exceeds it and an obliging of the self to that excess" (1990, quoted in Abbot 2011, 144). If we understand the community of lovers or siblings as envisioned by Nancy and Blanchot, Mansfield's communitarian experiment disrupts organic communities in her perception of love as "the indefinite abundance of all possible loves" (Nancy [1986] 1991, 83). As ahe remarked in a letter to Murry (8 November 1919), her artistic (de)construction of love—sibling, incestuous, pure, vindictive, finite—allows her to make of it her religion (Mansfield [1919-1920] 1993, 80). Unlike Catholics, whose duty is to "a personal deity," hers is "to mankind" (71). She thus proves her communitarian drive and her final triumph over death by looking it directly in the face, rather than through the *operative* symbolism used by De Quincey in his description of Elizabeth. Speaking about the unavoidable presence of death—"the big snail under the leaf, the spot in the childs [*sic*] lung"—Mansfield denounces "WICKED WICKED God" and concludes: "it is more than useless to cry out. Hanging in our little cages on the awful wall over the gulf of eternity we must sing—sing" (37; italics in the original). She manages to open the cage and, singing, she flies away.

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Ghostly Visitations in Contemporary Short Fiction by Women: Fay Weldon, Janice Galloway and Ali Smith

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From the late nineteenth century onwards the genre of the ghost short story has served as a vehicle for the exploration of female concerns. Women's ghost narratives feature heroines haunted by spectral apparitions that give expression to the characters' inner tensions with their assumption of socially sanctioned female roles. This essay reads three stories, by Fay Weldon, Janice Galloway and Ali Smith, to show how the potential of the genre to question the norm and to give shape to personal, intergenerational and historical conflicts continues to be deployed by contemporary women writers. As in the stories of their female predecessors, the effects of the literary ghost's disturbing liminality vary in each of the cases under consideration here. Thus, the apparition in Weldon's "A Good Sound Marriage" (1991) works as a contested mouthpiece of traditional sexual ideology, the oneiric revenant in Galloway's "it was" (1991) is the figuration of unconscious desire, while the *doppelgänger* in Smith's "The Hanging Girl" (1999), despite her spectrality, inhabits a less empty and more amiable world than that of *real* flesh-and-blood people.

Keywords: ghost story; short story; women's writing; Fay Weldon; Janice Galloway; Ali Smith

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Apariciones fantasmales en el relato breve de escritoras contemporáneas: Fay Weldon, Janice Galloway y Ali Smith

Desde finales del siglo XIX el género del relato breve de fantasmas ha servido de medio para la exploración de inquietudes femeninas. Las historias de fantasmas escritas por mujeres están protagonizadas por heroínas rondadas por espectros que encarnan tensiones internas relacionadas con la asunción de roles femeninos impuestos por la sociedad. El presente artículo analiza tres relatos de Fay Weldon, Janice Galloway y Ali Smith con la intención de

demostrar que las escritoras contemporáneas continúan explotando el potencial del género para cuestionar la norma establecida y para articular conflictos personales, intergeneracionales e históricos. Al igual que en los relatos de sus predecesoras, los efectos de la liminalidad inquietante del fantasma literario varían en cada uno de los casos aquí tratados. Así, el espectro en "A Good Sound Marriage" de Weldon (1991) funciona como una portavoz cuestionada de la ideología sexual tradicional, el fantasma onírico en "it was" de Galloway (1991) es la representación del deseo inconsciente, mientras que el *doppelgänger* en "The Hanging Girl" de Smith (1999), a pesar de su espectralidad, habita un mundo menos vacío y más amable que el de las personas *reales* de carne y hueso.

Palabras clave: relatos de fantasmas; relato breve; escritura de mujeres; Fay Weldon; Janice Galloway; Ali Smith

1. Introduction

Since Ellen Moers introduced the notion in her ground-breaking study *Literary Women* ([1976] 1978), "Female Gothic" has been a major object of interest in feminist approaches to literature.[1] Lauren Fitzgerald, among others, has highlighted its importance for second-wave feminist criticism's project of "uncovering the lost tradition of women's literature" ([2004] 2009, 14). A thread that runs through much of the criticism produced in the wake of Moers's work is the idea that Female Gothic, since Ann Radcliffe laid its generic bases at the turn of the eighteenth century, has been a privileged site of women's struggle for a literature of their own. In the initial stages of its development, this struggle was both a question of property (against male authors' attempts to appropriate the Gothic form) and of propriety (against dominant models of womanhood).[2] Proprietary claims were in themselves a breach of female propriety, and rather a successful one, as E. J. Clery argues was the case with the tradition of what she prefers to call "women's Gothic" from Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley: "Gothic literature sees women writers at their most pushy and argumentative" (2004: 3).[3] Juliann Fleenor affirms that "[f]rom the first [the Gothic] has been a 'feminine form'" (1983, 8), while Fredericke van Leeuven moves ahead in time to refer to the work of Djuna Barnes and Carson McCullers as "instances of twentieth-century female Gothic used by women writers to articulate the situation of women in a society that denies them the status of subject" (1982, 39). Susanne Becker focuses, instead, on the reformulation and reinvention of female Gothic conventions and themes in late-twentieth century fiction and film in the conviction, she says, "that one of the secrets of the gothic's persistent success is gender-related: it is so powerful because it is so feminine" (1999, 2).

Writing in 1999, Becker underlines the continued vitality of the Gothic in the 1990s, precisely the decade in which each of the three stories under discussion in this paper were published. In her seminal essay, Moers puts forth the view that "to give *visual* form to the fear of self, to hold anxiety up to the Gothic mirror of the imagination, may well be more common in the writings of women than of men" ([1976] 1978, 107; italics in the original). Nickianne Moody specifically relates this imaginative

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[2] Fitzgerald connects Moers's definition of Female Gothic to her overall concern with women's possession of their own literary tradition ([2004] 2009, 17). Kate Ferguson Ellis states that "the earliest male Gothicists undertook to wrest the form from the female hands in which they saw it too firmly grasped" (2000, 257).

[3] For a criticism of female Gothic as the foundation of the ideology of "victim feminism" and "professional femininity" see Hoeveler (1998). Hoeveler argues that in Gothic novels from Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788) to Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853) heroines employ an "arsenal of passive-aggressive strategies" that lead, eventually, to their moral and financial triumph, and to the winning "their readers' sympathies through conforming to the carefully delineated construction of innocent victim, what [she calls] the professionalization or cultivated pose of femininity" (1998, 14).

visualisation of female fears and anxieties to a subtype of Gothic fiction, the ghost short story, which as "an experimental as well as a formulaic narrative framework" provides a suitable vehicle for the expression of women's conflictual relationship with and contestation of the patriarchal norm (1996, 77). From the late nineteenth century onwards, Moody continues, "the ghost story emerges as a form which has been used consistently to pursue particular public and private debates concerning women's experience" (78).[4] What triggers the female and, implicitly or explicitly, feminist questioning of and resistance to patriarchal hierarchies and gender roles is the very defining feature of the ghost story as a genre: namely, the experience of "a haunting," which for Moody is "a return of the dead or the past in some manner" (77).[5] More frequently and systematically than in ghost stories by male writers, haunting visitations in women's tales have a profound effect upon issues mostly attached to the domestic sphere: marriage, divorce, patriarchal oppression, gender violence, abuse, family ties, mother-daughter relationships, childbearing, housework, sex, desire, etc. This accounts for the fact that the action in women's ghost stories often takes place in or around the realm of the home.[6] The apparition of the literary ghost in the familial and domestic realm triggers a critique of patriarchal ideology and bourgeois ethics that is best conveyed by the short story. Gender and genre are here intimately combined for, as Moody states, "the ghost story holds a special relevance for women, as the family is foregrounded and women, as the keepers of secrets, are especially empowered—*a narrative which questions and establishes mystery around a curious event being ideally suited for the short story form*" (1996, 70; my italics). Three stories, by Fay Weldon, Janice Galloway and Ali Smith, illustrate how ghostly visitations retain their potential as a narrative strategy in contemporary short fiction by women. The ghost in Weldon's "A Good Sound Marriage" (1991), an alienating binding force, stands in stark contrast

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[4] Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert suggest in passing that women's conspicuously remarkable production of ghost stories (particularly at the turn of the nineteenth century) could be attributed to either material reasons, to their need to earn a living (1991, xiv), or to more psycho-social causes as "[p]erhaps women, being on the margins of society [...] were especially impelled to write about the margins of the visible, for the ghost story [...] deals with power and thus might be expected to appeal to those who felt the absence of self-determination in their own lives" (1986, xiii). In an argument partly advanced in her book *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Short Story* (1977), Julia Briggs (2012) connects women's interest in both ghost stories and Gothic narratives to their material needs, to their involvement in spiritualist movements and to "some special affinity with freer and more imaginative modes of expression" (2012, 182-183). Briggs adds: "A taste for romance or a sensitivity to mood and atmosphere may also have contributed, and the ghost story may have offered an imaginative access to some kinds of spiritual power" (183).

[5] Diana Wallace (2009) argues that the Gothic element of the ghostly or the spectral has been appropriated by feminist theory and criticism as a recurrent and powerful discursive trope.

[6] Drawing on Moody, Frances Jane P. Abao states that in the works of male writers of, specifically, the Victorian and Edwardian periods, such as Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and M. R. James, ghosts "lead them [men] to question their sanity or their beliefs in rationality and science," rather than triggering their discontent with "the restrictions imposed on them by society" (2013, 91). Susanne Becker states, perhaps too categorically, that, "after all, gothic horror is domestic horror, family horror, and addressed precisely these obvious 'gendered' problems of everyday life" (1999, 4).

to the potentially liberating apparition in Smith's "The Hanging Girl" (1999), with the oneiric visitation in Galloway's "it was" (1991) lying somewhere in between in its representation of that which gives shape to the protagonist's somewhat disturbing emotional attachment in early childhood. It is the general aim of this paper to show how undead spectral figures continue to be an index of undying female conflicts and anxieties in contemporary short fiction by women.

2. The Alienating Ghost of Tradition: Fay Weldon's "A Good Sound Marriage"

Written by a controversial feminist, at times comic and relatively popular author, Fay Weldon's "A Good Sound Marriage" ([1991] 1995) exhibits many of the generic characteristics attributed to ghost stories by women: the home is "[t]he principal setting," the "main theme is communication, more frequently between family members than strangers," and the "common narrative structure is the experience of a woman in her new home which makes her re-evaluate her marriage or family life" (Moody 1996, 78-79). This story is part of the section "From the Other Side" of the collection *Wicked Women* (1995), which includes just one other piece, "Through a Dustbin, Darkly" (1992). The latter title is a parody of *In a Glass, Darkly* (1872), the famous collection by Sheridan Le Fanu which contributed a great deal to setting the standard of the ghost story as a genre and which included his most popular piece, "Carmilla," in itself a powerful statement on female sexuality and gender. The predicament of Philly, the female protagonist of "Through a Dustbin, Darkly," is similar to that of Carrie, the central character in "A Good Sound Marriage": both are young and have married middle-aged widowers and are now pregnant, live in an oppressive home and are expected to comply with gender prescriptions and thus be "simple and sweet and fertile; up to [their] elbows in soap suds," as Philly's husband's lover says (Weldon [1992] 1995, 192). There are major differences, however, between the two stories, the most important being that there is no ghostly apparition properly speaking in "Through a Dustbin, Darkly," while the action in "A Good Sound Marriage" develops as a conversation between Carrie and the spirit of her dead grandmother, Christabel. Though in "Through a Dustbin, Darkly" there are no supernatural elements that could have a bearing upon married life, it nevertheless reads like a typically Weldonian "uproarious feminist revenge comedy" (Dowling 1998, 14). Despite there being no ghost as such, Philly finally succeeds in breaking free from her oppression encouraged by the memory of her husband's late wife, with whom she establishes some sort of sisterly bond across time.[7] There is, though, no hint of any kind of potentially liberating

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[7] Philly's husband, Basil, is a famous painter whose dead wife, Serena, had failed to give him a child. Serena, also a painter, left the house after finding her husband in bed with Ruthy Franklyn, a gallery owner. After an affair with a frame-maker who committed suicide, Serena presumably went insane, broke into Basil's house, burned all her paintings, but failed to burn Basil's because Ruthy stopped her just in time. She spent her last

sisterly bond in "A Good Sound Marriage," only a passing reference to a friend of the protagonist. What we find instead is a rather gentrified version of the ghostly apparition conjured up by the female protagonist's weeping. As an instructing spirit, the ghost of Christabel tries hard to talk her granddaughter out of her grief and to be content with what she has: namely, an unhappy marriage.

"A Good Sound Marriage" is exemplary of the type of ghost story carried by women's magazines from the post-war period onwards, such as *Ladies Home Journal*, where the Weldon story was first published in October 1991 (*Internet Speculative Fiction Database*).[8] As Moody points out, "[t]he telling of tales and family histories is recognisable as an exploration of intergenerational communication and experience, which explains the regularity of ghost stories in women's magazines" (1996, 85). Carrie complains to the ghost of her grandmother that she feels trapped in her marriage to Clive, who on the evening of the story had left her in the company of his two unfriendly teenage sons to go to a party. She is pregnant, feels lonely and misses her mother, Kate, even though they are not on speaking terms after her decision to marry Clive. Kate had also opposed Carrie's decision to become a costume designer instead of doing something related to sport because, as Carrie tells her grandmother, "she wanted a sporty, woolly-hat sort of daughter with no soul" (Weldon [1991] 1995, 198). Kate had divorced Carrie's father, Jim, to marry another man, Jonathan, much to her own mother's dismay. Hence, rather than seeking out the presence of her modern, progressive, assertive absent mother to help her break free from her oppression, Carrie's grief invokes the ghost of her old-fashioned, conventional grandmother, long dead: "you cried so long and hard, you forced me out of my grave to rise and speak to you myself," Christabel's phantom tells Carrie (197). The story's title is, precisely, the refrain that punctuates ghostly Christabel's attempt to make her granddaughter stop regretting her marriage to Clive and accept the traditional division of gender roles and what it entails. From the ghost's perspective, Carrie's expression of grief is an undesirable, unbecoming attitude in a wife and soon-to-be mother: "I was careful not to let David, […] your grandfather, know that I was crying, or why, because some things, even in a good, sound marriage, are better kept private. Your generation does too much sharing. To share grief is to double

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days in the alley at the back of the house, doing heroin and selling her body till "[s]he fell headfirst into a dustbin from whence she was carted off to the booby hatch, where she died" (Weldon [1992] 1995, 184). Basil's circle of indistinguishable and undistinguished admirers insults the memory of Serena repeatedly. The story hinges on Philly's transformation of the memory of the despised woman into an enabling force, such that she eventually identifies with her unfortunate predecessor and succeeds in avenging their shared oppression. Philly sets the house, impregnated as it is with female suffering, on fire while crying "Okay, Serena?' […] 'Okay now?" (Weldon [1992] 1995, 194). Sisterhood as liberating bond is an important theme in Fay Weldon. Thus, a novel such as *Female Friends* (1975), Elaine Tuttle Hansen argues, "considers […] the possibility of enabling connections to same-sex peers rather than to mother, child, or heterosexual mate" (1997, 194).

    8 "A Good Sound Marriage" was also anthologised in *The Mammoth Book of 20th Century Ghost Stories*, edited by Peter Heining (1998). Apart from *The Times* or *The Observer*, Fay Weldon often chose women's magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Options* as outlets for her short fiction. "Through a Dustbin, Darkly," for instance, first appeared in *Options* in 1992.

grief, not to halve it" (196). Carrie must, then, bear her grief alone as Christabel did in her day—"I felt like you do now at least once a week, but on average I reckon twice a week for forty-five years" (199)—since husbands have enough worries of their own—exemplified by David's "worrying because when he combed his hair that morning there was more hair left on his comb than on his head" (197). Christabel is thus the mouthpiece of traditional sexual ideology that dictates self-denial and responsibility to women, while supporting *in practice* childish, whimsical attitudes in men: "Men are given to wishful thinking, it's true […] Your grandfather believed our troubles would be solved when his uncle died and left him his fortune […] I believed with him, though two minutes' thought would have told me the prospect of sudden riches was highly unlikely. We had a good, strong marriage" (198). The story bears witness to the continuity of patriarchal models into the present of the narrative, models that Christabel wants to enforce as desirable, universal, natural and eternal, which is the way ideology works.[9] Once Carrie states her plan to divorce Clive, the spectral mouthpiece of patriarchal ideology disappears, but not before pouring out her frustration. The story ends thus:

> "You're not listening to what I'm saying," said the apparition. "I suppose you will have to start from the beginning and work it all out for yourself, like everyone else. I'm wasting my time. *I am your future as well as your past*, and available for inspection, but try telling any young woman that. They would rather weep, and shriek, and squirm in the present." And she vanished, the semi-circle outline of her meagre breasts fading last, and Carrie went back to sleep, or had never woken up. (Weldon [1991] 1995, 203-204; my italics)

Unlike the imposing yet unsubstantial presence of Christabel, Carrie's mother is more solidly real and alive as a model, albeit an absent one. In her rendering of a century-long intergenerational conflict concerning gender roles, Weldon not only expands the potential of the form for temporal compression,[10] but could also be said to condense the different responses to motherhood prevalent in each of the three periods into which Elaine Tuttle Hansen distributes the Weldonian corpus: (1) the 1970s, repudiation—in this case, Christabel's past relationship with her mother, Kate; (2) the 1980s, recuperation—hinted at in Carrie's desire to have her mother back by her side; (3) and the 1990s, confusion, impasse—Carrie's current state (1997, 184-185). Taking a broader perspective, we could go as far as to say that, on the basis of the radical ambiguity of the status of the ghost, "A Good Sound Marriage" encompasses two different literary movements: like Carrie, the reader does not know, nor can he/

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[9] In Terry Eagleton's words, "[i]deologies are commonly felt to be both *naturalising* and *universalising*. By a set of complex discursive devices, they project what are in fact partisan, controversial, historically specific values as true of all times and all places, and so as natural, inevitable and unchangeable" (1994, 9; italics in original).

[10] "[T]he ghost story allows the experience of a lifetime to be contained within the short story" (Moody 1996, 88).

she decide, whether Christabel's ghost is a dream or mental projection—more in tune with modernist subjective poetics—or real—part of the ontological expansion that postmodernism operates, according to Brian McHale's powerful thesis (1987). The unequivocal beginning of the story, "Carrie cried herself to sleep, and her grandmother appeared to her in a dream and spoke to her" (Weldon [1991] 1995, 195), is qualified not only by the ending of the story quoted above, but by other passages in the text like "[s]he [Carrie] sat up abruptly in bed and the apparition, instead of vanishing, as Carrie had rather hoped it would, sat down in the wicker chair as if to keep things in balance" (198). Whether imaginary or real, modernist or postmodernist, Weldon's revenant is a conspicuous embodiment of the gender values of the past which it is the task of present-day women to exorcise. In the stories by Galloway and Smith considered later in this essay, the past likewise returns in the shape of a ghost, but its message is neither as obvious (unconscious desire in Galloway's "it was"), nor as unacceptable (suppressed emancipatory forces in Smith's "The Hanging Girl") as here.

3. The Uncanny Ghost of Desire: Janice Galloway's "it was"

To include Scottish author Janice Galloway in a discussion of ghost fiction by contemporary women writers may seem rather odd if one takes into account the virtual absence of spectral figures in her short stories. Though the label Gothic is often attached to her work on account of its scatological, visceral, carnal, gruesome, dark and, even, monstrous elements (Sage 2011, 63-68), the fact is that seldom do we come across ghostly apparitions in her stories. To the best of my knowledge, there are just two clear instances of spectrality in Galloway's short fiction, both from her first collection *Blood* (1991): namely, "Scenes from the Life No. 27: Living In" and "it was." As is the case of the other four pieces of the "Scenes from the Life" series, "No. 27: Living In" reads like a dramatic script, a dumb show in this case. It tells the story of a day in the life of a neat and handsome man, Tony, rendered through a series of stage directions organised in three acts: Tony wakes up, gets ready for work and leaves (Act I), the house is left empty, with no human presence, just sounds coming from the street of an unnamed city (Act II), and finally Tony returns home, relaxes after "a hard day" (Galloway [1991b] 2009, 120), goes to bed and falls asleep. While he is asleep, an unnamed naked woman gets up from the bed where he is lying, walks "soundlessly" (122) to the mirror, begins to touch her body and ends up masturbating while she stares fixedly at the specular "white contours of her body curving out of the darkness" (123). The last stage direction, a "Note to the ACTRESS," ends thus: *"The audience must never be sure whether she is substantial or not"* (123). If 'substantial,' that is, a real woman, then we could interpret the story as another example of the lack of communication between couples, which is a recurrent theme in Galloway's stories—for instance, "Need for Restraint" in *Blood* (1991) or "peeping tom" in *Where You Find It* (1996). If not 'substantial', she could be taken as a figuration of woman as an oneiric projection of

man's desire, a modern version of Adam's dream in line with the traditional polarity of ethereal/carnal which denies women the status of full human subjectivity. In either case, the story underscores, maybe even denounces, woman's social invisibility.

As in the case of "A Good Sound Marriage" and, most likely, of "Scenes from the Life No. 27: Living In," the spectral figure in Galloway's "it was"—her literary debut— haunts the realm of the dream. Though there is really no textual evidence to prove this, we can safely rely on the author's own account of the genesis of the story, which dispels all doubts. Interviewed by *The Short Review* in 2010, Galloway stated: "The impulse [to write the story] arrived following a very vivid and disturbing dream which I chose to write out, then rewrite and rewrite till I got the texture of dreaming right. It was called *it was*." "it was" is, thus, the author's much-revised fictional rendition of her own oneiric experience, "till I got the texture of dreaming right," as she insists. Because of its stylistic density and opacity, its narrative discontinuity and fragmentariness, and its formal and typographical experimentation, Galloway's prose is more demanding than Weldon's, though the latter only seems simple on the surface. The indeterminacy of the "it" and the truncated title sentence, "it was," are initial indices of a lack, of the failure of language to trap reality in a net of signifiers which is full of holes, such that the story may be read as staging the effects of what Jacques Lacan called the Real, as was done by Josiane Paccaud-Huguet, who goes straight to the point:

> The absurdist fantasy of "it was" should be read as an attempt, both in the language and in the representation, to give shape to that which exceeds symbolisation, i.e., the Lacanian Real that by definition recedes into formlessness as soon as it is "named"—hence the textual resistance, the blanks and fractures in the text […] [T]he narrator sets herself the task of re-opening the cracks and digging out "it," a buried face revived from the dead […] The figure raised from the dead, therefore, is literally the object of its creator's desire […] What the fantasy represents is that the existence of 'it' is authored by narrative desire—a desire for mastery/authority over a lost object that eludes one's grasp in indefinite metonymy. (2004, 66-67)

In the story, an unnamed woman or girl—though if girl, an older girl since "she was too old for this kind of thing [kneeling on grass in a public space]," (Galloway [1991] 2009, 33)—finds herself "toward evening" standing on "the grass verge" (32).[11] She appears to be in the midst of what seems a suburban space, just looking around, touching plants, smelling flowers till it gets "blue-dark" and "then the glitter of it caught her eye," a phrase repeated, twice like an echo (33). She found out that this glittering "it" was a face, so she proceeds to dig out the rest of the body, which happens to be her deceased Uncle George, a kind, smiling, bald little man who invites her home "*for a cup of tea*" and "*a heat*" (34-35). Her encounter with this ghost, who "had no awareness that he was dead and she would not let him know" (35), triggers childhood

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[11] Paccaud-Huguet does not fail to stress the spatio-temporal liminality of the action (2004, 60).

memories permeated with strong and ambiguous tactile sensations, particularly attached to the touch of the man's stubbly face, and supplemented by her own infant vocal and facial reactions:

> The still lamplight outlined his bald head and traced the grey nightcolour of his cheek where it moved to prepare another sentence of encouragement for her to come. *It was a rough cheek, hairily whitened with stubble that had alternately fascinated and horrified her as a child*; *she felt its jaggy trail scratch a skirl of wild shrieking from an infant mouth*, *her eyes stretched golly-wide in excitement*. Too much excitement for *the wean*. (Galloway [1991] 2009, 35; my italics except '*the wean*', presumably the words spoken by her uncle)

The sensual, sexual overtones of this passage lead us into the complex sphere of infantile sexuality theorised by Freud in, among other places, *Three Contributions of the Theory of Sex* (1903). Though this is not the place to go into much detail about the ways psychoanalysis approaches child sexuality, we may recall Freud's stress on its fragmentary nature, on the fact that children derive pleasure from the excitation of specific bodily zones. "The sexual aim of the infantile impulse consists in the production of gratification through the proper excitation of this or that selected erogenous zone," Freud writes at the beginning of the section titled "*The Infantile Sexual Aim*," of his second essay, singling out "the lip-zone" as the primary erotic area because of its connection to the satisfaction derived from nourishment (Freud [1903] 1995b, 556). In view of the infant's strong sensual impressions, and of Galloway's insistence that the story is the relation of a dream (narrated in the third person, as is frequent in Freud's work), the thesis that the story gives shape to the experience of the Lacanian Real can be further developed.

The ghost plays a central role in the experience of the Real according to what Lacan says in session 5 of *Seminar XI* on the four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. There Lacan develops his notion of the "*encounter with the real*" as an encounter with what is "*unassimilable*" ([1964] 1998, 53, 55), with what cannot be symbolised, trapped by "the insistence of the signs," that is, by language (53-54). The subject's desire, Lacan further argues, "manifests itself in the dream" and "[i]t is only in the dream"—he leaves little place for doubt—"that this truly unique encounter can occur" (59). The girl's (unconscious) desire articulated in Galloway's text finds its origin in the repressed erotic gratification attached to fragmentary bodily parts, and the traumatic real at the core of the dream exerts its pressure in the guise of the ghost.[12] For, in Lacan's view, the ghost is a "screen" produced by the dream "that shows us that *it* [the Real] is still there behind" ([1964] 1998, 55; my italics).[13]

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[12] As Lacan argues elsewhere, "it is precisely because desire is articulated that it is not articulable" ([1966] 2006, 681).

[13] Later on in the same session of *Seminar IX*, Lacan speaks about "[t]he place of the real, which stretches from the trauma to the phantasy—in so far as the phantasy is never anything more than the screen that conceals something quite primary, something determinant in the function of repetition" ([1964] 1998, 60).

The unsymbolisable, unassimilable *it* (the Real) in the story acquires the ghostly semblance of a *he*: "it was" becomes, towards the end of the story, "he was," the transgenerational ghost of Uncle George (Galloway [1991] 2009, 35). Furthermore, Paccaud-Huguet's insightful observation that "Uncle George's ghost will live as long as she wills it" (2004, 60), linking the ghost to the girl's desire, could be interpreted within the framework of Freud's dream theory, specifically by way of contrast with the guilty father's dream of his deceased son's protest "*Father, don't you see that I am burning?*" ([1899] 1995a, 436), or the guilty son's dream in which he sees his dead father alive and, Freud reports, "*conversing with him as usual, but* (and this was the remarkable thing) *he had nevertheless died, though he did not know it*" (380). Galloway's girl's dream is about an uncle who does not know he is dead, yet rather than the guilt felt by the son in Freud due to the relief he feels about his father's death, the girl wishes to prolong the existence of her uncle's ghost, being as it is both an object of her desire and a source of pleasure beyond its pacifying limit, a pleasure that "becomes pain, and this 'painful pleasure' is what Lacan calls *jouissance*" (Evans 1996, 93). The *jouissance* experienced in her early attachment to her uncle (fascination, horror, scratchiness, shrieking, excitement) is transposed (*displaced* in the terminology of dream theory) retroactively, as it were, to her tactile experience of the vegetable world in the dream. The feel of the uncle's 'stubble' (one should not miss the vegetal, agrarian, horticultural connotations of the word *stubble*) is reflected in the grass of the verge bordering the tarmac, or the hedge around the houses nearby, from which she derives tactile impressions that are painfully pleasurable: "she knelt to feel the cling of the cool blades wrap the bare skin of her knees, exposed between long socks and dark grey skirt. Her eyes closed, near to weeping with the pleasure of it," or, "[she] found herself standing at the now-grey privet hedge of one of the smarter pebble-dashes on the corner, her hands resting on the stubby hardness of cropped branches […] Gradually aware of their dull ache, she lifted her palms" (Galloway [1991] 2009, 33). Moreover, the uncanny mixture of the uncle as protective avuncular figure and horrifying menacing presence is somewhat advanced by the description of space itself early in the story, the at once familiar and unfamiliar domestic realm inhabited by old people sitting on sofas with floral patterns which likewise cause uncomfortable tactile impressions: "[o]lder couples […] sitting in the *scratchy roses* of their ancient settees inside watching slot telly […] She wasn't sure if she knew this place or not. *Something was homely about it*, something that though not kent [known] was not strange." (32; my italics).[14] The terrifying underside of the uncle's dear memory, however, has nothing to do with traumatic adult obscenity, but, rather, with the girl's earliest affections permeated by disturbing sexuality which, as Freud showed us, is a universal experience.

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[14] A slot telly is a coin-operated TV set.

4. The Liberating Ghost of Love: Ali Smith's "The Hanging Girl"

Ghosts, apparitions, spectres and strange presences figure largely in Ali Smith's fiction. On account of this, the label "Scottish Gothic" is attached to her work more often than to Janice Galloway's (Germanà and Hornton 2013, 3). Agnieszka Sienkiewicz-Charlish indeed chooses Smith's "The Hanging Girl"—from *Other Stories and other stories* (1999)—as an example of the continuity of the Scottish Gothic tradition and its preoccupation with national identity: "within contemporary Scottish Literature one can also find a number of texts that use the motif of the double as a way of articulating what is absent: a unified identity of the Scottish nation" (2011, 80). Though she does not explore the ways in which "The Hanging Girl" articulates nationalist concerns, Sienkiewicz-Charlish does relate the story to the recurrent motif of the double in Scottish literature. Indeed, the ghost that haunts the main character in the story is not the intergenerational oneiric familial revenant found in Weldon's and Galloway's pieces, but, rather, belongs to the *doppelgänger* or *doppel*hanging type. Through this ghostly visitation, Smith's story stages a critique of contemporary society and, so, may be said to address the issue of national identity, if at all, only obliquely.

"The Hanging Girl" is divided into nine sections that consistently alternate first-person and third-person narrative, beginning with a sharp one-sentence paragraph: "They're going to hang me" (Smith 1999, 15). A connection is therefore established already at the narratological level between the hanging girl who narrates the first section and Pauline, the I-narrator of the remaining sections in first-person voice. The "I" is thus split, doubled in the same way that the role of protagonist is divided between Pauline, the haunted girl, and the unnamed hanging girl of the title who plays the role of the haunting revenant.

Stephen M. Levin's analysis of the pervasiveness of the spectral in Smith's work draws attention to her "shifts in point of view" as a recurrent element that registers "the intrusion of a spectral presence by breaking the continuity of narrative form" (2013, 38). Spectrality in Smith is persistently and consistently used to give shape to that which is repressed in the lifeless world of bourgeois routine, and which returns bearing the promise of healthier interhuman bonds. "[T]he spectre," Levin writes, "intrudes upon the tradition-steeped living, creating significant struggles that nonetheless hold the potential to restore life to the living" (2013, 38). Ghosts, therefore, undermine the alienating solidity of a *status quo* whose preservation, we are made to understand, is undesirable.[15] Revealingly, the spectre's reinvigorating potential is akin to that of the short story as a literary genre, for Smith conceives "the story form as a force and source of life" (2009). Furthermore, for Smith, the short story, like a ghost, always remains alive, goes on living after the end: "An end, when it comes, should always send you back to the beginning, a good short story, like any real art, demands revisitation. A

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[15] In this, Smith resembles Muriel Spark, another outstanding figure of the Scottish Gothic tradition whose work is permeated with elements of the spectral and the fantastic. See Germanà and Hornton (2013) and Gardiner (2010).

good short story is lifelong" (2009). "The Hanging Girl" does indeed prompt this revisitation, and at the structural level too as the end of the story sends us literally back to the beginning: "God, though, what a beautiful day," Pauline's last words at the story's close after her fall from a high place, are an echo of the unnamed hanging girl's initial comment, "What a day, a beautiful spring day" (Smith 1999, 35, 15). The identification between Pauline and the girl's ghost is thus reinforced.

The story's revitalising thrust is concomitant to its indictment of the banalisation and insensitivity to human suffering in globalised contemporary society. Crucial in this connection is the fact that there is a most serious candidate for the historical counterpart of the anonymous hanging girl in Smith's story: Masha Bruskina, an active member of the Minsk Resistance against the Nazis, hanged by the German authorities in October 1941. As Tracy Maylath points out, "[l]ike the hanging girl in the story, [Masha] is told she is being made an example of, she wears a placard in two languages (Russian and German) proclaiming that she is a partisan […] There are photographs of the real hanging. In the story, the hangings are being filmed" (2014, n.p.). According to the website *Capital Punishment U. K.* (Clark 2015) the hangings (Bruskina was hanged with two other of her fellow-members of the underground cell) were actually "meticulously filmed," though no footage seems to have reached us. The fictional girl about to be hanged explains in a casual tone: "A man is pulling pointed legs out from beneath a camera. I don't know what type of camera it is. It's a film camera. This will be filmed. People have sat down on the chairs to watch. Something is going to start soon. A man just got up and gave his chair to a lady" (Smith 1999, 15-16). The murderous act, which is presented as a wartime public show attended by people and filmed by its barbaric perpetrators, is gradually transmuted into a farcical TV performance, a show called *This Is My Death* hosted by the girl: "thank you thank you ladiesandgentlemen I'm a little hoarse forgive me my throat's a little tight for it today but a very warm welcome to the show I'm your (g)host for this evening morning afternoon evening morning afternoon" (Smith 1999, 16). The story establishes a historical connection between the destructive advance of the Nazi army in the eastern front (Belarus, in this case) and the progress of late capitalism, in which a mortifying and unstoppable process of production ("evening morning afternoon evening morning afternoon") transforms everything, even the most painful experiences, into Baudrillardian simulacra ready for consumers. Two death-dealing powers are, therefore, identified across historical time: the Nazi army and the derealising, commodifying logic of late capitalism as theorised by, among others, Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard (Bertens 1996).

Monica Germanà and Emily Hornton underscore Ali Smith's "ambivalence towards the simulacral order of postmodern culture" (2013, 5). Indeed, "The Hanging Girl" is a perfect example of Smith's ambivalence concerning ghostly simulacra as both alienating—swallowed by a stultified and cynical TV audience of consumers impervious to human suffering—and liberating—a spectre from the past as the bearer of, as Levin points out following Derrida, "suppressed, historical agencies" (2013, 36), which elicits

an emancipatory response in those ready to acknowledge its presence, Pauline in this case. Pauline, a name that connects the character's attitude in the story to St Paul and his doctrine of global Christian love against oppressive power, is a young suburban wife who designs artificial flavours for a company making mint sweets and who experiences a painful awakening after a night in which she and her partner, Mike, have friends over to celebrate the stupid, petty-bourgeois novelty of their "new polished wood floor" (Smith 1999, 21). After dinner, she and her friends react in the most scornful and inhumane manner conceivable to the casual sight of universal human suffering and death on TV:

> Someone had left the television on in the adjoining room, a programme where some elderly people were talking about their lives, and every so often, I remember, there would be film of mounds of dead bodies from all over the world over the century, over the lifetimes of the old people. The thing I remember is that every time any of us caught sight of these dead bodies in the other room we would end up destroyed, in helpless laughter. (Smith 1999, 21)

Prompted by Mike's reference to an article in the Sunday paper (another mass medium) on the recorded last words of pilots about to crash, they begin a game of "making up people's famous last words" (21) which Pauline wins by acclamation by cracking a joke about helpless victims on TV: "There were people lining up in black and white on television, about to be shot or *hung*. I pretended to be one of them. I said: I really wish this was just a game of famous last wo--. I got the biggest laugh. We were laughing our heads off" (22; my italics). Pauline's crudely sardonic comment prompts the visitation of the ghost of the hanging girl, the first time being just a hint of what later will become a full-fledged haunting presence: "The next was the first day I had an inkling that something might actually be wrong" (22). Pauline visits a doctor complaining about paranoid delusions and the doctor, at her request, prescribes antibiotics for her "unspecific aches" (18) and refers her to a counsellor for a professional opinion on her delusions. Three months pass before her meeting with the counsellor, by which time the apparition has acquired a more or less definite shape: "It's a woman, […] a woman or a girl, I can't tell which […] I'm pretty sure she's here now" (19). Disappointed with the counsellor's absolute disregard for her symptoms, with her standard conclusion that her delusions are infantile in origin, and her only concern being with organising their schedule of future appointments, Pauline gives up therapy a week later after passing by the counsellor's office to cancel all her appointments. Outside the building, she starts to address the girl in the street in order to discover the latter's intentions: "What do you want from me[?]" (23). She then decides to enter a church and stops before a carving of St Thomas, the apostle who demanded evidence of the truth of Christ's return after death, the Resurrection being the epitome of the ghostly message of the triumph of love as the saving power, which reduplicates *in nuce* the story's moral. Afterwards, Pauline plays around with the echo of her own voice, which is an aural prefiguration of her visual redoubling. She leaves the church, buys

some things in a shop and, on coming out, the ghost comes finally into full view: "she saw the girl hanging from a lamppost. She watched her, cut down, fall through the air and crumple on the ground […] She draped the hanged girl's arms round her shoulders, hoisted her on to her back" and takes her home (24-25).

Pauline spends her days in the company of the girl, who takes every opportunity to hang herself. She is nameless and speechless, yet capable of transmitting a revivifying moral message through her acts and expressions. For instance, she can discriminate fact from fiction and react accordingly, unlike the living who populate the story, for whom real death and real suffering are laughable spectacles: "She has an endless appetite for television […] She particularly seems to love old musicals. She watched the whole of *Oliver!* and I could tell, she was moved, especially when Nancy gets killed" (25), although the girl cannot bear to see real suffering and true destruction on screen—"She becomes quite agitated if anything serious is on […] [A] documentary film of some Canadian loggers taking chainsaws to trees […] [S]he didn't want to see it and I will not have her suffer" (26). The distress and anguish the hanging girl feels at the sight of trees being cut down in Canada also extends to humans whose life-course no destructive power should ever cut short. When Pauline tries to comfort her saying "that it is the same for everyone; every one of us falling through air with one end of the rope attached to our birthdates till the rope pulls tight," the hanging girl's mute reply is that "[s]ome people are pushed. Some people aren't given enough rope" (27).

Here, and elsewhere, Smith exhibits an environmental sensitivity that complements or, perhaps even qualifies, her postmodernist poetics.[16] Connected with this is the hanging girl's lack of interest in language, in words, and her contrasting responsiveness to the immediacy of sounds and, particularly, of natural images. She enjoys music and, Pauline tells us, "[w]e have a book of photographs of wild flowers […] [and s]he is always signalling to me to find pictures of the small pink ones, field bindweed, and the small blue ones, forget-me-not," yet "looks bored" when "I show her words in the paper and try to explain them" (26). Language is under suspicion as a totalising tool: it is too abstract, too detached from the reality it is presumed capable of representing, yet cannot help but distort and falsify. Thus, words themselves can multiply, double, split into different meanings, a limitation which Pauline parodies by playing with the disparate acceptations of the word "hang" themselves (31-32). Discourses of power and the roles and categories they enforce are debunked. Pauline neglects her domestic, professional and social duties and commitments, and rejects every explanation in support of the ghost's non-existence. The spectral presence of the hanging girl does not have anything to do with either "childhood" (20) or "displaced guilt" (29), Pauline contends, consciously exposing the lies that legitimate the power/knowledge of the mental health expert. The real world and the real people around her are discredited and found to be worthy of blame. Her partner's and her friends' bewilderment concerning

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[16]See Sánchez García (2012) and Kostkowska (2013).

her stubbornness gives way to some obscene reactions. Thus, for instance, Mike, after asking Pauline if the hanging girl is pretty, gets an erection calling to mind the beautiful girls in an American sitcom and thinking about the prettier girls at work. Or Roger and Liz, her friends, who got very excited at the suggestion that Pauline might be having an affair, became "exceptionally close and […] had some very good sex" (30).

The disavowal of spectrality in Smith becomes the necessary condition for preserving the *status quo* or, as Levin states, to sustain "the ontological stability of the bourgeois subject" (2013, 46). In connection with this it is crucial to point out how Pauline's strong attachment to the spectre of an unknown girl stands in radical contrast with Mike's reaction to the ghostly visitation of his parents. Thus, after Roger's reference to Liz's father's obscenely morbid personality (he used to take pictures of Liz and her mother and sisters in cemeteries) Mike begins to sweat when recalling a terrifying dream: "Last night he had woken in the middle of the night from the same dream, the recurring dream, where his parents appeared to him smiling, vibrantly alive" (31). Far from being terrified, Pauline actually welcomes her ghost, takes care of her—keeps her company, bathes her, puts her to bed, etc.—and tries to empathise with her: "I touch my neck, apply different pressures to the cords of my muscles. It amazes me how tough and sensitive they are" (32). While Mike is away at their friend Dave's house starting what seems to be an affair with his wife (Maggie), Pauline steps fully into the realm of fantasy and is taken by the hanging girl "to a slightly higher place so we could see better" (Smith 1999, 34). In the final section, a multitude of ghosts attend Pauline's fall in silence, which she lives (or is it dreams?) as if it were a beatific experience: "For a moment she held me, lightened, delighted. Then she hovered above me like a piece of litter caught up in a crosswind" (35). The prolepsis in the preceding section, narrated in the third person, advances an interpretation of this episode framed within the coordinates of the ordinary world: "Pauline jumped off a garage roof and broke a leg" (33). The stark contrast between both perspectives is further enhanced by the sheer compartmentalisation of labour that regulates social relations in the ordinary world and which reaches, at once very realistic and absolutely ridiculous, functionalist extremes in the figure of the policeman who arrives on the scene of the fall before the paramedics:

> I can't help you, love, he told Pauline. I'm the reporting officer. Even if you were on fire, even if you were bleeding to death right here in front of me on the lawn, I'd not be able to do anything. It's my duty only to report what happens here until the emergency services come […] He turned his back, one foot swivelling in the flowerbed, opened his book and wrote it down. Upon my arrival the young woman was hysterical, and was quite unable to assess her own position. (Smith 1999, 33)

Both perspectives, inflected (respectively) in the first and the third person, are incompatible, and the reader is forced to adopt or reject one or the other. One either reads the story as a case of psychotic hallucination and mental derangement which

ends up in a ludicrous fall from a low roof, or one responds to the ghost of the past that calls for an ethical transformation of the world inhabited by those who deny its existence to preserve a cynically inhumane, ludicrously rigid, and secretly obscene social functioning.

5. CONCLUSION

The modern ghost story, an outcrop of the centuries-old tradition of the female Gothic, continues to be an apt medium for woman's critical interrogation of reality and her place in it. The genre, like the undying spectre itself, continues to provide strategies to tackle public and private issues which pertain to women's experience and their received assumptions about gender and identity.

Louise Welsh, the editor of a recent anthology titled *Ghost: 100 Stories to Read with the Lights On* (2015), finds it "notable how many of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century writers included in *Ghost* were supporters of the women's suffrage movement and other feminists and equal rights campaigns" (2015, iii). Detecting echoes of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) in Jackie Kay's "The White Cot" (2009), Welsh underlines the fact that contemporary women's greater "freedoms do not banish ghosts" (2015, iii). As I have shown in this paper, Fay Weldon's "A Good Sound Marriage," Janice Galloway's "it was" and Ali Smith's "The Hanging Girl" are three examples of just how alive ghosts are in contemporary British short fiction by women. In all three, spectral apparitions unsettle the homely domain and serve to articulate women's anxieties, conflicts, desires and aspirations outside the norm in the 1990s, a decade that according to Susanne Becker "exhibit[ed] the ongoing dynamics of the gothic" (1999, 2). Yet the trope of the ghost functions differently in each of the three cases. Thus Weldon's narrative, exhibiting the potential of the short story for temporal compression, condenses varied responses to motherhood and questions particular ideas concerning gender values of the past which present day women must come to terms with and exorcise. While in Weldon's piece the ghost is not completely successful in enforcing traditional ideas about woman's ancillary position in relation to man, the spectre in Galloway's story stands for the unconscious desire announced in a dream which the female protagonist has not yet come to terms with. The girl in the Galloway story confronts the repressed dimension of an otherwise dear memory to which disturbing unconscious fantasies are attached. Finally, Smith's hanging girl is a rewriting of the figure of the *doppelgänger* as a liberating spectral force and links two historical periods in which the demand for justice is suppressed through directly repressive or more subtly oppressive means. Smith's short story, which, like the ghost itself, remains alive after its closure by virtue of its circularity, is an indictment of the banalisation of and indifference towards human suffering in a globalised society, and calls for an urgent ethical transformation. That the ghost serves to give shape to women's preoccupations has been, at once, an evident and an intriguing fact of British

literary history. In their struggle for social change in the modern period, women are accompanied by the, sometimes empowering, other times thwarting, and frequently elusive, presence of the literary ghost.

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Encountering the Posthuman Animal:
Revisiting Dian Fossey's *Gorillas in the Mist*

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Posthumanist theory has rendered possible the rereading of texts that have until now been subjected to more traditional humanist critiques. By opening new exegetical dimensions through which to approach the literary artifact, we can not only challenge *speciesist* assumptions but also revisit the implications of both literary conventions and literary theory. The aim of this paper is to present an alternative, posthumanist interpretation of Dian Fossey's *Gorillas in the Mist* (1983) so as to analyze the manner by which the de-voiced nonhuman others are rendered as full biographical subjects that rise above the humanist emphasis on speech and reason. I begin with a critical overview of the posthumanist challenge and of the dialectical resistance imposed by humanist ideology. I then turn to an in-depth analysis of *Gorillas in the Mist* as an example of literary defiance of humanism. Through a series of rhetorical strategies, Fossey finds a way through which to *speak* the gorillas, at the same time as she relocates her own condition as a human within a space where a new form of encountering the other is possible.

Keywords: posthumanism; Dian Fossey; primatology; (auto)biography; (animal) consciousness

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Encuentros con el animal posthumano:
una relectura de *Gorilas en la Niebla*, de Dian Fossey

El marco teórico del posthumanismo ha permitido la reinterpretación de textos sometidos a posicionamientos de índole humanista tradicionales. La apertura a nuevos acercamientos críticos ha posibilitado desafiar los preconstructos *especistas* y reconsiderar sus consecuencias tanto en las categorías como en la teoría literaria. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar una interpretación posthumanista y alternativa a la obra de Dian Fossey *Gorilas en la*

Niebla (1983) con el fin de analizar el modo en que la alteridad no-humana carente de voz es retratada en tanto que sujeto biográfico de pleno derecho, susceptible de elevarse por encima de los parámetros de enjuiciamiento humanista como son el habla y la razón. En primer lugar, atenderemos a una síntesis crítica del desafío posthumanista y de la resistencia dialéctica impuesta por la ideología humanista. Acto seguido, se procederá a un análisis en profundidad de la obra en tanto que ejemplo de desafío literario al humanismo. Por medio de una serie de estrategias retóricas, Fossey logra dotar de voz a los gorilas, al tiempo que reposiciona su propio lugar en tanto que ser humano en un espacio en el que un nuevo modo de reunirse con el otro es posible.

Palabras clave: posthumanismo; Dian Fossey; primatología; (auto)biografía; conciencia (animal)

The object of this paper is to analyze the posthuman interpretative challenges posed by primatologist Dian Fossey in her 1983 classic, *Gorillas in the Mist*. I begin with a critical overview of posthumanist theory to illustrate the issues at play in the reconsideration of animal subjectivity. I then turn to the study of *Gorillas.* This personal account of thirteen years spent in the Rwandan mountains doing field work is representative of the manner by which traditional hermeneutical and ontological understandings of the animal other are called into question, offering varying possibilities through which both human and animal subjects reemerge as sense-able beings. *Gorillas* allows readers to consider a series of thematic and rhetorical variables that, by their very nature, invite posthumanist considerations: from the subject matter of primatology to the activist undertones of this memoir by a white American female, and from gorilla consciousness to the implosion of human speech itself, the text emerges as a prosperous site from which to approach the (non)human.

1. The Muted Animal: Humanism and Posthumanism

In his recent study *What Is Posthumanism?* (2010), Cary Wolfe claims that the roots of both the term and the concept of posthumanism may be genealogically traced to a number of twentieth-century forms of thought that challenge the privileged position in which the human has always stood in relation to alternative forms of otherness. Whether or not the roots of posthumanism may be found in Foucault, in computer, communications and cyborg technologies or in bio-related fields such as ethology or cognitive sciences, what seems clear is that combined factors of historical circumstance impelled us to question the maxims stipulated by humanism. At a basic level, humanism revolves around anthropocentrism, ethnocentrism and androcentrism, and it stabilizes reason and speech as the principle attributes that justify the ethical, moral and political nature of the human.

Indeed, in light of empirical discoveries regarding the consciousness of other species, the human as much as the nonhuman may (finally) be more accurately comprehended. In the words of Wolfe, posthumanism "forces us to rethink our taken-for-granted modes of human experience, including the normal perceptual modes of the *Homo sapiens* itself, by recontextualizing them in terms of the entire sensorium of other living beings and their own autopoietic ways of 'bringing forth a world'" (2010, xxv). Acceding to assimilate the inherent forms of communication of nonhuman others—and considering what such communicative alternatives mean for human ontology—is a fundamental step through which to comprehend both the human and the nonhuman as relational beings. This is of course a generalization that is imbalanced from the beginning: as Derrida points out, the concept of *the animal*, in "general singular, within the strict enclosure of the definite article" ([2006] 2008, 34), rounds up the rich diversity of animal species within a single category as opposed to that which is human. In conceptually placing together shark and lamb, parrot and chimpanzee, squirrel and tiger (to use some of

Derrida's own examples), not only are the hierarchical binarisms that are so much a part of western thought reasserted, but also the distinctiveness of each species is obliterated. The human/the animal antinomy reaffirms humanist notions, and so "animality is associated with instinct, wildness, irrationality, emotionality, [and] being uncivilized" (Morris 2015, 46).

What posthumanism offers, among other things, is a closer inspection of the particularities of different species—and even individuals of any one such species—a scrutiny of their own language, reflected at an environmental and at a relational level, and, hence, an appreciation of where that leaves the human. Donna Haraway, for instance, explores the questions posed the moment "when species meet." Through telling encounters with domestic and wild specimens, she dissolves human exceptionality but nonetheless remains vigilant as to who it is that we will become (2008, 5). Similarly, Kelly Oliver (2009) uses the posthumanist lens and rereads Rousseau, Derrida, De Beauvoir, Heidegger and Agamben, among others, to analyze what we come to know about humans and about being human after having liberated the animal from the humanist constraint. Hence, and leaving apocalyptic aesthetics aside, we come to define the human through—as opposed to *in stark contrast to*—what is decisively of the animals.

Science may indeed have brought us closer to understanding the *telos* of the nonhuman other. Bernard Rollin defines *telos* as the fulfillment of the genetically based and environmentally expressed interests of each and every animal (1998, 162). One would hope that the mysteries uncovered by ethologists as to how nonhuman others reveal emotions through their social interactions and through their expressive behavior in their environment would have more rightfully determined the moral and legal position that nonhuman others occupy in relation to humans. Yet, as suggested earlier, it has been the signature force of western thought to structure its power relations over nonhuman others in accordance with human language and its complex layers of communication.

This fundamental heterogeneousness between the human and the nonhuman animal on the grounds of speech, needless to say, is rooted in Aristotle's *Politics*, where the political was declared an essentially human domain because of man's condition as *zōon logon ekhōn*:

> The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by other animals as well [...] but speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and other moral qualities. ([335-323 BCE] 1996, 47-48)

Contrary to the covenant of contemporary utilitarian animal liberation, which is strongly based on eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the Aristotelian

acknowledgement of interests, expressed through indications of pain and pleasure, does not trigger an ethics of inclusiveness based on sentience. "Sentience is more than the capacity to respond to stimuli," writes David DeGrazia, "it is the capacity to have at least some feelings. Feelings include (conscious) sensations such as pain—where 'pain' refers to something felt and not merely the nervous system's detection of noxious stimuli—and emotional states such as fear" (2002, 18). Commonness on the grounds of an interest-based *telos*, therefore, was dismissed by Aristotle in favor of an ethics erected upon reason: human speech enabled reasoned discourse, a power far above sense perception. Nonhuman others did not respond; they merely reacted and were hence inferior to man and could be subjected to forms of exploitation for the benefit of the superior species.

French philosopher Jacques Rancière has gone beyond Aristotle in his definition of the speaking animal, arguing that it was not just the *logos*—the speech capacity used for expression—that distinguished man from animal, but what he referred to as "literarity." As he stated in an interview with David Panagia:

> [H]umans are political animals because they are literary animals: not only in the Aristotelian sense of using language in order to discuss questions of justice, but also because we are confounded by the excess of words in relation to things. Humans are political animals, then, for two reasons: first, because we have the power to put into circulation more words, "useless" and unnecessary words, words that exceed the function of rigid designation; secondly, because this fundamental ability to proliferate words is unceasingly contested by those who claim to "speak correctly"—that is, by the masters of designation and classification who, by virtue of wanting to retain their status and power, flat-out deny this capacity to speak. (Rancière and Panagia 2000, 115)

According to Rancière, "literarity" is conducive to subjectivization or *assujetissement*, the political process of "becoming through disidentification" within the given *police* order. Rancière offers the term *police* as a suitable substitute for the term *politics*. For Rancière, the *police* is "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution" ([1995] 1999, 28). Subjectivization, meanwhile, is a political process because it involves the act of counting (or demanding to be counted) those who do not count, and thus, in the words of Samuel A. Chambers, "[exposing] the very mechanism of that order as deficient, if not delinquent" (2013, 103). Subjectivization, therefore, emerges not as a process of identification but as one of "disidentification" (Rancière [1995] 1999) whereupon those who demand to be counted refute their previous, fixed identity within the *police* system.

Rancière fundamentally includes within the categories of those potentially capable of subjetivization "workers, women, people of color, or others" (1992, 59), categories that come together under the concept of *demos*. Richard Iveson (2011) strongly contends

that, unfortunately, Rancière's sense of others is short-sighted in that its anthropocentric bias neglects providing a space for the nonhuman other within that category, precisely because the principle of literarity once again reinstates an up-down hierarchical domination between the units articulating the human/animal binary, thus reproducing the very same logic that the philosopher seeks to deconstruct. The principle of literarity, as such, invites a logic of domination because it inhibits the nonhuman other's potential to displace itself into a "polemical scene" of subjectivization (Rancière and Panagia 2000, 125). The 'excess of words' inherent to literarity is dependent on human speech alone: it attests to the un-fixity and the freeing of words as the *police* order is exposed for its zeal to figure as an innocent structure incapable of appropriating words. As words are emancipated from this mirage of appropriation and meaning (in much the same way that Rancière himself changes the original designation of the term *politics*), the excess becomes evident, for words belong to everyone and no-one simultaneously, notwithstanding gender, social or racial divisions. The other rises as a political being through literarity because s/he becomes a sense-able subject, a visible and audible-sayable creature that no longer operates within the domain of animality. Where the outcasts determined by race, color or gender can transcend an existence of noise and muteness, the nonhuman other is denied subjectivization and the possibility to enter a polemical scene because the principle of literarity, self-evidently, rests on human speech (words). In other words, the nonhuman other remains fixed, locked within the Platonic ideal where entities are secured within their *proper* place—the same ideal that Rancière, ironically, seeks to dismantle elsewhere. The nonhuman other is but invisible noise and babble, and therefore cannot become sense-able, visible and audible-sayable.

As one of the properties of "literarity" indicates, those in positions of power, the "masters of classification and designation," protect their status by denying the other's "capacity to speak" (Rancière and Panagia 2000, 115). As Iveson argues, one is left to wonder why for all of Rancière's questioning of the human-animal encounter, he ultimately undertakes the position of the master by denying subjectivization to nonhuman others on an ontological basis, secluding them within a muted existence of noise, rendering them as invisible, un-sayable beings (2011, n.p.). Hence the animal is hermetically displaced from the *demos* and is destined to flesh out the *ochlos*, the "great collective body, the zoology of orders justified in terms of cycles of nature and function" (Rancière [1992] 1995, 33; quoted in Iveson 2011, n.p.). Nonhuman others remain the "figures of fixed, machinic reaction [...] the undifferentiated pathic herd" (Iveson 2011, n.p.).

Rancière's proclamation of animals as un-sayable and unsense-able beings runs parallel to the type of humanism practiced by other twentieth-century philosophers. Although Rancière is notably absent from the discussion initiated by Wolfe in his groundbreaking study *Animal Rites* (2003), his stating of his position concludes in a manner not unlike that of Lévinas or Heidegger. As Wolfe suggests, Lévinas's rendering of the animal as an unreasoning being lacking *logos* is metaphorically absorbed in the

image of its facelessness, which is not unlike Heidegger's own reflection on the animal as a handless entity (2003, 65). All these forms of maiming the nonhuman other ultimately signify and reassert the muted existence to which animals are bound within a humanist world.

The act of making the speechless, the faceless and the handless a subject in and of itself worthy of moral consideration is an issue that has been explored by posthumanists and animal rightists or welfarists. Wolfe himself has interrogated the assumptions underlying animal rights and welfare philosophies, arguing that both rights-based approaches—such as those endorsed by Tom Regan—and utilitarian frameworks—fundamentally represented by Peter Singer—for all their good intentions, tend to fall back on humanist conjectures. Crucial to this criticism is the fact that animal rights and welfare theories build a case for animals on the grounds of their likeness to that which is human, at the emotional, cognitive, sentient, physiological and behavioral levels. Basing moral consideration on similarity *to* and difference *from* the human is, in Wolfe's view, another way through which to solidify up-down hierarchical binarisms, whereupon resemblance to a superior species determines the moral import of the nonhuman other. For instance, though he views the Great Ape Project as an admirable enterprise, he laments both the reasoning behind the scheme and its possible implications: "To put it very telegraphically, great apes possess the capacities that we possess, but in diminished form, so we end up ethically recognizing them not because of their wonder and uniqueness, not because of their difference, but because they are inferior versions of ourselves, in which case the ethical humanism that was the problem from the outset simply gets reinforced and reproduced on another level" (Wolfe 2003, 192).[1] In a recent article reviewing the trajectory of the Project, Paola Cavalieri acknowledges the articulateness of Wolfe's argument. Nonetheless, she turns to what she seems to regard as a reality check of sorts to refer to the impracticability of abolishing any type of institution (in this case *speciesism*) under non-humanist pretexts. Even the Great Ape Project, she contends, must answer to the anthropocentric tradition to be viable (2015, 23).

2. Human and Animal Subjectivity in Dian Fossey's *Gorillas in the Mist*

How does a writer accomplish the type of intersectioning of species that posthumanism advocates? How does a writer make both the human and the nonhuman textually legible within a system of knowledge that no longer prioritizes the human nor places it at an epicenter towards which other species must gravitate to reach resemblance? Dian Fossey's *Gorillas in the Mist* (1983) strove to explore new ways through which to

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[1] The Great Ape Project (GPA) was initiated in 1993 and joined by internationally acknowledged professionals from a wide range of fields (philosophy, primatology, anthropologists, etc.) in the struggle to advocate a United Nations Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Great Apes. This was collected and signed by the thirty-four contributors to the publication titled *The Great Ape Project* (Cavalieri and Singer 1993).

assimilate the nonhuman other (namely, the gorilla), aiming to transcend the nature/culture divide on the grounds of speech. Although the notion of posthumanism was then only in its infancy, the strategies she employs at a formal level as much as her content and overt argumentations suggest that she was envisioning and practicing a similar philosophical stance from which to apprehend the self and the gorilla other. By learning and interacting with the gorillas, Fossey proposes an alternative way through which to place the nonhuman other as a political subject, a placing which involves a redefinition of the human just as much as of the nonhuman. Implicit in Rancière's doctrine is the fact that animals are instrumental in teaching and reminding us of what is human; we tend to think that it is their limitations which determine our privilege and superiority, their lacks, their inabilities, their silence. Where Rancière cites limitations, Fossey envisages possibilities; what Rancière suggests is an irreconcilable, ontological difference, Fossey overcomes through an occupation of the liminal fringes between species. It is only through the assimilation of an identity within the margins of the dichotomy that the gorilla can become a sense-able, audible-visible and sayable being.

Gorillas in the Mist depicts the story of Fossey's evolving communion with the mountain gorillas of the Virungas, from around 1967 to the early 1980s; the autobiography was published in 1983, two years prior to her brutal murder. Fossey, a native of San Francisco and occupational therapist in Louisville, Kentucky, first visits Africa in 1963 on a self-financed seven-week safari. It is during this trip that she meets the renowned British archeologist and naturalist Louis Leakey, and though little does she know it at the time, Fossey would eventually become the second figure in what would popularly be known as the triumvirate of Leakey's Angels, a tripartite primatological project spearheaded by Jane Goodall's research on chimpanzees in Tanzania, Fossey's on gorillas in Rwanda, and Biruté Galdikas's on orangutans in Indonesia. Three years after her safari, Fossey, then thirty-three, approaches Leakey after a lecture at the University of Kentucky and quickly convinces him that she has what it takes to follow in the footsteps of Goodall and take on a gorilla project. Fossey forever abandons her life in America and, under the sponsorship of the Wilkie Foundation, sets out for Kabara, in Congo, to begin her research. Six months later, the unrest following the country's recently-won independence unleashes a civil war, and Fossey is detained for two weeks, before finally escaping to Uganda. Fossey and Leakey, much to the American embassy's reluctance, resolve for her to continue her project on the Rwandan side of the Virungas, where she founds the Karisoke Center, and where the remainder of her narrative is set.

2.1. Interspecies (Auto)biographical Pacts

The very nature of the text potentially invites an interesting discussion regarding its adherence to a specific genre. In many ways, the text could be considered an activist's autobiography. And yet Fossey's focus is not so much to write about the *bios* as it is to

build a case for the conservation and protection of her kindred nonhuman others, to *speak the animal* that cannot be listened to on its own, to make it legible. For Fossey, to write the *bios* is to write the gorillas and, conversely, to write the gorillas is to write the *bios*. Such an approach bends Phillipe Lejeune's (1989) autobiographical pact between narrator, reader and publisher that interweaves the author, the narrator and the character to form a single identity and name.

Individual gorillas, recognizable by name and behavior, emerge as powerful biographical subjects within the text—indeed, we become more intimate with Digit, Beethoven, Uncle Bert, Pablo, Coco and an array of dozens of other gorillas than with Fossey herself. We know nothing about Fossey's life prior to her first trip to Africa, nothing about her upbringing, her education—except that she worked as an occupational therapist—her interests, her life-changing experiences, her joys or tribulations. Indeed, the only remark that Fossey regards as self-explanatory of her crusade is that which opens the book: "I spent many years longing to go to Africa, because of what that continent offered in its wilderness and great diversity of free-living animals" ([1983] 1985, 1). Enough said. Her story, like those of her gorillas, begins and ends in Africa. A meager first chapter of roughly twenty pages is used to condense the period of her life from the safari to her relocation in Rwanda, omitting traumatic experiences during her imprisonment that, as Virginia Morell (1993, 423) suggests, may have included being raped and held in a cage for public display. Nor is there any hint of her subsequent romance with National Geographic photographer Bob Campbell. This righteous sense of privacy was probably one that she also adhered to in her everyday life. As two friends declared after her murder, "Dian's true personality remains a mystery to many of us who knew, admired, and loved her" (Hausfater and Kennedy 1986, 955).

The gorillas that she becomes more intimate with, on the other hand, emerge as fuller subjects not only because we are familiarized with their individual physical attributes, collected in a scientific fashion, or with their behavioral particularities, which are illustrated through colorful anecdotes, but also because they are the instruments that bring out the truth about Fossey herself. In other words, we as readers come closest to glimpsing Fossey's secluded persona during the moments of gorilla encounters described, as though it were through the lens of the nonhuman other's gaze which purified into transparency Fossey's most private self. The gorillas' lives do not constitute a compendium of recorded data; rather, as subjects, they reveal an individual and social world where highly complex emotions determine their relationality with the environment, with other members of their species and with other living creatures.

Fossey's absence from her own text, as a human character overtly describing, examining and self-assessing herself, could be used to argue that the narrative resists full categorization as an autobiography (or life-writing)—after all, if the prime focus and narrative development is, for the most part, structured and cadenced by the trials and tribulations of generations of gorillas, Fossey as a narrator may not be deemed

to qualify as an autobiographer. However, if we are to evade the simplifications of genre conventions, perhaps the more appropriate matter in hand is not to quantify the absence versus the presence of the autobiographical subject, but rather to qualitatively evaluate the types of presences and absences projected by Fossey's *autos*—that is, "the self writing and being written" (Olney 1998, xv). In other words, analyzing how and why she is present/absent may more suitably guide our understanding of the rhetorical strategies through which to convey a different sort of human self.

The possibilities such consideration provides are all the more revealing if we are indeed to accept the text as an autobiographical act. The very conventions of the genre inherently challenge posthuman assumptions; but when bent and reinvented under what I would venture to call an "interspecies (auto)biographical pact" whereupon subjects become audible-visible, sayable and sense-able through their relational encounter with the other species, autobiographical potential is multiplied, diversified and fragmentized. As Smith and Watson (2010) argue, autobiographical subjectivity forges a highly complex site whereby memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment and agency, along with newer concepts such as performativity, positionality and relationality, operate within a constant flux of implications. If the nonhuman other can be experienced by the human in such ways, then the interspecies pact may just be viable enough.

In spite of her absences, the types of presences that Fossey does reflect in the text do, for the most part, qualify as techniques in the line of activist autobiography: the activist self, who exists in the public realm, appears as secondary to the struggle; unjust and oppressive situations are denounced and exposed; and those that have been de-voiced are granted a voice within the text. To return to Rancière's doctrinal terminology, the activist autobiography can only exist as such if it contributes to the polemical scene and fabricates a political act through subjectivization. Activist autobiographies, Martha Watson argues, are highly dependent upon their powers of persuasion. Presenting a contestation of forces, she contends, is imperative to render the cause as one of immediate urgency: "The tension between the scene—what is— and the purpose—what ought to be—becomes the explanation for their controversial activities and behaviors" (1999, 104). Watson was actually more specifically referring to autobiographical writing related to the feminist cause; however, the basic parameters are applicable to the crusade undertaken by Fossey, who integrates the gorillas within the polemical act and grants them a presence based on their potential as subjects worthy of moral consideration. Indeed, it becomes rather evident through reading her that Fossey's devotion to the conservationist movement prevails, both over an introspective rendition of the *bios* and the *autos*, and over the scientific objectives which Leakey sent her to Africa for in the first place.

Gorillas stands as a doubly-disrupting political tool not only because it challenges the accepted popular ontological distinction between human and nonhuman, but also because it openly confronts the scientific community and its instrumentalization

of the other. The narrative is both written and published during a period of intense primatological and anthropological research in America. In the early 1960s the chimpanzee Ham became the first specimen to be launched into outer space by the American space program. In the early 1970s, Columbia professor Herbert S. Terrace began the controversial Nim Chimpsky Project—a failed attempt to teach grammar to a chimpanzee specimen. Along with countless other biomedical, neurological and nuclear experiments performed on apes, these research procedures painfully tested, violated and dissected apes not necessarily in the hope of discovering vital information about the animals themselves, but also of acquiring knowledge about humans, through a scientific acknowledgement of the likeness between the human and the ape. Fossey's mission imposed by Leakey and Wilkie was to approach the apes as primal embodiments of a long-lost link. In the words of Fossey, "[Leakey and Wilkie] felt that by studying man's closest living relatives, the great apes, new light could be shed on how our ancestors might have behaved" ([1983] 1985, 5).

It becomes fairly evident through the text, however, that Fossey's priorities and research cease to focus upon the search for a past link, due both to conservationist urgency and to the revelations resulting from her encounters with the gorillas. I mentioned above Wolfe's disillusionment with animal rights and welfare perspective on account of their reliance upon the likeness-to-human factor. Fossey redeems herself from the profoundly humanistic modes of scientific research by de-centralizing her own subjectivity—her search is one of commonness where not only do both species move towards the encounter, but one where experiencing the encounter, as I have argued throughout this section, can be translated at a textual level, bending genre conventions, and surrendering narratives of interspecies, relational selves.

2.2. Interspecies Encounters: Woman Meets Ape

Fossey's defiance of the then traditional approaches to primatology and anthropology has generally been associated with her womanhood. Surprisingly, there is little explicit attention to the topic of gender oppression on the part of Fossey in her text, which suggests that she probably regarded the gender debate more as a competing issue which threatened to distract readers from conservationism than as a hierarchical form of domination with solid connections to *speciesism*. That women tend to outnumber men in the animal rights movement has, however, not been lost on scholars, and neither have the speculations about what makes their involvement particularly feminine. Carol J. Adams (1990), Greta Gaard (1993), Karen J. Warren (2000) and Emily Gaarder (2011), among scores of other academics and ecofeminists, have attempted to decipher the reasons underlying the alleged care ethics approach of female activists. These scholars all agree that the position that both women and animals share as the less advantaged subjects in the respective value dualisms they occupy leads to a kind of bond to which men cannot relate.

In her observations as to the recruitment of activists, Pattrice Jones writes that "boys and men tend to make their decisions on the basis of laws or abstract principles while girls and women tend to make their decisions on what is best characterized as an ethos of care" (2004, 146). This ethos of care is fleshed out through the assimilation of the woman's position as a nurturer and provider, a self-conscious role that now and again sparks in Fossey's narrative as she protects the gorilla individuals in much the same way that a mother of any of the two species would. The lengths to which she went to impose her active conservationism, which included terrorizing the locals through black magic and her wearing masks so as make them believe she was a sorceress, go to show the extent to which ethics of care can translate within the context of activism. Fossey's one-woman war and witchcraft against poachers were, unfortunately, viewed by the public as the deeds of a madwoman, deeds that ultimately determined her violent fate.

As Elizabeth Cherry (2010) has pointed out, cultural strategies of animal rights activists involve all sorts of boundary crossing. Although Fossey, as indicated earlier, pays little attention in the text to the gender issue, it is clear that her situation as a white American woman in the role of a scientist raises significant considerations as to how gender transcendence relates to and affects the blurring between the human and the nonhuman. Fossey appears fairly comfortable in her skin as sorceress and as *nyiramchabelli*, "the old lady who lives in the forest without a man" (Fossey {1983} 1985, 154). She incorporates the female stereotype to which she is reduced in Africa to make it her own and use it for her cause. Sy Montgomery collected a number of testimonies from people who had worked or been close to Fossey, concluding that most coincided in their belief that Fossey had brought her death upon herself: "By imposing her own laws on a sovereign nation, by making enemies of local people instead of friends, by caring more about gorillas than people, Dian was just as responsible for her death as the person who wielded the panga that split her skull" ({1991} 2009, 186). Fossey's flaw, according to these testimonies and to local authorities, was to prioritize her and the gorillas' affairs over the public wellbeing of the Rwandan population peripheral to the Virungas. And, in the view of many, it was just like a woman to do that.

Within the male-centered scientific and academic domain, it was also just like a woman to collect research data the way she did. That women could endow the field of primatology with fresh and unbiased perceptions was certainly not lost on Leakey (King 1991, 19). Being fully immersed in his role as a proud father figure to the three trimates, he was right in his predictions that these women could liberate scientific discourse from its constrictive, male-centered approach of domination. The image of women side by side with apes, on the other hand, fascinated the public, leading to a fruitful outburst of media and popular culture products (Jahme 2000, 220-243), including the 1988 biopic on Fossey starring Sigourney Weaver. Indeed, Goodall, Fossey and Galdikas also brought their respective ape species into focus not only

through discoveries related to their behavior which challenged previous observational records, but also by writing about them as individuals. Goodall, the pioneer, was the first to ever write about chimpanzees with pronouns indicative of their sex—as *he* and *she* as opposed to *it*—(Rees 2007, 882), she was the first to christen the specimens with names (as opposed to numbers), and she was the first to refer to the individuality of each specimen through such challenging terms as *emotion* and *personality* (Morell 1993, 422), strategies which Fossey would incorporate in her own writing.

Needless to say, the trimates' views were perceived as sentimental and whimsical by the androcentric scientific community, who aggressively criticized their research on account of their apparent inability to establish themselves within the comforts of scientific detachment. Science and primatology had been solidly built upon the foundation that nonhuman others could in no way veer from a behavioral path— that is, their every act was the product of instinct—whereas humans were endowed with cognitive capacities that could not be studied exclusively from a behaviorist approach (De Waal 2006, 66-67). As such, to present nonhuman others as biographical subjects with different personalities and emotions, was a thoughtless feminine act that threatened to pervert the objectiveness of serious ethology. The trimates were accused of succumbing to this pathetic fallacy, a displacement of human cognition onto the nonhuman other. These critics, however, missed the point that at least in Fossey's text, the human-nonhuman other encounter constitutes an epistemological process of double displacement in which, as I shall attempt to argue, both species gravitate towards a tangential ontological meeting point. In other words, it is not so much about humanizing the animal, nor about animalizing the human, rather it is about rising above the asphyxiating implications of such structures, about venturing into a terrain so virginal that even language has yet to conceptualize it through nomenclature.

2.3. Interspecies Encounters: Becoming Sense-able

Let us consider in depth the specific rhetorical techniques that Fossey employed to *speak* the gorillas. The gorilla emerges as a sense-able being not by transcending its limitations regarding human speech, but by invoking us to transcend our own. Only by overcoming the human-imposed barrier of establishing speech (and literarity) as the ontological boundary can the human and the nonhuman other assimilate one another. Fossey accesses a matrix of multi-communicative signs where the association between the signifier and the signified is not limited to just expressing "a state of being," as Rancière would have it, but is suggestive of an ample display of emotions that attest to the gorilla's consciousness beyond the immediately sensible.

For instance, describing nursing towards health an infant gorilla whose family has been slaughtered, she writes: "Pucker showed a spark of interest in the familiar foods, but *possibly* because they evoked memories of the past" ([1983] 1985, 113; my italics). In another episode in which Fossey and a fellow tracker are immersed in

the act of rescuing a *duiker*—a kind of regional antelope—from a poacher trap, she takes the opportunity to describe what she regards the most compelling of gorilla emotions—curiosity: "Sitting in a row on a large Hagenia branch about twenty feet away were the four adolescent males of the group. They *seemed* totally fascinated by our activities. The intensity of their concentration *gave the impression* of their lending moral support to our efforts" ([1983] 1985, 32; my italics). The choice of words in passages such as these is significant: 'possibly,' 'seemed' and 'gave the impression' constitute a discursive effort to reveal inclinations against conventional hermeneutical interpretations of the nonhuman other sign. They situate the enunciations within the specter of the contingent, of the feasibility of nonhuman others experiencing such complex emotions as nostalgia, emotional trauma or curiosity, traditionally only associated with human consciousness.

The nonhuman other, therefore, becomes liberated once interaction is established through other mediums that render both human and nonhuman as sense-able subjects. Fossey learns to imitate an array of gorilla vocalizations, she learns to interpret the emotional meaning behind their odors, she adapts and stretches the possibilities of her own body by adopting the communicative code of gorilla body language, ensuring that, like the gorillas, emotion is not contained, but environmentally expressed. This is a key issue in the study of primatological empathy.

Consider for example the following anecdote in which Fossey is observing Group 5. One of the young, Icarus, immersed in his playful antics of branch swinging, ungracefully falls to the ground before Fossey. Alarmed, the adult members bluff-charge Fossey, "as though they all held me responsible for the fall" ([1983] 1985, 62). Oblivious to the stir he has created, Icarus gets up and continues climbing, but the gorillas, filling the air with "pungent fear odor," remain alert to Fossey's every move. Another young member, Piper, then takes center stage and begins climbing the broken sapling between Fossey and the gorillas: "She exuded blasé self-importance as the attention of myself and the gorillas' was riveted on her. No high-wire artist ever had such a rapt audience. The glances of the silverbacks darted back and forth between Piper and myself as if they expected me to leap forward and grab her at any moment. When our eyes met, they roared their disapproval" (62). Here the line is blurred between the observer and the observed. Fossey's awareness of her vulnerability results from her understanding of her relational self through the gorilla gaze. Similarly, the adult gorillas view their relational selves through Fossey's gaze: they act not according to their own emotions but according to the image they want to convey to Fossey, which is preceded by a dislocation of identity into the observer's sense-able being. This dislocation implies an awareness of the other's position as the observed within a particular space and in a particular moment. The brief instants of eye-contact are definitive in their signification: for the gorillas, to be looked in the eye in a moment of tension cannot but be a sign of the looker's defiance and awareness of the one who is looked upon.

The dislocation of identity implicit to the act of empathy on both sides renders all the selves within the scene as relational subjects immersed in a simultaneous act of mutual response. The fundamental distinction of relationality through reaction and response has long erected divisions between the nonhuman and the human. Following Aristotelian tradition, Lacan ([1956] 1999), for example, argued that where language only reflects reaction, speech elicits response, thus separating humans from nonhumans as relational subjects. Derrida ([2006] 2008), on the other hand, challenged the separation between response and reaction by questioning the nature of such behaviors. Kelly Oliver summarizes Derrida's position by asking "why does man think that among the creatures on earth, he alone responds rather than merely reacts, that he alone is not determined by instincts?" The question Derrida poses is whether "man" is capable of response at all, as all those abilities that have been associated to "his uniqueness […] are inscribed by social conventions, including language and technology" and therefore they could be regarded as being "also trained" (Oliver 2009, 119).

What Fossey seems to suggest is that regardless of whether the leveling of the human-animal encounter is one based on reaction or response, both ontological subjects are acting with the same degree of consciousness. They anticipate each other's actions and attempt to preclude them by responding or reacting to one another, breaching the gap between reaction and response, between the human and the nonhuman and between the private and the relational. It is not just the issue of eye-contact that deserves attention: prior to the suspenseful moment of response-anticipation and reaction/response to it, is the gorillas' bluff-charge against Fossey, a form of deception that again points to the nonhuman other's awareness of the other's awareness of the self "If the animal is capable of pretense, then it has already taken the other into account […] Once a creature starts thinking about how to deceive another and once the other creature can be deceived, it is difficult to discern the possible levels of deception since it (deception) takes place in the relationship itself" (Oliver 2009, 188).

The act of gazing appears frequently in Fossey's recreation of the numerous and varied types of encounters with the gorillas, most often as a sign of recognition. Fossey describes two kinds of encounters: the obscured, whereupon the gorillas are oblivious to her presence, and the open, through which she works on a habituation process. The former provides her with rich insight into the private group behavior, where the roles between observer and observed are clearly demarked. Instances of habituation, of getting the gorillas used to her presence, on the other hand, provide the most colorful reflections of the autobiographical subject, the *I* through the gorilla gaze that fleshes out Fossey's most private self. These passages of reciprocal understanding are the most lyrical in the book: "Suddenly I heard a noise in the foliage by my side and looked directly into the beautiful trusting face of Macho, who stood gazing up at me. She had left her group to come to me. On perceiving the softness, tranquility, and trust conveyed in Macho's eyes, I was overwhelmed by the extraordinary depth of our rapport. The poignancy of her gift will never diminish" ([1983] 1985, 201).

The text not only refocuses attention onto the alternative languages of the nonhuman other but also implicitly dismisses speech itself at a formal level. Despite the considerable amount of human characters, there are but a handful of utterances in direct quotation where they have a voice of their own. This rhetorical strategy, nonetheless, provokes a series of problematic implications within the African context. As Donna Haraway (1989) argues, in the postmodern world, primatology cannot become dissociated from its multinational and postcolonial connotations. In *Gorillas*, the native Rwandans sometimes become the accidental object of anthropological study, as Fossey depicts their ways of economic subsistence—farming, poaching—and their religious rites and beliefs. These characterizations could be interpreted as biased from the imperialist position of the *I* of an American white woman, as the passages often yield to the racial other as a natural, wild creature guided by instincts and superstitions. Their speech—reported and therefore controlled by Fossey—is generally reduced to the articulation of isolated terms, usually conceptual nouns, suggesting a direct correlation between signifier and signified that can be likened to gorilla vocalizations of first-order semiotic signs. This linguistic characteristic may be regarded as a romanticized verbal reflection of the African's primal reliance on his other senses to adapt to the environment. Describing the process of breaking the language barrier between herself and the racial other, Fossey states that "Africans have a great facility for learning languages quickly because they do not tend to rely upon the crutch of books" ([1983] 1985, 25). In another instance she claims that "the locals' senses, especially their eyesight, were more acute [than that of the western students]" (43). These kinds of assumptions have precise implications within the discourse of western primatology. As Haraway writes regarding the position of *National Geographic*—of which, incidentally, Fossey was a contributor—people of color were "insufficiently differentiated from nonhuman apes" (1989, 153).

Yet to reduce Fossey's characterizations to racist portrayals would perhaps overlook what more convincingly appears to be her main enterprise: to debunk the human/nonhuman other antinomy by obliterating speech as the means to interact with other relational selves. To be fair to Fossey, all human characters, regardless of race, are to a wide extent speech-deprived. It is revealing that practically the only time that a white character is granted a space for direct speech, the enunciation exhibits a profound anthropocentric stance. Before parting for England, a student carrying a large plastic bag containing the hide of one of the gorillas informs Fossey that: "This is Rafiki's skin and I want to take it home with me." Shocked and revolted by this request of "gruesome violation," Fossey confiscates "the trophy" ([1983] 1985, 150). The student's short enunciation is enough to contain at least two anthropocentric maxims: (1) the slaughtering of the nonhuman identity through material degradation, for Rafiki is now nothing but matter whose only value is one of cultural, and potentially economic, import, that of representing a souvenir, a booty of sorts, and (2) the reinstatement and legitimization of the legal status of the nonhuman other as a property.

3. Conclusion

Posthumanism, even at its most external, fundamental level, invites revisions of texts where dominating humanist critique has been prevalent. In the case of *Gorillas in the Mist*, such humanist critique, I have attempted to argue, challenged conventions such as, on the one hand, literary genre categorization and the implicit humanist ideology associated with autobiography and, on the other, androcentric approaches to primatology. In reading Fossey's text through the posthumanist lens, these conventions become themselves questioned, as traditional resistance to truly encountering and responding to the other species is weakened. Speech becomes secondary, and even irrelevant in the act of assimilating the other—the text finds a way to encounter both the gorillas and Fossey herself as incompletely human and incompletely gorilla according to humanist standards. Subjectivization, limited by Rancière to the human specter, becomes possible not through literarity, but through the 'disidentification' of the gorilla—and of Fossey herself—by taking into account the relationality between autobiographical and biographical subjects. Fossey was able to overcome such temptations and dislocated her own human condition to find common ground with the gorillas' own disidentification. It is in these textuals mists where perhaps we can from hereon gaze into the uniqueness of other species and ask ourselves who we will become *through* them, *in* them and *of* them.

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Searching for a "Different Kind of Freedom":
Postcoloniality and Postfeminist Subjecthood in Zadie Smith's *NW*

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This paper attempts to open a new line of inquiry into Zadie Smith's fourth novel *NW* (2012) by drawing attention to her investment in the contemporary feminine experience. I argue that by bringing women to center stage, *NW* marks a turning point in Smith's fiction, while also bearing the hallmarks of the author's previous work, namely her concern with Britain's postcolonial legacy and issues of human connection. While Smith's focus on self-monitoring educated women links the text to a postfeminist paradigm, the fact that these characters, and others, are of immigrant background locates the novel in the terrain of Britain's postcolonial history and its multicultural present in twenty-first century London. My contention will be that far from adopting a celebratory approach to her postfeminist subjects as harbingers of social change, Smith points at the disabling aspects of this ideology, and the prevalence of racial and gender inequalities, problematizing individualistic notions of failure as self-responsibility.

Keywords: postcolonialism; connectedness; postfeminism; female friendship; bildungsroman; impressionistic narrative

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Buscando un "tipo diferente de libertad":
postcolonialismo y sujeto postfeminista en *NW* de Zadie Smith

Este artículo pretende abrir una nueva línea de investigación en el estudio de *NW* (2012), la cuarta novela de Zadie Smith, prestando atención a su exploración de la experiencia femenina contemporánea. La centralidad de los personajes femeninos hace de esta obra un punto de inflexión en la narrativa de Smith, al mismo tiempo que la novela despliega las idiosincrasias de la autora, en particular su preocupación por el legado postcolonial de Gran Bretaña y por el tema de la conexión humana. Si bien el énfasis en una generación

femenina formada y autónoma liga el texto a un paradigma postfeminista, el hecho de que estos personajes y otros sean de origen emigrante ancla la novela en el terreno familiar de la historia postcolonial británica y su presente multicultural en el siglo XXI. Se intentará demostrar que más allá de celebrar al sujeto postfeminista como emblema del cambio social, Smith interroga los aspectos negativos de esta ideología y la prevalencia de desigualdad de género y racial, problematizando nociones individualistas del fracaso como responsabilidad personal.

Palabras clave: postcolonialismo; conexión humana; postfeminismo; amistad femenina; novela de formación; narrativa impresionista

Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012) is arguably the author's most female-centered novel to date, as it spotlights issues of female identity and female friendship at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite its "late blooming" in women's writing, as Margaret Atwood observes in her essay on the subject (1986), the topic of female friendship has received considerable attention by such prominent contemporary women novelists as Fay Weldon, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Gail Godwin and Alice Walker, to cite just a few. The reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement* places Smith's novel on this literary map, praising it as "one of the strongest dissections of female friendship since Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*" (Webb 2012, 19). Indeed, in the same way that Lessing's "Free Women" sections concerning the friendship between Anna Wulf and Molly Jacobs function as a "a skeleton, or frame" (Lessing [1962] 1993, 7) in the midst of the fragmentation of her novel, so the friendship of Leah Hanwell and Natalie Blake provides the backbone of Smith's non-linear and structurally complex fourth novel, as well as it being an excellent tool for exploring the lives of contemporary women. This should not be taken to signify that Smith has neglected the portrayal of women in her novels, which are inhabited by memorable female characters such as Irie Jones in *White Teeth* (2000) and Kiki Belsey in *On Beauty* (2005). And yet, it has been claimed that her "female characters lack development because they are overshadowed by white male protagonists [...] whose stories drive the narratives" (Walters 2008, 125). Whether the lack of central female characters in the fiction of Smith is due to the author's own admission of "having difficulty writing from the female perspective" (Walters 2008, 126), or to other motivations, with *NW*, which she considers to be the first book that she has "really written as an adult" (Bollen 2014), she has taken up the challenge. Bringing women to center stage, *NW* marks a turning point in Smith's fiction, while also bearing the hallmarks of the author's previous work, namely her enduring concern with Britain's postcolonial history and issues of human connection.[1]

   This paper attempts to open a new line of inquiry into Smith's text by drawing attention to her exploration of contemporary women's lives. Despite being the author's first full-blown venture into the female realm of experience, this facet of *NW* remains markedly underexamined in the existing scholarship, which has concentrated on another aspect of the text's innovation, namely, the author's departure from the lyrical realism that characterizes her previous work, and in its place her embrace of experimentation and modernist precursors (James 2012; 2013; Knepper 2013; Fernández Carbajal 2016). David James identifies a revival of experimentation in Smith's generation of postmillennial writers, whom he places at a "'crossroads' between realism and experimentation" (2012, 845). This wave of criticism has been partly prompted by Smith's essay "Two Directions for the Novel" (2009a), which James considers to have a "strikingly predictive relationship to *NW,*" since it is aimed at "those who assume

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   [1] Zadie Smith's last novel *Swing Time* (2016), revolves around the lives of two biracial female friends (Pearce 2015).

that in fiction today there are no remnants of modernism and that realism remains unchallenged" (2013, 205).[2] It is unarguable that in its discarding of linearity as regards plot line and time frame, in its endless inventiveness and its incorporation of diverse narrative forms and styles, *NW* insistently calls the reader's attention to its craft. My engagement with the text's aesthetics will nonetheless be limited to the way it enhances Smith's depiction of the crafting of the self, of processes of subject-formation and self-transformation, which, as we shall see, are central to this novel.

Writing about the issue of subject formation, Judith Butler explains that "the self delimits itself, and decides on the material for its self-making, but the delimitation that the self performs takes place through norms which are, indisputably, already in place" (2002, 225). The norm of femininity operating in Smith's text corresponds to "the 'can do' girl," a term used by Anita Harris (2003) and quoted by Angela McRobbie, whose ideas in *The Aftermath of Feminism* provide insight into Smith's exploration of the feminine experience (2009, 58). McRobbie argues that "the attribution of capacity" (58) is the hallmark of contemporary womanhood. She explains that "the principles that underscore the new gender regime require willingness, motivation and aptitude on the part of young women that if instilled within the school system will be sustained and further developed in the workplace" (75). Success, according to this model, is not incompatible with marriage or motherhood, and the heterosexual norm prevails. This kind of feminine subject "emerges as a social norm of contemporary femininity" against which women are measured or measure themselves (77). Smith inscribes a postfeminist ideology in the text in the sense that her focus of interest is not on female powerlessness, but rather on women who have reaped the benefits of past struggles for equality and freedom. Coming of age in the nineties and despite their working class, immigrant backgrounds—Irish and Caribbean respectively—Leah and Natalie have had the opportunity to rise to their potential. If such focus on self-monitoring educated middle class women in control of their lives links the text to a postfeminist paradigm, the fact that these characters, alongside others, are of immigrant extraction grounds the novel in the terrain of Britain's postcolonial history and its multicultural present. My contention will be that far from adopting a celebratory approach to her postfeminist subjects, the novel interrogates this norm of contemporary femininity by pointing to the limitations and exclusions it engenders, including the difficulty in achieving an

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[2] Also drawing on Smith's essay, Wendy Knepper focuses on the novel's aesthetics, which she defines as "a juxtaposition of avant-garde techniques with forms of rigorous lyrical realism" in "Revisionary Modernism and Postmillenial Experimentation in Zadie Smith's *NW*" (2013, 125). Alberto Fernández Carbajal's article "On Being Queer and Postcolonial" offers a reading of Smith's text "through its echoes of Virginia Woolf's novel in order to suggest that *Mrs Dalloway* provides *NW* with a similarly frustrated model of queer resistance to sexual normativity while simultaneously concentrating on human connection across ethnic divides" (2016, 79). Other issues raised by the text are also beginning to be addressed. In "A Right to a Secret," Lynn Wells explores the notion of secrecy, both as a theme in the novel and as an anti-representationalist technique through which Smith avoids full exposure of "her characters' inner workings" (2013, 97). David James has addressed the topics of localism and cosmopolitanism in "Worlded Localisms: Cosmopolitics Writ Small" (2015).

ideally coherent and fulfilling sense of selfhood, the weakening of the subject's moral power, and the continuing existence of patterns of gender and racial inequality.

A clarification regarding the novel's structural pattern becomes necessary at this point, particularly because it invites readers to think about a third character, Felix Cooper, as a co-protagonist alongside the two female figures. *NW* features an impressionistic temporal structure. As Marianne DeKoven explains, "impressionistic narrative generally begins on the eve of an important event or time, without letting the reader know that it has any particular significance. The story then 'flashes back' to the events or times in the protagonist's life which build to this crucial moment, constructing the whole picture through an accretion of episodes, until the reader has a full sense of the import of that initial moment" (1983, 32-33). The important event, or as DeKoven would have it "pinnacle" (33), in *NW* is furnished by the death of Felix in the present time of the novel, during the August bank holiday weekend, when London celebrates the Notting Hill Carnival. Felix acts as a link between the five different sections comprising the narrative, which all culminate in this incident or ramifications of it. The greater part of each section covers moments and events in the protagonists' lives prior to this pinnacle, the thematic significance of which becomes gradually apparent. At the end of the first section of the novel, "Visitation," Leah, who is at a carnival Sunday party, overhears the news of a stabbing the night before. The victim's identity is unveiled in the next section, "Guest," which charts the last day of Felix's life, a Saturday, with revealing flashbacks into his past. "Host," a retrospective section centering on the development of Natalie's character, ends with a walk that takes her to the environs of the crime scene soon after the stabbing that Saturday. This walk is the focus of the brief section "Crossings," where Natalie crosses paths with one of the suspects. The aftermath of these events is dealt with in the final section, "Visitation," whose concluding scene features the protagonists' involvement in seeking justice done for the death of Felix. Though more obliquely than previous works, *NW* encompasses the author's perennial preoccupation with the ethics of connection, which is thematized through the friendship at the center of the novel, as well as through the protagonists' irresistible entanglement with others, even total strangers, within the urban coordinates of the text. This clever, if intricate, structural pattern also allows Smith to preserve the centrality of the female experience in the novel without sacrificing the thematic relevance of Felix, whose full significance only becomes clear at the end of the narrative as the three characters converge.

NW is, in essence, the story of two female friends exploring the meaning of their lives. Smith has admitted that "men hardly exist" in this fourth novel (Bollen 2004), one that she dedicates to her best friend Sarah Kellas. Following the argument of critic Marianne Hirsch, it seems appropriate that a novel preoccupied with the exploration of feminine identity should not deal with its female characters in isolation, but in relation to other women. "Female identity in fiction," Hirsch argues, "can no longer be studied in the context of traditional ego psychology that fails to take into account

women's fluid ego boundaries […] relationships between women emerge as important […] plots," adding that the different forms of female bonding, characterized by being supportive and nurturing, are related to "mother-daughter affiliation" (1981, 218). In her landmark study, *The Mother/Daughter Plot*, Hirsch adheres to Nancy Chodorow's claim that the foundation of female identity is located in "the pre-oedipal period," where "mother-daughter bonding, not phallic lack, connection, not castration, characterize female identity" (1989, 132). Similarly, Luce Irigaray has argued that women should not be "accomplices" in the matricide on which patriarchy is based, and should instead foster positive relations with other women ([1981] 1997, 44). In this line of thought, the reclamation of female alliances amounts to an assertion of the feminine. Hirsch identifies in the feminist fiction of the 1970s a foregrounding of the female plot, which displaces male figures in favor of same sex female relations: "the retreat to the pre-oedipal as a basis for adult personality, the concentration of mother-daughter bonding and struggle, and the celebration of female relationships of mutual nurturance leave only a secondary role to men" (1989, 133). Although Smith does not explicitly position herself within this tradition of feminine writing, in its privileging of the female friendship plot, *NW* shares much of its spirit.

Irigaray also comments on the need for balance in female relationships, which should avoid extreme patterns of "*fusion or rivalry*" that may threaten to desubjectivize or destroy women ([1985] 1997, 192-193, italics in original). The closeness of the female bond, the theorist claims, is not incompatible with the separateness of the friends, who should not be mirrors of each other: "Between us […] one is not the original and the other, her copy […] we relate to each other without simulation" (1980, 78). In effect, Irigaray displays a modern understanding of friendship based on difference. As Sandra Lynch explains, classical discourses on friendship "place more emphasis on similarity and equality between friends—shared concerns, shared character, even complete fusion on all matters—than on taking account of the otherness of the friend" (2005, 35). In contrast, modern approaches to friendship problematize the traditional emphasis on likeness and perfection, viewing it "as a relationship predicated on separation and difference allow[ing] for the accommodation of divergent opinion in the relationship, for openness to change and development" (85). The latter view underscores the fluidity of relationships between friends, which may be subjected to the disruptive influence of forces such as temperament, moral attitudes, class status or wealth. Smith clearly eschews the traditional notion of the female friend as kindred spirit and "confidant," which, as Janet Todd explains, is at the root of the traditional literary representation of female friendship (1980, 1), in favor of a more fluid and unsentimental understanding of its dynamics. Her female figures are ideological opposites with divergent life trajectories. Whereas Leah's most distinctive quality is her "generosity of spirit" (Smith 2012a, 157), coupled with a certain bohemian propensity, Natalie's is her self-serving "cleverness and will-to-power" (160). While Natalie manages to gradually rise above the estate tower blocks through her academic endeavors, Leah, in a paradoxical role

reversal, "occupies the stereotypical position of ambitionless under-achievement often assigned by mainstream British culture to immigrant and non-white Londoners" (Wells 2013, 100). It is worth noting that Leah and Natalie embody variations of the forces in conflict in Smith's previous novel, *On Beauty* (2005), liberal humanism versus self-reliant pragmatism, as articulated by the male protagonists, the liberal Howard Belsey and the more conservative Monty Kipps. These opposing forces become reconciled, however, through the protagonists' wives, as a genuine, if short-lived, bonding develops between Kiki and Carlene, despite their disagreement on fundamental issues. *On Beauty* can thus be said to prefigure Smith's analysis of female relationships in *NW*, where the topic is given full expression. Even though Leah and Natalie's friendship has withstood the test of time, marriage, and motherhood, the current outcomes of the friends' differing choices, coupled with their individual personal crises, have combined to create some natural tension and distance within their relationship.

Leah's and Natalie's disaffection is clearly related to their complex relationship with the feminine norm according to which they have constituted themselves. Smith captures their lives at a time when their identities are failing, illustrating McRobbie's observation that "young women now find themselves, if no longer trapped within the home, then confined to the topographies of an unsustainable self-hood [...] and deeply invested in achieving an illusory identity defined according to a rigidly enforced scale of feminine attributes" (2009, 120). The 'illusory' and 'unsustainable' character of their subject positions manifests itself in the way Leah has failed to live up to the expectations of this type of feminine subject, while Natalie, who emblemizes it, finds it unfulfilling. Although the spirit of self-determination from which the protagonists operate is invoked at the onset of the narrative by the line "I am the sole author of the dictionary that defines me" (Smith 2012a, 3), on which Leah ponders as she leisurely reads a magazine in the garden hammock of her basement flat, the grandiosity of this statement gradually wears thin as we are exposed to Leah's misgivings about the expectations surrounding her heterosexual marital relationship. Having chosen to marry French-Algerian Michel much to her mother's dislike, she is faced with the conundrum of how to reconcile her marriage with her rejection of maternity and her repressed homoerotic drive, feelings which clash with normative heterosexual femininity. Her encounter with Shar, the crack addict who appears begging for money on Leah's doorstep at the onset of the novel and who will haunt her as though the return of a part of herself that she has repressed, reignites her attraction to women, at the same time as she is being continually reminded of her procreative "duties" by her family and female colleagues. Leah professes a sort of private feminism, having an abortion in secret and thus disregarding her husband's wish to become a father. And yet, despite her autonomous and critical stance, Leah seems to covet Natalie's middle-class lifestyle, as the following passage illustrates, "Leah watches Natalie stride over to her beautiful kitchen with her beautiful child. Everything behind those French doors is full and meaningful. The gestures, the glances, the conversation that can't be heard.

How do you get to be so full? And so full of meaningful things? Everything else Nat has somehow managed to cast off. She is an adult. How do you do that?" (Smith 2012a, 57). While Natalie has status, a home and a family, Leah has a low paying job in a charity and rents a council flat from which she can still see the old estate, a constant reminder of her more modest attainment in life. Natalie represents the feminine ideal of aspiration and achievement against which Leah cannot help but measure herself. When, as McRobbie argues, "having a well-planned life emerges as a social norm of contemporary femininity […] the absence of such styles of self-organization becomes [...] a signal of failure or a symptom of some other personal difficulties" (2009, 77), an assumption that Leah seems to have internalized despite her private rebellion against these classifications.

Smith's investment in exploring postfeminist subjecthood is evinced by the prominent role that Natalie plays in the narrative. As an iconic "neo-feminist subject," neo-feminism being Hillary Radner's term for postfeminism, Natalie is portrayed as "a free agent working in […] her own interests with a view to optimizing [...] her position outside of the confines of family and hereditary status, but within a profit-driven society" (Radner 2011, 11). Her section, "Host," the longest and most chronologically extensive, occupies a central position in the novel, and could even stand on its own: an abridged version of it was first published by Smith in *The New Yorker* as a short story titled "Permission to Enter" (2012b). Functioning as a sort of embedded narrative of formation or *bildung*, as I will argue, "Host" presents Natalie as a subject "actively engaged in the production of [her] self," to use McRobbie's words (2009, 60). The section charts the transformation of Keisha Blake—as she was formerly known—into Natalie De Angelis through a number of carefully monitored choices regarding education, career, partners, home ownership and even naming. Natalie, "our heroine," as the narrator in this section refers to her (2012a, 171), manages to climb the social ladder through her adoption of an ethos of meritocracy and individualism, overcoming familial, class and race barriers. While a law student, she changes her name from Keisha to Natalie, which is less ethnic sounding and more resonant with her process of self-invention, inaugurating a life guided by the principles of expediency and pragmatism. Her Afro-Caribbean boyfriend and fellow law student Rodney Banks, with his stigmatizing ties to her former life in the estate, is replaced by a more suitable partner, affluent and cosmopolitan Frank De Angelis, a Black-Italian investment banker to be. Through her association with Frank, Natalie enters the corporate world of money and business. After working as a lawyer for her community in a small firm and partly with a view to fitting in better with Frank's social circle, Natalie creates her own commercial law practice devoting her career to defending the interests of corporations. She refers to her social ascent metaphorically as a progress from being "an accidental guest at the table, as she had always understood herself to be," to becoming "a host, with other hosts" (Smith 2012a, 190), hence the title of the section. In their Victorian trophy home, Natalie and Frank form a family, thriving in spite of the stock

market crash of 2008. Whereas Natalie dissociates her husband from the questionable ethics underlying the crisis, his uncritical defense of the finance industry —"'if the City closed tomorrow,' said Frank, without looking at his wife, 'this country would collapse. End of story'" (240)—reveals his complicity with the system that caused it.

It is in the "Host" section of the novel that Smith develops her most sustained interrogation of normative notions of contemporary femininity. She does so through a departure, on both the thematic and formal levels, from the traditional conception of the narrative of formation as a genre depicting "a process of teleological and organic growth, in the manner of a seed that develops into a mature plant according to inherent genetic principles" (Boes 2006, 232). By contrast, Smith follows the more contemporary trend for narratives of female formation to "featur[e] female protagonists imaged in the context of a more disordered, less knowable world, and [to be based on] philosophical notions of the self as unstable, constructed and contradictory" (Salvatore 2002, 156). As such, Smith extends the narrative of Natalie's social rise beyond her formative years to also include her downfall, ending this section with the "heroine" steeped in a profound personal and marital crisis and feeling estranged from the self and the life she has constructed. The implication is that her loss of self may stem from her rigid adherence to the ethos of meritocracy and competitiveness, having allowed "work and capacity" to "dominate rather than be subordinate to [her] self-identity" (McRobbie 2009, 61). When Leah summarizes Natalie's achievements saying to her "You have your work. You have Frank. You've got all these friends. You're getting to be so successful. You are never lonely," the narrator explains how "Natalie tried to picture the woman being described" (2012a, 236), as if she could not recognize herself in this interpellation. She is portrayed as undergoing a process of "critical desubjectification," which Butler explains as a "turn[ing] away from the law, resisting its lure of identity [...] a willingness *not* to be," quoting Agamben to add that "'there is in effect something that humans are or have to be, but this is not an essence nor properly a thing'" (1997, 130-131; author's emphasis). Natalie, who significantly refers to her different roles as "drag" (245), comes to the realization that, however ideal and strived for, her subject position is a construction, rather than something natural or authentic, and as such it may fail or cease to work.

It thus seems fitting that the text of "Host," which articulates the narrative of Natalie's formation, should draw readers' attention to its construction as a literary artifact more intensely than any other section of the novel. There is a marked correspondence between notions of selfhood and the form of their articulation in this part of the text. Smith's engagement with the constructed character of feminine selfhood and notions of the incoherent self is matched, and indeed enhanced, by her recourse to anti-representationalist techniques, heeding her own advice that in order for realism to continue to be relevant, its practitioners "will have to push a little harder on their subject" (Smith 2009a, 80). Notions of unity and continuity are eschewed through a heterogeneous series of almost two hundred numbered vignettes. Linearity

is disrupted by forward-looking vignettes like "*41. Parenthetical*" (2012a, 169), static ones like "*138. http://www.google.com/search?client*" (223), which features a philosophical reflection on time, or discontinuous clusters as "*69. The invention of love: part one*" (182), "*88. The invention of love: part two*" (189) and "*182. Love in the ruins*" (256). Generic expectations are challenged by Smith's deployment of different text types to suit her purposes, like the titular menu in "*66. Menu*" (181), an email conversation in "*123. Bye noe*" (210), concrete poetry interwoven with dialogue in "*113. Miele di Luna (two weeks)*" (203), or the script style of "*165. Stage directions*" (241). "*Miele di luna (two weeks)*" emphasizes the surface of the prose, the plasticity of words in order to evoke a mood of self-containment and indulgence for Natalie and Frank's honeymoon in an Italian luxury beach resort. A very different picture of their marriage emerges over a hundred vignettes later in "*Stage directions*," where Smith turns to the conventions of drama to capture the disintegration of their relationship, a prelude to Natalie's breakdown, as she unsuccessfully tries to resist the temptation to arrange an online date with a stranger. In effect, Natalie's well-planned life, her achievement of a certain image of female desirability, has led to feelings of alienation and inauthenticity, which culminate in a spiral of self-berating behavior through her recourse to sexual encounters of a degrading nature.

The development of Natalie and Leah's friendship features prominently in this section, functioning as a barometer that registers the protagonists' disaffection. Significantly, "Host" opens with the incident that forges their relationship, as Natalie saves Leah from drowning at the community pool on their council estate at the age of four. There was no lifeguard at this facility, unlike in more comfortably off neighborhoods, as Natalie's mother complains: "They had a guard up the hill, in Hampstead, for them. Nothing for us" (Smith 2012a, 151). This event sets the context in which the girls' relationship unfolds, suggesting that their bond is grounded in the need for mutual support in an underprivileged environment. Although the interracial nature of their friendship points at a certain degree of conviviality in the racially diverse council state where they grow up in the seventies and eighties, Leah functions like "a sort of passport" into social acceptance for Natalie, allowing her to socialize outside her church and ethnicity. When their relationship lapses due to the interference of Natalie's mother, who finds the dildo that Leah had given Natalie as a birthday gift, Natalie feels like an "outcast," "revealed and exposed" (167). During their girlhood years, when the friends are immersed in the process of becoming the individuals we encounter in the text, their relationship functions as an empowering space of freedom and respect in which their developing selves can thrive. This we see, for instance, in the ease with which Leah accepts Natalie's renaming of herself, or in Natalie's unbiased understanding of Leah's attraction towards other women. As Hirsch remarks, "whereas the connection between mother and daughter is fraught with potential dangers, intragenerational friendships among women offer only the benefits and not the pitfalls of same-sex bonding (1989, 133). In contrast to the stability enjoyed by the friends during their formative years, Smith

imbues their adult relationship with an atmosphere of disconnection, and lacking in intimacy and self-disclosure. Leah is able to see through the cracks of the glossy façade of Natalie's marriage, while Natalie suspects Leah of being depressed due to what she perceives as Leah's stagnant life. Smith reinforces this point in one of the final vignettes of the section, ironically titled "*Catching up*" (258), depicting the friends' meeting in an Irish pub. While the meeting takes place in the midst of Natalie's personal crisis and her sexual escapades, the conversation does not move beyond the superficial.

The question, then, is whether the novel simply depicts female disaffection or whether it also envisions an alternative, a "being elsewhere or otherwise" for Leah and Natalie, to use Butler's terms, (1997, 130). For all its elusiveness, as the text circles around issues without really trying to resolve them in a satisfactory manner, *NW* does gesture towards the protagonists' need for a decentering of their selves, for a leap "out of solipsism into communality," as Smith remarks in her tribute essay to the late author David Foster Wallace (2009b, 283). Appearing in the same collection as "Two Directions for the Novel," Smith's essay "Brief Interviews with Hideous Men: The Difficult Gifts of David Foster Wallace" (2009b) can also be seen to have had a bearing on *NW*, although it has not been invoked in discussions of her novel. The Wallacerian predicament that "awareness must move always in an outward direction, away from the self" (268) constitutes Smith's main critique of her postfeminist subjects—Natalie in particular—who, to use Radner's terms, face the "challenge […] to imagine a sense of community in a culture in which identity and self are generated through individual achievement and fulfillment," and to ease frictions "between economic independence and the need for collective affirmation [...]; between an ethical imperative and self-gratification" (Radner 2011, 197). The female disaffection featured in the text is thus counterbalanced with a discourse of deprivation and social inequality related to race, class and gender, which opens up a potential space for personal reconstruction through ethical engagement with others.

Peopling the North West London world of Leah and Natalie are a host of characters who remind the self-absorbed protagonists of their connections and duties to others. A stark contrast is drawn between those council estate youths who, like Natalie and Leah, managed to make their way in British society and those who failed to overcome the obstacles of race and class and turned to crime and drugs. Shar, Nathan Bogle and Felix Cooper, the latter being the focus of my discussion, may well fit the description of "the failed offspring of state multicultural policies and practices" (Fortier 2008, 40). It is through them that Smith inscribes a narrative of marginality which is linked to Britain's postwar history of migration from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent. Smith creates an atmosphere of familiarity among these characters, the privileged and the downtrodden, who all attended the same comprehensive school and whose paths continue to intersect as adults across the urban coordinates of the novel. Although *NW* could be seen, as its title seems to suggest, as a novel "about being local, about a turn away from cosmopolitan versions of migrancy" (Procter 2003, 126), it features a

"worlded localism," one which engages "profound questions of racial difference, cultural displacement and assimilation" (James 2015, 48). Successful black women like Natalie, as well as the talented multiracial elite to which she and her husband belong, may have acquired a symbolic significance as "harbinger[s] of social change" (McRobbie 2009, 58), but nonetheless Smith maintains a strong correlation between class and race in the novel. Far from subscribing to a celebratory discourse of integration, Smith points at the prevalence of racial inequalities and problematizes the notion of failure as self-responsibility encoded in the ethos of meritocracy.

By bringing Leah and Natalie into relation with Felix, by turning him into their co-protagonist, and his death into a sort of pinnacle in this impressionistic narrative, Smith underscores the idea that although subjects have the capacity to form themselves, they always exist in relation to others. Felix is the only downtrodden character for whom Smith gives us a personal history, making his life "valuable" and therefore his loss "grievable" (Butler 2010, 25). His section, "Guest," a title which significantly turns him into a foil to Natalie, traces the last day of his life as he visits several people across west London, including his Rastafarian father, Lloyd. These encounters, which offer revealing glimpses into Felix's harsh past and his present hopeful condition as a recovered addict, allow Smith to portray this character with more depth than would be otherwise allowed by his brief appearance in the narrative. Smith partly depicts Felix as a product of his background, having been born in a dysfunctional family of Caribbean background and raised in a *halfway house* for troubled black youth in the seventies. His death intrudes into the lives of the protagonists, just as the suicide of Septimus Warren Smith does in a day of the life of Clarissa Dalloway. He is "a latter-day Septimus" (Fernández Carbajal 2016, 86), and ultimately, an updated Leonard Bast, from E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), who has been claimed as the source of Woolf's character (Russell 2005). Like his forerunners, Felix struggles to advance himself nourished by a belief in his own potential and by the redeeming force of his girlfriend Grace. It is Felix's refusal to part with the zirconia earrings that Grace has given him, a gesture paradoxically suggestive of his desperate grasp on the promises of life, which seems to precipitate his stabbing on Albert Road. His murder, however, can be considered a retaliatory act for his empathetic behavior in an incident involving a white woman and two black men on the train he was travelling home earlier. Felix's assailants had felt humiliated and betrayed when he had asked them to make room for a white pregnant woman, "[i]t was a hot day to be in that state. Looking at her made the sweat break across Felix's nose" (Smith 2012a, 145), choosing to honor his duties as a compassionate citizen rather than being guided by race loyalties. This is not a hate crime like that of Jamaican Stephen Lawrence, also mentioned in the novel (170), but the event hints at a certain degree of inter- and intraracial tension in the society depicted in the text.

In a perfect juxtaposition of privilege and plight, also reminiscent of Woolf's novel, the news of Felix's death reaches Leah during a private party as she shelters from the turbulence of the Notting Hill Carnival celebrations going on outside. Nonetheless,

the impact that the murder of Felix ultimately has on Natalie and Leah is more consequential than that of Septimus's suicide on Clarissa. After an argument with her husband over her involvement in the online dating scheme and feeling a suspension of selfhood—"she had no name, no biography, no characteristics" (264)—Natalie goes for a night walk that takes her back to her old neighborhood and may hence be understood as a regressive immersion into and reconnection with her past as Keisha Blake. There she accidentally comes across the crime scene and her former school friend Nathan Bogle, allegedly hiding from the Police because of his involvement in the murder. This encounter gives Natalie a glimpse into the plight of others who, according to her meritocratic ethos, she would normally consider social inferiors and responsible themselves for their failure in life. By witnessing Nathan's shady dealings with a group of women on the street, for instance, Natalie is able to see through the stereotype of the drug-addict and gain insight into the ordeal of Shar's life: "'Who was that girl, the little one, in the headscarf?' 'Huh? Why you worrying about her?' [...] 'Wasn't she at Brayton? She looked familiar to me. Is her name Shar?' 'Didn't know her then. That ain't her name with me?' 'What's her name with you?' 'We in court? I call my girls all sorts.' 'What do you do to your girls? You send them out to thieve? You pimp them out?'" (279-280). In this scene Shar has ceased to be a mere anecdote used to spice up a dinner party conversation (77), and becomes an example of a male-dominated and exploited woman with no control over her life. It is true that Shar remains an underdeveloped character with no history or interior life, a fact consistent with the postfeminist focus of the text. At the same time, though, through her the author obliquely addresses the exclusions engendered by the postfeminist paradigm, given the continuity of gender-related inequalities, without adopting this issue as a central part of her agenda.

By placing Natalie's moment of awareness happen in the midst of her personal breakdown, Smith points at the possibility of a renewed life for her which is less self-serving and more outward directed. Whether her breakdown will lead to a real breakthrough is uncertain, but, as the narrative reaches its close, she seems immersed in the process of understanding that, as David Forster Wallace asserts in his popular speech *This is Water* (2009), on which Smith also draws in her tribute essay: "[T]here are all different kinds of freedom, and the kind that is most precious you will not hear much talked about in the great outside world of winning and achieving and displaying [...] [It] involves attention, and awareness, and discipline, and effort, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them, over and over, in myriad petty little unsexy ways, every day" (Wallace 2009, 119-120). A further moment of outward-directed awareness occurs when Natalie is touched by the "depth of misery" she perceives in the eyes of Lloyd and Grace, featured on the cover of the *Kilburn Times* (Smith 2012a, 287) and feels compelled to respond to the family's appeal for information following Felix's murder. It must be noted, however, that her empathetic and civic-minded attitude is undermined by her continuing belief in self-reliance, implied in her comment that "We wanted to get out [...] they [Shar, Felix]

didn't want it enough" (293), which shows her indifference to the contingencies of family background, race, class and gender highlighted elsewhere in the text. That both empathy and lack of feeling coexist in the final brushstrokes of Natalie's portrayal may be explained by Smith's reluctance to "pin" her characters down and rather to show their natural inconsistencies in a nonjudgmental way (Bollen 2014). We may feel drawn to give her empathy some credit if we agree with Wallace's claim that a fundamental role of fiction is the articulation of a character's "capacity for joy, charity, genuine connections, for stuff that doesn't have a price," rather than the easy condemnation of the materialism of modern life (McCaffery 1993, 132). The personal breakdowns suffered by the protagonists at the end of the narrative open up new possibilities of self-construction. Natalie's musings that "freedom was absolute and everywhere […] You couldn't hope to find it only in the old, familiar places" (2012a, 291) suggest a desire to stretch her self-identity beyond the confines of her status and occupation. Leah's statement, "I don't have to apologize for my choices" (292), made when her husband discovers her use of contraception, signals a new disposition to be outspoken about her disagreements with prescriptions of heterosexuality and motherhood. Even though the novel ends with the protagonists both at an impasse, Smith suggests that the way forward is towards a more fulfilling pursuit of freedom that does not alienate them from establishing meaningful and caring connections with others, friends and ultimately strangers.

In keeping with "the ethical investment with the other" which characterizes her work (Tolan 2013, 140), Smith underscores the disempowering aspects of discourses of free choice and self-determination for the lives of middle-class women, pointing at the liberating potential of forms of collective affirmation. The sentiments of disaffection, joylessness and injustice that plague the narrative become attenuated in a poignant concluding scene of female bonding that sees the friends respond jointly to the call of Felix's family for public assistance in locating witnesses to the crime. Although a small-scale initiative, this gesture can be interpreted as an affirmation of civil society, understood as "ties of affection, friendship and community" (Wolfe 1989, 240). This moment of convergence invests female friendship with ethical and civic undertones that transcend the personal, as friendship becomes a "context from which individuals can perform their public duties" (Frazer 2008, 246), given its potential to "generate externalities […] which benefit all" (253). The novel's denouement reinstates the link between female friendship and altruism that Smiths intimates in *On Beauty* (2005), which ends with Kiki intending to sell the painting she inherits from her friend Carlene and donate the money to a Haitian Support NGO.

At the same time, readers cannot fail to notice that Smith invests this scene with a deeply personal sisterly aura, as the following description of the phone call indicates: "Apart from the fact that she [Natalie] drew the phone from her own pocket, the whole process reminded her of nothing so much as those calls the two good friends used to make to boys they liked, back in the day, and always in a slightly hysterical state of

mind, two heads pressed together over a handset" (2012a, 294). Smith's recourse to this sororal image amounts to an affirmation of the female plot, and the importance of same-sex bonding to female identity. In the novel's final scene, the author takes her protagonists momentarily back to a "pre-oedipal, pre-separational female past, as yet uncontaminated by social institutions," to use Hirsch's words (1989, 184). Despite the author's reluctance to offer an idealized portrait of female relations, the final encounter between Leah and Natalie stresses the qualities of female solidarity, loyalty and understanding in the face of the dilemmas affecting the lives of contemporary women as they handle their freedom. In *NW,* it is neither motherhood nor marriage that emerges as the paradigm of care, but rather the friendship that the protagonists profess towards each other and towards others.

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(Re)Imagining and (Re)Visiting Homelands in
Looking for Transwonderland:
Travels in Nigeria by Noo Saro-Wiwa

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Through the analysis of Noo Saro-Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* (2012), this paper will explore the ambivalent perception towards modernity in present-day Nigeria which affects Saro-Wiwa as a diasporic traveler-writer visiting her motherland. It will be argued that the author's position as an insider/outsider leads to a reformulation of Paul Gilroy's roots/routes dichotomy which ultimately affects her reconstruction of Nigeria as her Imaginary Homeland. Starting from an analysis of her liminal position as a prodigal-foreigner, this paper will consider what is perceived as the essence of Nigeria, and how Saro-Wiwa inscribes the country within the mutually exclusive dichotomy modernity/authenticity. The contradictions of such a binary division will be related to Saro-Wiwa's rejection of modernity, and her desire to preserve Nigeria's traditions. The approach taken aims to underline to what extent her inclination towards the preservation of cultural heritage over modernization can be associated with her diasporic need to have an Imaginary Homeland that represents a nurturing heritage source.

Keywords: Nigerian diaspora; travel writing; modernization; Imaginary Homelands; roots/routes

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(Re)Imaginando y (re)visitando la patria en *Looking for Transwonderland:*
Travels in Nigeria de Noo Saro-Wiwa

Este artículo analiza el libro de viajes *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* (2012), de Noo Saro-Wiwa, y la ambivalencia de su autora en relación con la actual modernización de Nigeria, que afecta a Saro-Wiwa como escritora diaspórica a la hora de narrar el viaje a su país natal. Mi objetivo es argumentar que la posición que ocupa la autora, al sentirse

simultáneamente local y extranjera, conlleva una reformulación de la dicotomía *roots/routes* de Paul Gilroy, que finalmente afecta la reconstrucción que Saro-Wiwa hace de Nigeria como *Imaginary Homeland* o patria imaginaria. Partiendo de la posición liminal de la autora como *prodigal-foreigner*, este artículo se centra en analizar lo que Saro-Wiwa percibe como la esencia de Nigeria, y el modo en el que inscribe al país en la dicotomía modernidad/autenticidad, presentando ambas categorías como mutuamente excluyentes. Las contradicciones de esta división se relacionarán con el rechazo que Saro-Wiwa manifiesta hacia la modernidad, y con su deseo de preservar las tradiciones nigerianas. El enfoque adoptado pretende subrayar hasta qué punto su inclinación hacia la preservación del patrimonio cultural nigeriano, a costa de la modernización del país, puede asociarse con la necesidad diaspórica de tener una patria imaginaria a la cual recurrir como fuente de legado cultural.

Palabras clave: diáspora nigeriana; literatura de viajes; modernización; *Imaginary Homelands*; *roots/routes*

1. Introduction

When *Lonely Planet* states that, "as a travel destination, Nigeria seems more a place to avoid than to book a flight to" (Andrew et al. 2007, 453), it is to be wondered whether their aim is to persuade or rather dissuade future travelers. Nigeria is constructed and translated for tourists as a place more likely related to "corruption, ethnic violence and email scams" (2007, 453) than to the fact that it "has produced music and literature whose influence spreads far beyond the continent" (2007, 453). As we read on, this kind of discourse progressively shifts its focus towards the marketing, exoticizing and otherizing of Nigerian landscapes and cities, championing an image that is intended to appeal to adventurers who dare to visit the "Dark Continent."

Leaving *Lonely Planet*'s neocolonialist discourse aside, fictional and nonfictional representations of Nigeria from the mid-1980s onwards tend to convey Afro-pessimism, "the belief that the continent and its populace is hopelessly imprisoned in its past, trapped {in} a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, and held hostage to corrupt institutions" (Gikandi 2011, 9). Afro-pessimism's main danger resides in its perpetuating "traditional Western notions of Africa as the 'other' of modern reason and progress, [which] seems to be the only logical response to political failure and economic stagnation in Africa" (2011, 9). This can be appreciated in fiction writing, as Kehinde states, by discussing, among other works, Ben Okri's "Laughter Beneath the Bridge" (1993) and Chika Unigwe's "Retail Therapy" (2005), where Lagos is depicted as a wasteland where "unemployment, oppression, social stratification and neglect […] [constitute] a death trap for the masses who have nothing in the midst of plenty" (Kehinde 2007, 234-235). In some cases, such as the *Lonely Planet* guide mentioned above, Afro-pessimism may even entail twenty-first-century Orientalist travel writing practices (Said [1978] 2003) which recall the empire's "obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself" (Pratt [1992] 2008, 4).

Counter to Afro-pessimism runs Afropolitanism, "a way of being in the world, refusing on principle any form of victim identity [yet being] aware of the injustice and violence inflicted on the continent and its people" (Mbembe 2007, 28-29). Afropolitans, "not citizens, but Africans, of the world" (Selasi 2013, 528), advocate "redefining" and "complicating" Africa, while refusing to "oversimplify" and "essentializ[e]" Africanness (529) (see also Eze 2014; Ifekwunigwe 2003). The master narratives constructed by history, guidebooks and the media are rejected, encouraging Afropolitans' multifaceted insights into modern Africa. Still, despite the turn-of-the-century image of Nigeria offered by authors in the diaspora such as Chimamanda Adichie, Ben Okri and Helon Habila, "very little has been written about [modern Nigeria] in a straightforward, nonfictional but personal way" (Bures 2012). In this respect, the object of this article, Noo Saro-Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland* (2012), responds to the absence of nonfictional representations of Nigeria and explores to what extent Saro-Wiwa's (re)vision and (re)creation of Nigeria in her travelogue are affected by her belonging to its diaspora. Daughter of the Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, Noo Saro-Wiwa was raised

in London, and her travelogue recalls summer visits to Nigeria during her childhood. Yet, Noo Saro-Wiwa recounts that, after her father's execution in 1995, an execution which provoked Nigeria's eviction from the Commonwealth of Nations, her links with Nigeria were "severed" (Saro-Wiwa [2012] 2013, 7), for the country came to symbolize "fears and disappointments" (8). In this regard, *Looking for Transwonderland* is the tool through which she conveys how she overcame these feelings by means of journeying through her homeland. At the same time, the journey alters the configuration of her diasporic identity, since she struggles to negotiate her position as "part-returnee and part-tourist" (9).

In discussing the (re)formulation of Saro-Wiwa's diasporic identity during the journey, Paul Gilroy's roots/routes dichotomy (1993) acquires a new dimension inasmuch as travel writing does not usually involve diasporic subjects returning to their motherland. Gilroy's seminal theory discusses migrants and diasporic communities finding new ways of belonging and remarks that "modern black political culture has always been more interested in the relationship of identity to roots and rootedness than in seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation that is more appropriately approached via the homonym routes" (1993, 19). This has been understood as a vindication of the fluidity of diasporic subjects which implies that "the grounded certainties of *roots* are replaced with the transnational contingencies of *routes*" (McLeod [2010] 2012, 250; emphasis in the original). Following this train of thought, Gilroy intertwines the creation of routes to the transnational character of identities and the fragmentation that arises in journeying between countries, rather than when wandering through one's own land. Yet, Saro-Wiwa's position as a returnee traveler-writer prompts the creation of a new type of routes, which I will define through the oxymoronic expression "Homeland Routes," and which stands for the physical journey through her motherland. Such a journey favors her coming to terms with and reattaching to Nigeria, after years of detachment as a result of the trauma that her father's death implied. Traversing Nigeria and tracing Homeland Routes allows her to reflect on her personal history and the history of the country as she visits unknown places and cultures, thus (re)discovering the fluidity of her identity.

Additionally, the creation of Homeland Routes motivates the formation of new roots, which I define with the oxymoron "Fluid Roots." The term differs from Gilroy's roots in that it neither evokes a feeling of fixed identity linked to a specific place nor an absolutist discourse of a nationalist or ethnic belonging. Tracing Homeland Routes allows Saro-Wiwa to remap her sense of belonging as she rediscovers Nigeria, hence creating Fluid Roots which facilitate the synthesis of her diasporic transnational nature with her rootedness to her native country. That is to say, her insider/outsider status allows her to reconnect with her motherland during her journey. Furthermore, while Gilroy's routes can be considered a substitute for fixed cultural roots, in Saro-Wiwa's context Homeland Routes and Fluid Roots are complementary, since the tracing of the former fosters the generation of the latter.

Following this line of thought, the tracing of Homeland Routes is related to Saro-Wiwa's reformulation of what Rushdie defines as "Imaginary Homelands" (1991, 10), a paramount term in analyzing diasporic negotiation of identities and (un)belongingness. To borrow Rushdie's words: "physical alienation [...] means that [diasporic subjects] will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost" (10), which leads them to "create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands" (10). In this regard, the notion of travel literature as a hybrid genre, where authenticity and storytelling elements are intertwined (Korte [1996] 2000, 10), engages with the possibility of (re)writing or (re)constructing Imaginary Homelands, unreal by definition, while tracing Homeland Routes. *Looking for Transwonderland* can, then, be considered Saro-Wiwa's rewriting of her Imaginary Homeland, though not (re)created from abroad, as Rushdie (1991) originally formulates, but rather from Home.

As I will attempt to show in the following sections, at the end of the journey, Saro-Wiwa may have reformulated her conception of Nigeria as her Imaginary Homeland, but despite her actual return and her physical presence in Nigeria, the country remains imaginary to her. This is seen in her ambivalence towards modernization in present-day Nigeria, and her perception of its essence during her five-month journey through the country. I will begin by locating *Looking for Transwonderland*'s position within the genre of travel writing, and by exploring Saro-Wiwa's oscillating attitude towards modernity and what constitutes the essence of contemporary Nigerian cities. In her view, the country's attempts to modernize itself are often deemed not only inauthentic but also a failure. This I shall relate to her thoughts on the clash between modernity and tradition in her descriptions of the most nurturing experiences during the journey, being those involving contact with Nigeria's heritage. To conclude, I will associate her desire to preserve Nigerian traditions with her diasporic need to have an ancestral home representing a heritage source, while at the same time enjoying the modernity of England, her chosen home. In wanting traditions to be preserved, Nigeria becomes a place for her mind to turn to, her Imaginary Homeland, revis(it)ed in *Looking for Transwonderland*. However, the conflictive nature of Saro-Wiwa's desires will be analyzed, since in spite of her longing for the preservation of traditional ways of life, modernization is at times described as allowing the preservation of ancestral areas and practices, corruption being harshly criticized in terms of its role in preventing Nigeria's development.

2. THE PRODIGAL-FOREIGNER: A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY AWAY FROM DARK TRAVEL

To understand Saro-Wiwa's formulations on Nigeria's modernity, it is essential to unravel both *Looking for Transwonderland*'s role within postcolonial travel writing, and the strategies she uses to inscribe herself within an insider/outsider position. Travel writing theory has traditionally presented patterns of journeying where the itineraries

feature stages such as "departure, passage and arrival" (Leed 1991, 23). "Departure" here stands for detachment from a context (56), its essence residing "not only in the anxiety of parting but also in the resulting dividedness of self as one takes leave of a localized identity" (44). The "passage" entails "an experience of motion across boundaries and through space […] [where] the passenger becomes more conscious of self as a 'viewer' or 'observer'" (56). Finally, "arrival" is attachment to a context (56), "a process of 'identification,' as the traveler identifies the place and as the place identifies the […] traveler" (85). However, this framework is altered in journeys where members of diasporic communities (re)visit their birthplace.

The stages mentioned above do not suit Saro-Wiwa's experience, specifically in what constitutes her arrival. While London unambiguously stands as her point of departure, her fluid diasporic identity complicates the description of her passage, not permitting the moment of arrival per se to be identified, for she belongs in Nigeria even if she is also a tourist. Saro-Wiwa's passage could even be interpreted as a secondary journey, encompassed within the principal one. After spending three weeks in Lagos, she sets forth on a tour, heading northwards, and eventually southwards, traversing Eastern Nigeria. This route can be construed as itself containing a new departure, passage and arrival, given that the familiarity of her native south is left behind as Saro-Wiwa starts her adventure in the unknown north, where her dislocation predominates, thus signaling a clearer perceived moment of arrival.

Despite describing the uncertainty of what she is to encounter in the northern territories, Saro-Wiwa does not fall into patterns of otherizing or exoticizing Nigeria. In this regard *Looking for Transwonderland* proves to be an instance of "*counter*travel writing" (Holland and Huggan [2000] 2003, 21; emphasis in the original) insofar as it resists "*neo*colonial process[es] by which cultural 'otherness' is assimilated, reproduced and consumed" (48; emphasis in the original). Edwards and Graulund argue that such is the potential of postcolonial travel literature that countertravel narratives are not merely writing back weapons with which to question the Eurocentric perception of the genre (2011, 2), but rather offer "frames of reference that exist outside the boundaries of European knowledge production" (3). In this sense, as a postcolonial traveler-narrator, Saro-Wiwa shapes *Looking for Transwonderland* as a writing back tool.

Postcolonial travel accounts also challenge Orientalism as the underlying paradigm manifested in what Foley and Lennon call "Dark Tourism," a term employed "to signify a fundamental shift in the way in which death, disaster and atrocity are being handled by those who offer associated tourism 'products'" ([2000] 2006, 3). They further analyze how "the politics, economics, sociologies and technologies of the contemporary world are as much important factors in the events upon which this dark tourism is focused as they are central to the selection and interpretation of sites and events which become tourism products" (3). Since Foley and Lennon's analysis does not focus on countries with a history of colonialism, for the purpose of this essay I will employ Clarke, Dutton and Johnston's concept of "Dark Travel" (2014,

221), which I consider more appropriate in that it specifically refers to postcolonial contexts. In dealing with African travel writing Dark Travel involves

> a set of cultural practices pertaining to the experience, and importantly, the discourse of travel in sites that are marked as 'dark' (i.e., traumatizing, disturbing, unsettling) either by dint of their history or their present commodification [...] Postcolonial travel is in a sense always already 'shadowed' by the legacies of colonialisms past and present. (221; emphasis in the original)

Dark Travel "concerns the 'emplotment' of Africa and Africans within specific Western scripted narratives" (Dunn 2007, 485) dictated by a still existent "imperial I/eye" (Holland and Huggan [2000] 2003, 15). In contemporary African travel narratives, such meaning-making strategies are mocked and denounced in works like Binyavanga Wainaina's satirical proposal on "How to Write About Africa" (2005). Saro-Wiwa, however, steers clear of the holistic perceptions and essentialist practices which Dark Travel connotes. In like manner, she avoids subscribing theories in which travel writing is either "demonized" (Edwards and Graulund 2011, 1) or deemed as fundamentally imperialist in its essence and practices (Korte [1996] 2000, 153). In a recent talk in the British Library, Saro-Wiwa underscored that more African writers should turn to travel rather than novel writing (Akinwolere, Edwards and Saro-Wiwa 2014). She engages with the Afropolitan spirit and advocates the feasibility of de-Westernizing the genre—thus allowing African readers to identify themselves with the traveler-narrator—and explores subtexts which non-African traveler-writers cannot grasp. In this regard, *Looking for Transwonderland* challenges *Lonely Planet*'s discourse and, as Birrell points out in his review of the memoir, "peels away many of the clichés that envelop Nigeria, [revealing] both the beauty and brutality of this slumbering superpower" (Birrell 2012). Saro-Wiwa maintains that her perspective as an outsider granted her the distance necessary to observe, and hence *Looking for Transwonderland* tries to picture a non-idealized, non-pessimistic view of Nigeria (Africa Book Club 2013). Nevertheless, she reclaims her Nigerianness, and thus, her belonging. Hence, *Looking for Transwonderland* intertwines "deep familiarity and surreal strangeness, a sense of knowing and not knowing a country" (This Is Africa 2015).

In this respect, Saro-Wiwa epitomizes what Knowles has recently referred to as the "prodigal-foreigner," a traveler "occupying a liminal position in a transnational space [...], neither accepted nor rejected, not entirely 'at home' nor totally 'alien'" (2014, 52). Knowles introduces this concept in relation to Michael Ondaatje's memoir *Running in the Family* (1982), which depicts his experience as a returnee in Sri Lanka, which has its parallels in Saro-Wiwa's return to Nigeria. "Situated between identities, cultures, and languages" (Knowles 2014, 52), Saro-Wiwa's (re)vision of her homeland constitutes a (re)construction of the country in which her foreigner-self contributes as much as her native-self. In this context, the term "prodigal" implies

homecoming and "a reconciliation between returnee and father-figure" (41), which in Saro-Wiwa's case is not materialized, for "there is no father-figure to return to" (41), a feature that establishes yet another connection with Ondatjee's memoir. However, the pivotal role that Ken Saro-Wiwa has, both in the germination of his daughter's project and in her conception of the country, is evident in the travelogue's recounting of Noo Saro-Wiwa's intention of coming to terms with Nigeria, long after her father's death.

In this manner, her revis(it)ing Nigeria allows her to reconnect with her past and overcome her adverse feelings towards her homeland. This idea, together with the fact of her representing a prodigal-foreigner, is reinforced in the preface:

> Re-engaging with Nigeria meant disassociating it from the painful memories lurking in my mind […] I needed to travel freely around the country, as part-returnee and part-tourist with the innocence of outsider, untarnished by personal associations. Then hopefully, I could learn to be less scared of it […] and consider it a potential 'home'. (Saro-Wiva [2012] 2013, 9)

As a prodigal-foreigner, the author discloses the artificiality of her Imaginary Homeland by means of juxtaposing childhood memories of her visits to Nigeria (up to 1990), and her adult experiences on the road. This now/then dichotomy seems to be a recurrent trademark in diasporic traveler-writers who are visiting home, as suggested in *Running in the Family*, and as Doris Lessing's *African Laughter* (1992) brings to the foregrounds in her "'re(dis)cover[ing]' the [Zimbabwe] of her youth" (Korte [1996] 2000, 173). In Saro-Wiwa's narration, the contrast between events that had taken place in the past and those taking place during the journey illustrates the slipperiness of memory. When recalling her childhood, her desire for a more modern Nigeria remains a constant, in contrast with her adult desire to preserve its heritage. Furthermore, she reveals that in her youth, before her father's death, her parents forced her to travel there year after year (Saro-Wiwa [2012] 2013, 3), a fact that influenced her vision of Nigeria as a child, and her desire for its modernization, which in retrospect she considers biased. By the same token, *Looking for Transwonderland*, as the rewriting of her Imaginary Homeland, may well also be tinged with biased (re)views concerning her need to find and preserve Nigeria's cultural legacy, which has been progressively lost with its modernization.

In the light of the above considerations, Saro-Wiwa's status as a prodigal-foreigner and postcolonial traveler-writer reveals her condition as a transnational subject, which connotes a "fluid attitude to questions of race and class, travel and belonging, home and away" (Knowles 2014, 14). Consequently, Saro-Wiwa's memoir epitomizes the critical side of travel writing: "its capacity to expose and attack the invasive practices of mass tourism" (Holland and Huggan [2000] 2003, 3), inasmuch as it bears witness to travel writing's "challenge to prevailing stereotypes and cultural myths of place" (3). Thus, as she traces her Homeland Routes and discovers new sides

to her character and her motherland, Saro-Wiwa conveys the transnational nature of Afropolitanism, offering a view of Nigeria that does not necessarily correspond with that proposed by guidebooks and other diasporic authors' narratives.

3. *Danfos*, Corruption and *Jagga Jagga*: (De)Coding Urban Modernity

This section will introduce what Saro-Wiwa perceives as Nigeria's essence, that is, its heritage and the messiness of Nigerian life, even though they will not have equal relevance at the end of the journey in her reimagining of her homeland. I will develop these points in relation to four episodes:[1] her description of Lagos' corruption; her impressions on the Transwonderland Amusement Park (Ibadan); her visit to the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove (Osogbo); and her depiction of the capital, Abuja. In commenting on her perceptions on Nigeria, her mockery never tarnishes her descriptions of the country's tribal heritage and traditional practices. Her satirical remarks are exclusively directed at mocking Westernization and the blatant pretenses of grandeur she finds. This can be appreciated from the very beginning of her journey, in her wry response to the sign that reads "Welcome to Lagos," "almost chilling in its apparent sarcasm, like some kind of sick joke" (Saro-Wiva [2012] 2013, 12). Similarly, she considers the motto printed on Lagos' car plates, "Centre of Excellence," "a ridiculous conceit if ever there was one" (12).

As a traveler-returnee, her foreigner perspective allows her to see the religious, political and social veil which clouds the judgment of many Nigerians. At the same time, she feels free to speak frankly, endorsed as she is by her cultural affiliation to the country and its strange familiarity. In her belief that corruption is ingrained in modern Nigeria, hustling and manipulation are promptly introduced as "the lifeblood of Nigeria's economy" (23). Perhaps the best illustration of this point is the description of the bustling activity taking place within Lagos' *danfos*, the characteristic Nigerian minibus-taxis. *Danfos* can be interpreted as microcosms of Lagos where religion, politics and begging are placed at the same level. As a traveler, the *danfo* is a means to see Lagos passing in front of her eyes, both because it moves throughout the "twenty-first-century urban jungle" (23), and because the preachers, hustlers and beggars entering *danfos* are regarded as metonymic representations of Nigeria's essence. In this vein, the chaotic traffic, which *Lonely Planet* regards as "jammed with speed freaks" (Andrew et al. 2007, 458), can be considered a metonymy of Nigeria's chaotic way of life. As will be explored in relation to Abuja, Saro-Wiwa learns to yearn and respect chaos as a symbol of Nigerianness.

Incidentally, her (re)actions in the *danfo* bear witness to the impossibility of determining a moment of arrival as perceived by Leed (1991, 85), as "initial identifications

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[1] In the analysis of Saro-Wiwa's journey offered in this paper I shall follow the chronological order presented in the travelogue.

[are] normally based upon the appearance and manner of transport used by the guest" (101). Inside the *danfo* Saro-Wiwa remains silent, a sign of her strangeness, consciously avoiding being identified as an outsider. This, though, grants her the freedom to observe and describe hawkers, hustlers, beggars and preachers alike. Ironically, for all of them, *danfos* are "especially handy for securing a captive audience" (Saro-Wiwa [2012] 2013, 22). As if in a rehearsed performance, one by one they stand in front of the passengers, trying to persuade them to join a church, buy a motivational pamphlet or a product to improve women's fertility or just to give them some *nairas* (21-22). In this context, "belief, and specially self-belief, seems a vital ingredient in helping people get through life in Lagos […] in an environment that punishes the unambitious, the sick and the incapacitated" (23). Against this background, modernization in fact equates to decay in a country where bribery, nepotism and political corruption diminish "the quality and quantity of everything in the country, including [Nigerians'] self-esteem" (24).

In this same line, novels written from the diaspora often picture a disturbing futureless Lagos, "mysterious[ly] housing the past and determining or destroying the future" (Kehinde 2007, 232). Conversely, Saro-Wiwa does not endorse her descriptions with omens of futurelessness, thus resisting Afro-pessimistic or dystopian analyses of the country, and specifically Lagos, as a metonymy of Nigeria. Neither does she introduce detailed descriptions of personal experiences where she is in danger, thus distancing *Looking for Transwonderland* from travelogues such as Teju Cole's *Everyday is for the Thief* (2014). In spite of being a woman traveling alone in Lagos, whose "crime rate [is] out of control" (Andrew et al. 2007, 458)—one of the first pieces of information offered by *Lonely Planet*—Saro-Wiwa hardly gives voice to any anxiety in this respect. Rather, she focuses on censuring what provokes Nigeria's deterministic environment, unquestionably alluding to the culture of corruption. In this context, the selection of the information that she presents the reader with can be related both to the rewriting of her Imaginary Homeland and to the creation of new Fluid Roots, as she progressively achieves her purpose of coming to terms with the country which she rejected due to her family history. Equally important is her criticism of Nigerians' religious fervor, since "years of economic struggle and political corruption seem to have focused Nigerians' attention on God more strongly than before" (Saro-Wiva [2012] 2013, 63). In this vein, Saro-Wiwa believes that Nigerians' "reliance on God to change material circumstances will ultimately hold [the country] back even more than corruption" (304).

After three weeks in Lagos, Saro-Wiwa heads northwards toward Ibadan and Abuja, where Homeland Routes will be traced further, fostering her reattachment to Nigeria and the ultimate creation of Fluid Roots, but also prompting somber reflections on modernity. From Ibadan, she progressively heads northwards, where she spends some weeks before heading southwards, through Eastern Nigeria. Thus, Ibadan is her first stop after leaving Lagos; there she visits the university her father attended and the Transwonderland Amusement Park. Transwonderland is promptly demystified as an epitome of the modern Nigeria that she longed for during her childhood, which she

now regards as a Western-influenced wish. What she imagined as a "Disney-esque promised land that was lustrous, modern, kitsch and fun" (98) is judged with her adult perception of modernity as being full of "fake textures and colours" (98). In spite of this, Saro-Wiwa admits that, as an adult (tourist), she still wishes somehow "for Nigeria to 'achieve' and be a place that people admire and want to visit; a credible tourist destination" (98). Admittedly, her "prodigal-self" is revealed in her remaining desire for Nigeria to be appreciated worldwide; her "foreigner-self," though, is equally present in her need as a traveler to make the most of her journey.

Although her guidebook describes Transwonderland as "the closest thing Nigeria has to Disney World" (98), she in fact finds it "a forlorn landscape of motionless machinery [...] A handful of people walk[ing] around the decrepit park, surveying the desolation" (99). Yet Saro-Wiwa wonders how in a country where "nothing ever lasts" (100) Transwonderland and other similar institutions "kept going long after their economic viability had expired, like twitching corpses that refuse to die" (101). In this context, the author satirically describes a group of men hand-washing their clown costumes, "making unwitting mockery" (101) of a plaque praising Transwonderland's status as an "ultra-modern" (101) amusement park. The irony continues in her deeming Babangida, the head of the military government when Transwonderland was erected, a clown. She considers him "a comic Roman emperor too inept to provide for his people, yet equally incapable of offering them a long-lasting distraction from their poverty" (101). In contemplating the scene of the clothes-washing clowns, she concludes that her "childhood dreams of a modern, artificial Nigeria were stalled for the time being" (101).

Still advertised as one of Ibadan's main touristic attractions (Oyo State Government 2016, 6), Transwonderland can be analyzed as an allegory of post-independence Nigeria. Saro-Wiwa's comments on the title of her travelogue reinforce this idea, for she reveals that *Looking for Transwonderland* stands for "a symbol of the Nigeria [she] wanted to experience, the Nigeria separated from the murder and the dictatorship" (Public Radio International 2012). At the same time, she maintains that Transwonderland has fallen into decline, and that the same could be said about Nigeria since independence (Public Radio International 2012). Transwonderland as a trope remains present throughout the journey, one of Saro-Wiwa's conclusions being that "the mirage of a Transwonderland-style holiday wasn't worth chasing" (Saro-Wiwa [2012] 2013, 304). Although, as just shown, her belief of modernity as detrimental is already evident from the very beginning. Nonetheless, her rather ambivalent approach can be clearly appreciated in her visit to the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, where she heads on leaving Transwonderland. The Sacred Grove is a Yoruba religious site which she describes, "after the inglorious kitsch of Transwonderland" (102), as one of Nigeria's "more authentic sights" (102). In this context, the labeling of what she considers authentic conveys a (re)presentation of the country in terms of the mutually exclusive dichotomy modernity/authenticity, whereby modernity compromises tradition. In this sense, Saro-Wiwa's notion of

authenticity does not stand for an Orientalist view of the country and its heritage, but rather as her attempt to protect what she considers areas, values and practices free from "corruption's iron fist" (205). Incidentally, she often finds such values, practices and places in rural areas, far from the cities' scams and bribed politicians. Hence it can be interpreted that Saro-Wiwa's reference to the Yoruba Sacred Grove as 'authentic' aims to suggest incorruptibility, thus standing in opposition to corrupt modern institutions like Transwonderland. Against this background, the dichotomy modernity/authenticity runs throughout the work, as one might expect, associating modernity with Westernization. Nevertheless, in tracing Homeland Routes Saro-Wiwa discovers that situations in which modernity and corruption are not intertwined may also arise.

An insight into such situations presents itself in her visit to the Yoruba Sacred Grove. Due to its recent history, the situation of the grove threatens the feasibility of perceiving authenticity and modernity as fixed binary opposites. "Overrun by urban development" (106), only the support of an Austrian artist in the 1960s enabled the preservation of the 600-year-old Sacred Grove (106). Yet, Saro-Wiwa laments that capitalism and the government's mismanagement have led to the selling off of some portions of the Grove to property developers (109). Although, at first sight, it may appear that modernity and capitalism have done nothing but damage the Grove, the author cannot skirt the fact that it was the Austrian artist's education that "had given her the wherewithal to travel to Nigeria […] and revive the Yoruba cult" (109). This leads her to wonder whether Westernization is the Sacred Grove's nemesis or its savior (109). The riddle can be related to the figure of the prodigal-foreigner, since Saro-Wiwa's desire to protect her cultural legacy from capitalism is intertwined with her acknowledgement that her own "foreign upbringing and education had diluted [her] cultural identity" (109), making it thus impossible to disassociate herself from the West. The foregone conclusion, at this early stage of the journey, is the impossibility of sustaining the antithetical dichotomy modernity/authenticity to describe Nigeria. This manifests an inherent contradiction in Saro-Wiwa's standpoint towards modernity, with her first presenting it in stark opposition to authenticity, but later on admitting that the line dividing both categories is porous. In this case, what is seen as authentic, the Sacred Grove, might not have been preserved, had it not been for a (modernist) Western activist. Concurrently, this point illustrates her difficulties in reshaping her Imaginary Homeland as she continues tracing Homeland Routes, for even if her new Fluid Roots advocate reattachment to Nigeria and the preservation of its heritage, she cannot deny her in-between position as a transnational individual.

As we shall see, the author's fluctuating perception will continue falling into the same patterns throughout the journey. Perhaps nowhere more clearly than during her next stop, Abuja, where, in spite of the Sacred Grove episode, there is a new attempt to (de)code the essence of the (un-)Nigerian. Oddly enough, Abuja, the capital, is labeled as un-Nigerian as a result of its pretense of modernity. As in Lagos, those pretenses are mocked with respect to the motto printed on Abuja car plates, "Centre of Unity,"

which "describes Abuja perfectly, since the city seems to have united Nigerians in the view that it's the dullest place on earth" (111). This comment further reinforces Saro-Wiwa's claim that "try as it might, Abuja hasn't quite reached that ever-shifting benchmark of 'modernity'" (113).

In this part, she recollects visiting the capital as a child, when "Abuja was the type of city [she] dreamed about […] [in] fantasis[ing] about how Nigeria *ought* to be" (110; emphasis in the original). As in Transwonderland, she promptly acknowledges that her childish eyes could not see accurately, that they "couldn't articulate [Abuja's] sense of inauthenticity and fabrication" (110). Even if "that fantasy of Abuja as an upmarket urban paradise had been partially realized" (111), the city had an "eerie thoroughly un-Nigerian serenity" (126). The author considers it a "shame that [Abuja] could only achieve its orderliness by stripping itself of everyday Nigerian life" (126). What the city lacks, Nigeria's essence, seems to remain in Lagos' chaotic rhythm, the so-called "*jagga jagga* of Nigerian life […] slang for 'messed up'" (243; emphasis in the original). Interestingly enough, Nigeria's *jagga jagga* has a negative undertone which proves to be relevant in Saro-Wiwa's conclusions at the end of the journey, for she admits that the chaos, far from being an "embarrassment to [their] politicians […] [became] vital for to their [mischievous] operations" (121).

In these circumstances, Saro-Wiwa openly admits feeling an outsider in Abuja, where she finds only "reminders of the real Nigeria" (112) among its "cleanliness and dreary order" (112). Significantly, an aspect which condemns Abuja to un-Nigerianness is the banning of *okadas*, the motorcycle-like taxis, which together with *danfos* are the most popular means of transport in Nigerian cities. As a traveler, *okadas* "appealed to a downwardly mobile side to [her] character [she] hadn't known existed" (128). In keeping with this line of thought, her detachment from Lagos, its means of transport and its traffic, which metonymically represents Nigeria, prompts the rediscovery of the self-in-motion. In other words, her feeling of strangeness in Abuja and her defamiliarized descriptions, together with the fact that she misses the *okadas* and the mobility that they represent, lead her to discover a new character trait related to Afropolitans' mobility. Hence, the experience highlights the constant reconfiguration of diasporic subjects' fluid identity. What is more, her missing of an element considered quintessentially Nigerian arouses a feeling of (re)attachment to the country, thus creating Fluid Roots.

In essence, Lagos, even if corrupt, is considered to contain the quintessence of present-day Nigeria, its chaotic *jagga jagga*. In Transwonderland, Saro-Wiwa leaves behind her childhood dreams of a modern Nigeria, heading to Abuja, where her dislocation becomes apparent in her witnessing of what she considers failed attempts at modernization. That said, Lagos, Transwonderland and Abuja are purely urban landscapes, which is relevant in the sense that the contradictions of her discourse arise in non-urban scenarios. As the episode of the Yoruba Sacred Grove reflects, and as the following section will illustrate, rural landscapes bear witness to the impossibility of completely isolating modernity from tradition.

4. Traditional Contexts: Patronage, Masquerades and the Nigerian Family

The tenor of this section will be defined by Saro-Wiwa's consideration of the experiences involving traditional cultural practices being the most nourishing part of her journey. As she observes at the end of the travelogue:

> I had come to love many things about Nigeria: our indigenous heritage, the dances, the masks, the music […] I, the progressive urbanite, had become a lover of nature and pre-colonial, animist ceremony […] Yet Nigeria, for all its sapphire rivers and weddings and apes, couldn't seduce me fully when all roads snaked back to corruption. (304)

After traversing Nigeria's middle belt, Saro-Wiwa journeys through the northern provinces of Kano, Nguru, Bauchi, Jos, Yankari, Maiduguri and Sukur, where her southern language, customs, religion and clothes emphasize her dislocation and foreignness in her own country due to the cultural clash between Nigeria's north and south. From northern Sukur, she takes a flight to Cross River State to visit the southern territories of Calabar, Port Harcourt, her native town, and Ogoniland, the land of her ancestors, before returning to Lagos. I will focus here on three representative episodes in her process of reimagining her Homeland while constructing Homeland Routes: a Durbar ceremony in Kano, her description of a village in Sukur and an epiphany in Calabar when she heads southwards. The first two episodes take place in the north, "foreign enough to make [Saro-Wiwa] feel like a tourist" (138), a feeling she longs for after leaving Abuja: "without family connections here, I planned on exploring the region as […] a pure tourist [, so] I could replace my increasing emotional baggage with a (metaphorical) knapsack and travel lightly. That was the plan, at least" (138-139). The passage contains a proleptic insight, for she will not travel as 'lightly' as she intends. On the contrary, the north will progressively increase her dislocation, making her feel more "foreigner" and less "prodigal" than she has felt in more modern areas of the country. Nevertheless, the north will deepen her feeling of belongingness to her tribal group, the Ogoni people, for her identity is essentialized into being "very much an Ogoni and a Christian" (143). This is first perceived in Kano, described as "the true north […] [, its] weaker Western cultural influence [being] very foreign to [Saro-Wiwa]" (143).

In Kano, Saro-Wiwa attends the annual Durbar festival in the Muslim Hausa-Fulani culture. Saro-Wiwa is amazed by the ancestral ceremony, whose aim is to display grandeur and pay homage to local leaders. Delighted with the majesty of the ceremony and the colorfulness of the northern warriors' attire, she reflects on how sad it would be "ever to see it disappear in the name of modernization" (161), for she considers it "the only chance for a community to display orderliness, glamour and rectitude in an otherwise shabby and incompetent world" (161). Saro-Wiwa goes as far as stating that the end of the annual Durbar represents Kano's return "to the chaos and indignity of modern life" (162). A thought-provoking reference, since the same

chaos which was praised before, and will be longed for later on, is now associated with indignity. In a similar vein, she recognizes that "this sort of traditional [method of] rul[ing]—the amount of patronage involved, the (governmental) expense of maintaining palaces and emirs' salaries—seems inefficient and outdated in any part of the world (161). Hence, modernization appears to be a much more viable option, insofar as patronage hinders Nigeria's economic progress. Its practice makes it "imperative for civilian politicians to maintain their positions of political power at all costs" (Falola and Heaton 2008, 8) since access to government funds is restricted to those with influence, a fact which results in violence and manipulation surrounding elections. When in Abuja, Saro-Wiwa criticizes Nigeria's present patronage, where "politics and resource control [are] intertwined" (122). The inherent contradiction remains in the fact that as an Afropolitan she regrets the presence of a system which holds Nigeria back; yet, as a traveler-returnee willing to reconnect with Nigeria, she needs to reengage with the "authentic." This leads her to wish for the preservation of Kano's ancestral Durbar, which entails the perpetuation of a (non-modern) patronage system. What can be deduced in this context is that her need for (re)engaging with her motherland and generating Fluid Roots dominates over her rejection of corruption and bribery. Additionally, when patronage and modern Nigeria's political system are discussed, Saro-Wiwa brings into focus the role of the Nigerian family as an institution, and how politicians are expected to bring wealth not only to their family but to their village or tribal group. Saro-Wiwa bemoans the fact that Nigeria "[hasn't] yet dismantled centuries of extended family and ethnic bonds" (122), pointing out that "corruption and nepotism increase when pressure is placed on successful individuals to look after dozens of clinging family members" (123). Therefore, she implies, some of the ancestral practices that she defends are injurious for modern Nigeria as a developing economy.

On leaving Kano, her northern journey takes her to Sukur, a World Heritage Site at the top of the Mandara Mountains (198). Described as a "Stone Age mountain kingdom […] [whose] people still live in stone dwellings and employ Stone Age techniques" (198), Sukur epitomizes what would be advertised, subscribing Dark Travel practices, as an African village where travelers can go back in time. In this sense, as Graulund indicates, even if traveler-writers depicting their motherland try to avoid imposing their views while observing and transmitting their experience, they may nonetheless "slip into the rhetoric of authenticity" (2011, 58). In this respect, even if Saro-Wiwa does not fall into patterns of exoticizing the "Dark Continent," after contemplating Sukur's landscape and "placid simplicity" (204), she "yearn[s] for [Nigeria] to throw itself back to an Iron Age […] at the mercy of nature's caprices, not corruption's iron fist" (205). This desire will be echoed later on in her saying that the country "might be better off [without its oil industry], anyway; [for it] seems innately prepared for a simple, back-to-basics future" (303), an oxymoronic expression, similar to a modern-less future, which of course is unachievable.

Here, it is not an ambivalent line of thought, but rather one of Sukur's villagers, that destabilizes Saro-Wiwa's antithetical ideas involving modernity and the dichotomization of modernity/tradition. Far from wishing for the preservation of Sukur's Stone Age "perfect simplicity" (204), the local man longs for the government to take action and create "social amenities" (204) to attract tourists, and yield financial benefits with which to build educational and health facilities (204). Thus he clearly advocates Sukur's modernization, while, on the contrary, Saro-Wiwa, as a foreigner-returnee, defends the preservation of its culture and landscape. It is interesting to note that the villager's embedded voice constitutes an essential trademark of postcolonial travel writing, and contrasts with canonical colonial travel accounts in which "landscape is written as uninhabited, unpossessed, unhistoricized, [and] unoccupied even by the travelers themselves" (Pratt [1992] 2008, 50). Contact between the native and the traveler represents what Pratt describes as an encounter in the "contact zone," "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (7). Although Pratt's definition deals with paradigmatic colonizer/colonized relations, the encounter between the villager and Saro-Wiwa may be regarded as taking place in a postcolonial contact zone, and as being free from impositions, since Saro-Wiwa is both a native to the country and a traveler. The importance of that contact remains, both in the process of interaction, and in Saro-Wiwa's portrayal of the villager's position towards Sukur's situation, even though it differs from hers.

After experiencing the north, Saro-Wiwa flies to Calabar, in southern Nigeria, where she attends a traditional Nigerian wedding. After witnessing a traditional masquerade ceremony during the wedding, she has an epiphany:[2]

This, I realized, is what Nigeria does best. The weddings, the humour, the music—often too visceral to convey in our tourism brochures—were what made Nigeria special. It was an epiphany for me. The concept of 'Transwonderland' with all its artifice and modernity wasn't our strength right now, but it didn't matter. The alternative was so much better and richer. (Saro-Wiwa [2012] 2013, 215)

Whereas the epiphany appears to reside in her realization that the preservation of Nigerian traditional practices is a "richer" and "better" alternative than pursuing modernity, her understanding that modernity is not worth chasing was indeed already present from the beginning of the journey. In this sense, the realization of this fact actually resides in her discovering that her affect towards traditional practices has gradually developed, while at the same time she has discovered flaws in the equally

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[2] In this context, Saro-Wiwa refers to Nigerian tribal ceremonies. However, the word "masquerade" does not only refer to the celebratory ritual but also to the men behind the masks. In this sense, Saro-Wiwa describes "masquerades" as "consumed men who wear masks representing spirits that possess the human body, making their wearers dance" (Saro-Wiwa [2012] 2013, 215).

'authentic' *jagga jagga*. At this final stage of the journey, this revelation results from her charting of Homeland Routes, which have a major impact upon the reshaping of her Imaginary Homeland.

Shortly after the wedding, Saro-Wiwa attends a masquerade celebration in Creek Town (Calabar). In contrast with the wedding's epiphanic masquerade ceremony, this masquerade is presented in a rather forlorn tone, albeit she describes it as "scarily compelling" (218). In contrast to the traditional wedding masquerade, Creek Town's masquerades expected money in exchange for being photographed (218). Surprisingly, when Saro-Wiwa does not comply with this, she is slapped. This episode illustrates the effect which modernization and capitalism may exert upon masquerades, and consequently foreshadows the impossibility of conciliating tradition and modernization, a claim explicitly made by the author:

> I was starting to acquire a taste for the indigenous. Where would Nigeria be without those exciting weddings and (non-aggressive) masquerades […]? They had been the best part of my journey so far, the things that made this country worth visiting. Relinquishing our traditional heritage might be worthwhile if we could replace it with a modern, developed society, but at the moment we're stumbling into a crack between two worlds. (227)

Her earlier assertion, at the Yoruba Sacred Grove, that there are instances in which tradition and modernity can be intertwined, and that the preservation of the former may even be dependent on the latter, clearly contrasts with this explicit reference to their mutual exclusion. This seems to affect her final conception of present-day Nigeria, whose nature and traditional practices she feels profound attachment to, but which she truly considers has fallen into "a cycle of corruption and eroded trust [which] locks the country in a tailspin" (123).

Nevertheless, the purpose of her journey is accomplished, it "ha[s] cured [her] emotional fear of the country" (304), and "helped [her] to finally wipe away the negative association and start a new relationship with [Nigeria]" (305). This bears witness to the final (re)generation of Fluid Roots that allow her to "maintain a relationship with Nigeria from [her] chosen home" (305), England. However, although more positive, this new relation with Nigeria may be considered imaginary, just like the old one, for it has been constructed by means of labeling her most thoroughly enjoyed experiences as those which are unreachable from her chosen home.

5. CONCLUSION

Even though she finds present-day Nigeria's essence both in its cultural legacy and its chaotic *jagga jagga*, Saro-Wiwa directs her affection towards the former. The implication is that the latter carries negative connotations, since Nigeria's culture of corruption benefits from it, whereas its heritage is associated purely with

cultural growth. In this manner, despite the inherent contradictions of presenting a monolithic description of modernization, Saro-Wiwa decides to defend cultural patrimony to the detriment of what innovation may have to offer. Nonetheless, the rejection of what Transwonderland embodies was in fact latent in earlier stages of her journey, implying that her negative perception of modernity is not acquired, but rather present from the beginning. Still, it increases progressively throughout her journey, its growth running parallel both to her contemplation of the consequences of modernization, and to her desire to preserve her motherland's heritage, as she fragmentally experiences it.

The traveler's intrinsic need for discovering and experiencing different cultural practices plays a pivotal role in her desire to protect Nigerian traditions, reinforcing her in-between position as a prodigal-foreigner. Most importantly, her rejection of her motherland's inauthentic modernization can be interpreted as a need to conceive of England and Nigeria as complementary homes, the latter being her source of cultural heritage while enjoying the former's modernity. In this sense, the artificiality of her Imaginary Homeland, conjured up with childish wishes of modernity, is contested. Notwithstanding, *Looking for Transwonderland*, as a rewriting, can be considered equally imaginary, for past memories and wishes have been replaced with new ones, thus alluding to a present necessity of having a place for her mind to turn to after the creation of Fluid Roots. Hence, despite acknowledging the possibility of change, Saro-Wiwa champions the preservation of Nigerian traditions. Nevertheless, in her recognition of her internal conflict, Saro-Wiwa's rejection of modernization carries an inherent censure that connotes Nigerians' need to react. In this sense, she advocates an urgent need for modern practices to be (re)focused and (re)directed in order for them to stop being at the service of home-grown corruption and Western interests.

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Breaking Joy Division's "Glass": Reading Song Lyrics as Literature

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There are various difficulties in reading the words of songs as literary texts. Principal among them is the relation of those words to the story (or star-text) of their author. The life of Ian Curtis as written by his biographers and the songs he wrote for his band, Joy Division, exemplified as they are by the symbolism of breaking glass, are a case in point. Ultimately, more than with any other literary text, their meaning depends on their refraction, analogous to that of the shards of a broken mirror, through multiple other texts and audiences.

Keywords: Joy Division; song lyrics; pop/rock culture; text analysis; intertextuality; reading

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Rompiendo "Glass" de Joy Division: la lectura de letras de canciones como literatura.

La lectura de letras de canciones como textos literarios presenta diversas dificultades, siendo una de las principales la relación entre esas letras y la historia de su autor como estrella. Este artículo aborda el simbolismo de romper cristales en la vida de Ian Curtis, tal como aparece en sus biografías, y en las canciones que escribió para su grupo, Joy Division, como caso ilustrativo de la complejidad de leer letras de canciones modernas. El argumento es, en definitiva, que el significado de las letras de canciones, aún en mayor medida que el de otros textos literarios, depende de su refracción, a la manera de un espejo roto, a través de una multiplicidad de otros textos y públicos.

Palabras clave: Joy Division; letras de canciones; cultura pop/rock; análisis de texto; intertextualidad; lectura

1. Introduction: song lyrics as/and literature

This article uses the idea of *breaking glass* to discuss an aspect of the mythologization of Ian Curtis of Joy Division, the oversimplification involved in seeing him as a poet whose lyrics transparently reflected his life. In doing so, it draws intertextual connections between the writing of history and biography, culture and popular music, while also exploring the notion of *broken mirrors* as a way to represent faulty understanding and the way literary meaning may become fragmented and assembled in tangential ways.

Popular song lyrics are seldom considered an object for literary study, except within the fields of popular music studies (e.g., Frith 1988; Longhurst 1995), cultural studies (as witnessed, for example, by the numerous proposals of papers studying song lyrics to the Cultural Studies panel of AEDEAN conferences), and musicology. There is still, however, no general theoretical framework for analyzing pop songs in literary criticism, cultural studies (though critics from Theodor Adorno to Lawrence Grossberg have made key contributions in cultural politics) or musicology. One of the current musicologists producing surveys for the reading of rock songs, Allan F. Moore, argues that if such a theory existed it should insist on the fact that the primary text of songs is purely musical, and everything else, the words of the songs and any commentaries on them, particularly rock criticism, is secondary to their meaning (Moore 2001, 1). While Moore's argument denotes a musicological prejudice that needs qualification from a literary perspective, it places an emphasis that should not be entirely dismissed. The lyrics of many pop or rock songs themselves point to the uselessness of words to express their own meanings, or at least their inability to capture the singer's emotional states: think of The Who's "I Can't Explain" (and also their whole rock opera *Tommy*), F. R. David's "Words," or Aerosmith's "Let the Music do the Talking." Rod Stewart's "Every Rock 'n' Roll Song to Me," after calling his "Sexy Thing" an assortment of popular song names, from "Strawberry Fields" to "Bat Out of Hell," justifies the parody by admitting: "Now what I'm saying to you may seem quite absurd, but it's from the heart, baby, so please, please don't analyse the words!" (Stewart 2015). As Simon Frith put it, "[p]op songs celebrate not the articulate but the inarticulate, and the evaluation of pop singers depends not on words but on sounds—on the noises around the words" (1983, 35). Thus purely semantic or literal analyses could not really account for the meaning of songs.

Among the obstacles to their literary analysis are the traditional distance between popular culture as a whole and literary criticism; the triviality or purposeful difficulty and ambiguity of song texts; the fact that they do not make complete sense independently from the music they were written for; the meaningful texture of their original creator's voice; the image and iconography associated with the song; factors related to music production, and the occasions on which it was performed or recorded. In the case of Joy Division, while their songs and the history of the band has generated great interest, it has only been among music journalists and filmmakers.

That said, some of the music journalists who have written frequently about Joy Division, such as Paul Morley and Jon Savage, have a distinctly literary quality to

their writing, and betray a combined awareness of literature and rock music culture. Savage wrote a newspaper article on the literary influences of the singer and author of Joy Division's lyrics, Ian Curtis, whom he portrays as someone who "devoured offbeat literature," as well as books by Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Sartre, Kafka and Burroughs (Savage 2008). Savage subsequently co-edited the singer's lyrics and notebooks (Curtis 2014) with Curtis's widow and foremost biographer, Deborah Curtis, laying much emphasis on his reading and literary influences. Deborah Curtis even states in her "Foreword," perhaps somewhat tongue in cheek, that she fell for Ian because of his literary ambitions: "I was hooked; the romance of him being both a poet and a writer was too much to resist" (2014, vii), and she refers to his enjoyment of classics such as Chaucer, Wilde and Poe, his carrying a plastic bag with his writings in it around with him, a bag which he kept next to his books at home, and the importance he attached to having a room of his own for writing (see also Middles and Reade 2006, 147-148). Savage, in a separate "Introduction," discusses the literary qualities and influences of Ian Curtis, but then concludes that his "lyrics—both draft and complete—were written to be sung with loud music that was at once brutal and unwavering, futuristic and increasingly sophisticated," and that it is impossible to determine exactly how Curtis's "distinctive writing talent" might have flourished (Savage 2014, xxvii), as he committed suicide at the age of 23.

In fact the figure of Ian Curtis has been increasingly associated with the world of literature: in Anton Corbijn's film *Control* (2007) about his life, there is footage of Curtis reciting Wordsworth's "My Heart Leaps Up" to Deborah, although she never mentions Wordsworth either in her memoir of her husband, on which the film is largely based, or in her literature-focused "Foreword" to his writings (Curtis 2014). Of course Curtis would (probably) have read Wordsworth at school like many British children did, but Corbijn in the film is simply linking the mythical Curtis to romantic sensibility, as Ott does when comparing him to "Goethe's infamous creation, Werther" because of Curtis's potentially malign influence on suicidal youth (Ott 2010, 94), whereas his inclinations as a reader and writer (as Savage would probably confirm) exhibit a much greater affinity with the existentialism that enticed contemporary writers like J.G. Ballard, than with either Goethe or Wordsworth's romanticism.

The analysis of the literary influences Curtis might have had falls beyond the scope of the present article, which focuses instead on various texts, both literary and filmic, some of which Curtis might have read or seen, in order to explore the connotations and intertextuality of one significant image in Joy Division's songs, that of glass and its breaking. My approach is based on the notion of "embodied cognition" as developed by Allan F. Moore (2012, 237-238), drawing on Mark Johnson (1987). The essay concludes by referring to Derrida's *Glas* (1974), an anti-book which Curtis could not have read (its English translation was published in 1981 after his death), whose title has no lexical relation to the English word "glass," but which exemplifies how disparate texts can be juxtaposed, or, according to the Derridean notion that largely informs this

article, *grafted* onto other texts, in order to open up new meaning.[1] In our case, various texts (songs, novels, films) concerned with symbolic "glass" are used to demonstrate the significance of this image in Joy Division's lyrics and the stories written about Curtis, in an attempt to explore in general the possibilities of, as well as the limits precluding, the literary reading of song lyrics.

2. Ian Curtis's Heart of Glass

> If the fixure of *Momus*'s glass, in the human breast, [...] had taken place, [...] nothing more would have been wanting, in order to have taken a man's character, but to have taken a chair and gone softly, [...] and look'd in,—view'd the soul stark naked;—observ'd all her motions,—her machinations;—traced all her maggots from their first engendering to their crawling forth; watched her loose in her frisks, her gambols, her capricios; [...]—then taken your pen and ink and set down nothing but what you had seen, and could have sworn to: But this is an advantage not to be had by the biographer in this planet. (Sterne [1759] 1983, 59)

Shortly after making *24 Hour Party People* ([2002] 2003), the film which refloated the story of Joy Division for the present century, Michael Winterbottom directed an adaptation of Laurence Sterne's famous anti-novel, under the title *Tristram Shandy: A Cock and Bull Story* ([2005] 2006). This will lead me to my first *grafting* operation: a juxtaposition between a particular detail in the life of Tristram Shandy and the biography of Ian Curtis. The comic actor Steve Coogan was cast in the lead role in both films. Both characters have traits in common, since Tristram Shandy, like the earlier film's narrator-hero Tony Wilson, chief owner of Joy Division's record company, Factory Records, is a self-reflective narrator often speaking frontally to the camera and commenting ironically on the autobiographical narrative. Such self-reflectiveness, though with no hint of irony, can also be found, in hindsight, in Ian Curtis's lyrics for the band he fronted as chief vocalist. In order to illustrate the opacity of a man's character for the biographer, Laurence Sterne alludes to Lucan's story (in *Hermotimus or Concerning the Sects*) that when Hephaistos made man, the god Momus blamed him for not putting a window in his breast; because of this criticism Momus was banished from heaven (Sterne [1759] 1983, 549). Curtis may never have heard of Laurence Sterne; Tony Wilson, who (at least in his novelization of the film *24 Hour Party People*) sometimes acted as Curtis's literary mentor advising him to read Yeats, for example (Wilson 2002, 88), certainly had (94).[2]

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[1] Derrida offers *grafting* as a model for thinking about the logic of texts in "The Double Session" ("La Double Seánce," in *La Dissémination*, 1972; English translation 1981), which, taking the juxtaposition of different texts as a starting point, purports to be talking about the relationship of truth, memory and imagination, as well as an interpretation of mimesis. In a footnote quoting Gaston Bachelard, Derrida also refers to the connection between the concept of textual *graft* and human psychology, imagination and art (Derrida [1972] 1981, 203, note 21).

[2] Tony Wilson, who had a degree in English from Cambridge, shows a recurrent concern with the connections between pop culture and academic literary culture in *24 Hour Party People* (2002, 109, 181-182, 186, 196-197).

Momus's glass might recall the opacity of Ian Curtis's heart, which made the people closest to him fail to understand his many expressions of an earnest death wish, and his despairing call for sympathy, for what they now really seem to have been. Consider, for example, the last stanza of "Twenty Four Hours," from their final album *Closer* (1980):

> Now that I've realised how it's all gone wrong,
> Gotta find some therapy, this treatment takes too long.
> Deep in the heart of where sympathy held sway,
> Gotta find my destiny, before it gets too late. (Curtis 1995, 180)

The song, interpreted with a funereal rhythm, an eerie atmosphere of synthesizers, and the singer's characteristic crooning, today sounds like an earnest urge to shorten his suffering and despair (see Hook 2013, 350). However, the reader must be aware of the pathetic fallacy in song words (Moore 2012, 208). Tony Wilson found it "disgusting the way some people [including himself in his novelization] quote Joy Division lyrics to explain Joy Division things" (Wilson 2002, 82). On the other hand, it has also been said that Curtis admired Lou Reed for actually doing what he sang about (see Nolan 2007, 36). When Curtis hanged himself, many people decided that this is what he was writing about in his songs.

The moment one hears of the young singer's suicide, it becomes part of Joy Division's star-text, that is, of the band's public image and its reception. It was certainly the case for most of Joy Division's audience outside the UK, since their one and only major international hit, "Love Will Tear Us Apart" (1980) was not released until after Curtis's death as a 12-inch single. Once impressed by the singer's fatal end, the listener tends to understand the lyrics Curtis wrote for Joy Division, within the mood of tragic empathy that many of those texts seem to encourage in terms of the possible circumstances leading him to make such a decision.

Throughout the 1980s the relation between Joy Division's story and their singer's suicide was shrouded in rumor and legend (Wilson 2002, 102). His songs were believed to be a faithful reflection of his personal tragedy: for example, "She's Lost Control" (from *Unknown Pleasures* 1979) was about his own epilepsy (though he had written it before being diagnosed with the disease); "Atrocity Exhibition" (from *Closer* 1980), about feeling like a freak on show, especially when he began to have epileptic seizures during gigs; and "Love Will Tear Us Apart," about his tormented love life, which was presumed to have destroyed him. Then, in the 1990s, Deborah Curtis's memoir decisively emplotted her husband's life as a fashion victim of the rock and roll culture industry and the myth of dying young, and by 2002, with Winterbottom's film, the band's story had crystallized into a pivotal episode in impresario Tony Wilson's history, and therefore as a product of Factory Records and its attempt to revitalize Manchester's culture (Wilson 2002, 54-56). No matter how much Paul Morley, the music journalist who is supposed to have been closest to the band, tried to open up that history in all

its ambivalence,[3] Curtis' life was the tragedy at the heart of the predominantly comic history of Factory. This was only one step away from turning Curtis into the savior figure of Manchester's cultural life, as Middles and Reade's biography (2006) and Grant Gee's documentary (2007) implicitly do.

Accounts of Curtis's life tend to be dominated by conceptual metaphors, conforming a discourse on Joy Division which draws on their lyrics and is often based on binaries like outside/inside, as in the design of *Unknown Pleasures* (1979; see Valdés Miyares 2016, 90-91), in the chorus of "Atrocity Exhibition"—"This is the way, step inside"—and in the title of Peter Hook's memoir *Unknown Pleasures* (2013); distance—as the title of his wife's biography of him, *Touching from a Distance* (a line from their song "Transmission" (1979)—and closeness—as in the 1980 album *Closer*);[4] and control and its loss—as in their song "She's Lost Control" (1979) and the film *Control* (Corbijn 2007). These *image schemata* can be regarded as representing aspects of the lyricist's embodied experience, which are in turn adopted by those who write about it, such as Curtis's biographers and documentary and film script-writers. Glass-breaking imagery, expressing a feeling of physical fragility and transparency shattered, is far less conspicuous in the lyrics than in biographical incidents. However, I shall consider it a schema in terms of it being "a recurrent pattern, shape and regularity in, or of, ongoing ordering activities [of our experiences]" (Johnson 1987, 29). My reading will suggest that these cognitive metaphors of embodied experience tend to take on an open-ended meaning.

3. JOY DIVISION'S *Kristallnacht*

As an admirer of German culture and a cinemagoer, Ian Curtis might have seen Volker Schlöndorff's adaptation of Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1979), whose dwarfish hero Oskar Matserath—bearing a faint resemblance to the Hitler Youth drummer boy on the original sleeve of Joy Division's first single *An Ideal for Living* (1978)—has the power to shatter glass with his shrill screaming when he throws a tantrum. The poster for the film featuring the dwarf drummer is a grotesque distortion of the iconic Nazi drummer boy, while Joy Division's original single cover (replaced in the 12" re-edition by artwork featuring scaffolding) could be interpreted as a provocative celebration of Nazism as 'an ideal.' Oskar Matserath's strange talent might also seem to be a symbolic allusion to the Nazis' *Kristallnacht*, the "Night of Broken Glass" of 1938, so called for the large number of windows of Jewish owned shops shattered by the Nazis that night across Germany. The sinister rise of Nazism is also the background to Fosse's musical *Cabaret* (1972), where the decadence of Weimar Berlin is shown reflected on a

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[3] The blurb of Morley's book (2008) claims that he is "the man who knew Joy Division best." His way of rendering the history of the band as quite open has to do with his performative approach to history writing, as argued by Valdés Miyares 2013, 2-3.

[4] Reviewer Mark Ellen also used the binomial close/distant: "Close up, Joy Division are quite intriguing, from a distance, they're oppressive as hell" (*New Musical Express*, 17 November 1979, quoted in Nice 2010, 81).

distorted glass in the final scene. Deborah Curtis said they went to see *Cabaret* "a dozen times" when she started going out with Ian (in an interview with Jon Savage quoted by Middles and Reade 2006, 24). The band's interest in Nazi imagery, expressed even in their choice of their name "Joy Division," the name given to the brothel section for soldiers in concentration camps, forced them to refute accusations of their support of fascist ideology throughout their career (Hook 2013, 5 and 92; Sumner 2014, 84). It is now widely accepted that attraction to Nazi icons was common in the punk culture from which Joy Division emerged, where, as Savage points out (2014, xxii), it was "possible to be fascinated with the topic without taking on the ideology."

Curtis might also have heard about J.G. Ballard's *The Crystal World* (1966)—a novel narrating how the earth turns to crystal, beginning with the crystallization of a forest in Africa—given that he took the name of his song "Atrocity Exhibition" from another of Ballard's titles (1970), though he admitted that he had not read the novel when he copied its title—in an interview with Alan Hempsall cited by Savage (2014, xxiii). He is also likely to have seen or heard of Werner Herzog's *Heart of Glass* (1976), which the German filmmaker released the year before *Stroszek* (1977), the film Curtis is known to have watched on the evening before he died. *Heart of Glass*, an apocalyptic fable of post-industrialism, is about a small Bavarian community, whose prosperity is based on the manufacture of beautiful glassware but is in decline due to the advanced age of the only man who knew the formula for glass making. Senseless violence is represented by a man who breaks a glass tankard over the head of the friend he has been drinking with, starting a fight for no apparent reason. The decline of an industrial community would have had resonance in a post-industrial city like Manchester, probably much more than Ballard's crystalline apocalypse did. Whether Curtis knew these stories or not, the story of his life is curiously filled with incidents which have to do with violence and glass. This is not to say that these images of glass might have inspired him, but rather that they were part of an imagery on which some of his songs drew, and which also influenced several episodes in his biographies.

The biographies of Ian Curtis relate various glass incidents in the singer's life. Sometimes they seem to have been a means of calling attention upon himself or venting anger and frustration. This is what happens in a Campus novel the singer is not likely to have read, Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* (1975), about a trendy professor of sociology called Howard Kirk at a fictional university in northern England. Kirk's friend Henry Beamish, and then, at the end of the novel, Kirk's wife Barbara, each express their unhappiness and despair at his callous opportunism and infidelities by putting their arm through the glass of the bathroom window in subsequent scenes, a repeated self-destructive gesture that Kirk himself dismisses as mere accidents. Like Curtis's audience before his suicide, Kirk fails to read the subtexts. The novel can be, in Derridean terms, *grafted* on the biographies of Curtis: when the discourse of the novel is bound to that of the biographies, using the key word "glass" as the *grafted scion*, it produces a "reverberation, as does a tympanum"

(Culler [1982] 2007, 134), which in this case will transmit the image of a suffering man inflicting violence on himself, while the people around him fail to get the message or empathize.[5]

Curtis's widow depicts his self-directed violence through a number of incidents; when he broke a glass door during an argument with her, smashed glasses, or was so manic on stage he was not bothered about rolling around on broken glass (Curtis 1995, 17, 24, 45, 53). Joy Division's bass player Peter Hook recalls Curtis "on the dance floor and he was sort of kicking broken glass around […] and moving round to the music [of the German electronic music band Kraftwerk's *Trans-Europe Express*] at the same time" (Hook 2013, 6), to allay his anxiety before the band's first gig using the name "Joy Division" (which had replaced their previous name, "Warsaw"). Curtis was thrown out, and the other three members of the band had to convince the bouncer to let him in to sing (7). Hook also remembers him once after a particularly bad epilepsy seizure, "his eyes all glassy," still refusing to be taken to hospital (239). The use of the word 'glassy' may be incidental, and it is not even semantically related to "glass breaking." Yet when it is read from this embodied cognition schema, Curtis's glassy eyes compellingly express the extreme fragility of his condition by recalling the vulnerability of glass.

We may catch glimpses of possible symbolic significances of glass in the singer's career, culminating at the concert in Bury which "turns into a riot, as if to symbolize to Curtis a world that was disintegrating, a life that was over" (Morley 2008, 20). The gig was held the day after Curtis had attempted to kill himself by overdosing on prescription drug. Joy Division's manager Rob Gretton convinced him to be at the gig, even if only to sing a few slow songs. The riot resulted from an attempt to replace Curtis with another singer, after letting in a large crowd of rowdy youths. It was started by someone in the audience throwing a bottle at a Victorian crystal chandelier hanging above the stage: those standing below "got completely showered with shards of glass and bits of chandelier" (Middles and Reade 2006, 227). Curtis, suffering from severe depression, blamed himself for the disaster: "Weeping uncontrollably […] [he] in all likelihood crossed a boundary on the night of April 8th from which he never returned" (Ott 2004, 112). The image of the singer breaking down backstage would become a key part of his myth and fan cult: the embodiment of "the 'raw' emotions of Curtis, captured on film in his various forms of breakdown (now available on T-shirts, girly-tank tops, and dresses)" (Otter-Bickerdike 2014, 172). It was what I would like to call, linking our key image schema with the band's ironic

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[5] I am making no factual claims here, only using a reading strategy from deconstructionism. Post-structuralism has always insisted on cancelling the distinctions between fact and fiction. After all, novels are very often based on so-called "facts" and the actual experiences of the writer to an indefinite degree, and biographies are always organized according to fiction-writing strategies such as narrativization and the meaningful arrangement of facts, or emplotment. The difference between fiction and memory is no less blurred, as memory, like fiction, also needs to select, rationalize, recreate and construct the "events." For a classic discussion of the use and senses of *grafting* in Derridean deconstruction, see Culler ([1982] 2007, 134-155).

association with Nazi imagery, Joy Division's true "Night of Broken Glass." Unlike the Nazis, of course, Joy Division's only victim, if there was one, was Ian Curtis. The singer hanged himself 40 days later, on May 18, 1980.

4. BREAKING BOWIE'S GLASS

The metaphor of breaking glass was a particularly current one at the time, as in David Bowie's song "Breaking Glass" (1977), a song Curtis was certainly familiar with, and Brian Gibson's film *Breaking Glass* (1980), whose heroine and songwriter Hazel O'Connor was, along with Joy Division themselves, among the artists who performed at the Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park, London, on 3 and 4 April 1980 (Nice 2010, 104), where Curtis suffered an epileptic fit and collapsed onto the drum kit (Hook 2013, 317). The interpretation of Bowie's song lyrics is notoriously difficult, as they convey a disjointed message which may be related to a fractured personality when the artist was going through a drug-driven period, as well as his personal involvement in the experience of schizophrenia (Wilcken 2005, 76-82).[6] The first part of the song seems to be spoken by a guilt-ridden individual who finds a means of self-expression in creating forms with broken glass, while the second represents an authoritative, scolding voice which chastises such behavior with ostracism. The influence of the edgy performer Bowie as Curtis's role model has often been noted (Middles and Reade 2006, 22, 24), and, for example, Bowie's song "Drive-In Saturday" (1973) plays non-diegetically in the score of the biopic *Control* the first time the character of Ian Curtis appears (Corbijn 2007). In addition, the dichotomy of the creative individual on the one hand, and other authoritative persons in control of his life and career on the other is essential in accounts of Ian Curtis's life and death, including *Control*, which is an adaptation of Deborah Curtis's memoir of her husband, *Touching from a Distance* (1995).

It should be borne in mind that the words of one of Joy Division's most celebrated songs, "She's Lost Control" (1979), were based on his experience of seeing a woman suffering an epileptic fit, the condition that would later affect him. Gibson's film *Breaking Glass* (1980), on the other hand, contains a clear message on the artist's need to remain in control of her own life and career, particularly by relying on the support of the right manager. Chapter twelve in *Touching from a Distance*, entitled "Decide for me," describes the moment when Curtis gave up control of his own life, letting others decide. The following chapter, "My timing," narrating his suicide, explains that people

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[6] There is a brief forum discussing Bowie's "Breaking Glass" at songmeanings.net. A strain of schizophrenia ran through Bowie's family which affected several members on his mother's side. His brother Terry, who was a key influence on his early music career, developed it in the mid 1960s and spent the rest of his life institutionalized, until he jumped out of a window of his psychiatric hospital in 1985 and died (Bowie's 1993 single "Jump They Say" is about this). On the negative side, Bowie seems to have lived in fear of developing the condition himself, while on the positive, he often used schizophrenic notions as creative motifs. Cocaine probably exacerbated his obsession. During the 1970s, as Wilcken argues "Bowie certainly drugged himself into a state in which schizophrenic-like behaviour emerged" (2005, 79).

(particularly his wife, his mistress, Tony Wilson, and his manager Rob Gretton) were competing to decide who should attend the funeral: "Even after his death we were jostling for possession, importance, affection—call it what you will" (Curtis 1995, 134). In the film, "Breaking Glass" is the name of the band whose lead singer is Kate (Hazel O'Connor). It is probably an allusion to the band's disruptive post-punk stance, while also suggesting the fragility of the artist in the greedy hands of the showbiz machinery, and therefore tying in with the plot of Deborah Curtis's memoir. Once again, I would like to make it clear that I am not arguing for a mutual influence or causation between the two texts, only that the film and the book may be brought into intertextual alignment for the sake of cultural analysis.

Some contemporaries of the band have noticed that glass-breaking was an appropriate metaphor for Joy Division's music, and not just for the life of their lead singer. Paul Morley has written of "the glass-smashing and capering Bernard Sumner guitars" as the guitarist's distinctive contribution to the band (2008, 248 and 269). A spirited review of *Unknown Pleasures* by Max Bell for the music paper *New Musical Express* concluded that it "is an English rock masterwork. Listen to this album and wonder, because you'll never love the sound of breaking glass again. This band has tears in its eyes. Joy Division's day is closing in" (*New Musical Express,* 19 July 1980, quoted in Nice 2010, 69).[7] The glass imagery was probably suggested, above all, by the glass-smashing noises which producer Martin Hannett introduced into "I Remember Nothing," the album's closing song, as sonic anaphones, as defined by Moore (2012, 253), the lyrics of which stressed a sense of violence, estrangement, despair and embittered oblivion:

> We were strangers, for way too long.
> Violent, more violent, his hand cracks the chair,
> Moves on reaction, then slumps in despair,
> Trapped in a cage and surrendered too soon (Curtis 1995, 165)

The noise of glass smashing breaks through the tense atmosphere created by synthesizers at the beginning and at the end of the song. Musically "I Remember Nothing" is reminiscent of The Stooges's "We Will Fall" (1969), their front man Iggy Pop being one of Joy Division's key influences. But there is very little thematic resemblance in the lyrics, except in the feeling of surrender, expressed as a willingness to not fight, to be weak and to fall in the Stooges song, which in turn is akin to the despairing Joy Division lyrics. The glass-smashing noises, however, which do not feature in the Stooges song, seem to make a key suggestion of impending personal tragedy.

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[7] Bell's closing in is an allusion to a line in Joy Division's song "Digital" (1979), which however is not included on the album he was reviewing. On the other hand, the statement that "Joy Division's day is closing in" sounds eerily prophetic in perspective, since the band's next album, *Closer* (1980), also happened to be their *closing* album, due to the singer's untimely end, which brought Joy Division's career to a close.

The first song, perhaps, exhibiting the most distinctive Joy Division sound, recorded together with "Digital" in October 1978 for the compilation *A Factory Sample* (1978), was called "Glass." While some of the songs' titles appear in the chorus or are significantly repeated in the lyrics, in "Glass" the semantic link between title and lyrics needs to be inferred:

> Hearts fail, young hearts fail
> Anytime, pressurised
> Overheat, overtired
> Take it quick, take it neat
> Clasp your hands, touch your feet. (Curtis 1995, 156)

The rest of the stanzas of the song stress a sense of urgency and hyperactivity through repetition ("Take it quick, take it neat [...] Do it again and again and again"), with variations suggesting exhaustion ("Anytime, wearing down"), persecution and danger ("On the run, underground / Put your hand where it's safe") (Curtis 2014, 29-31). As the title of the song is "Glass" the reader would tend to assume (though alternative readings are always possible) that 'Young hearts fail' probably because they are fragile like glass, in spite of which they (young people?) will wish to 'do it again,' that is, getting 'overheat[ed], overtired.' The word "glass" is not mentioned in the song itself, nor, for that matter, in the entire corpus of Joy Division's lyrics. Thus the title contextualizes what the song may be assumed to represent, exactly like in the case of Annie Lennox's "Walking on broken glass" (1992), according to Moore (2012, 254). In the context of Curtis's biography it suggests the way he would keep on playing at gigs even though they were contributing to his own self-destruction.

Similarly, in "Something Must Break" (1980) the title phrase is used twice in the last stanza, but its relation to previous lines can only be guessed at. Those preceding lines are "If I can't break out now, the time just won't come" (one of his characteristic despairing statements), "Looked in the mirror, saw I was wrong" and "I see your face still in the window" (Curtis 2014, 74-75). The latter is the first line in the final stanza, where "Something must break (now)" is repeated in the second and last lines. Such associations powerfully suggest that what breaks may be the window, and probably also the mirror, both of which imply the narrator's relationship to self and other, with a foreboding sense of imminent threat to his own life in the final lines:

> This life isn't mine
> Something must break now
> Wait for the time
> Something must break. (Curtis 1995, 184)

The play of association and free inference is also at work in *Touching from a Distance* (Curtis 1995) and other biographies of the band which use titles from the songs as

chapter titles, inviting readers to find literal connections between the narrative in the chapter and the songs, even though, as Morley insists, Curtis's words "omit links and open up new perspectives: they are set deep in unfenced, untamed darkness" (Morley 2008, 153). Though, as I mentioned above, Wilson was disgusted at the way Joy Division's lyrics were utilized to explain the band's history, he describes himself as someone who tended to pick "[a]rtists who 'meant' it. More than meant it. Had no choice" (Wilson 2002, 49). Wilson also wrote about "Aneek" (his spelling for Annik Honoré, Ian Curtis's mistress) saying of Curtis: "He means these things, they're not just lyrics, they're not just songs, he means it" (99). The band's bass player was among those who did not heed the lyrics until Curtis died:

> Later, of course, I'd listen to the lyrics and try to pick them apart, but for years in the rehearsal room all I really heard was a scream and that was what was important to me. I just thought, "The guy means it." It doesn't matter what you're playing really, as long as you mean it. (Hook 2013, 173)

What Curtis 'meant,' however, was Wilson's, Honoré's, Hook's and others' interpretation of his lyrics, not necessarily what Curtis intended to communicate. They were not listening to the lyrics, they were impressed enough hearing his impassioned 'scream.' As for the actual meaning of the songs, it is constantly subjected to a process of deferral such as that argued by Derridean deconstruction. Each song may have an overall literary meaning that might be tested by attempting to sum up its lyrics. But the more specific meanings it might have always depend on the contexts or intertexts (related or relatable texts) which are *grafted* onto the song.

By writing about feelings that might (retrospectively) seem to encourage suicide and then carrying it out, Curtis's lyrics prompt a joint reading of his songs and life. Wilson (2002, 74) suggests that Curtis's suicide was partly a response to Bowie's apparent invitation to a youthful death in lyrics such as "All the Young Dudes" (1974) which includes the line "Don't wanna stay alive when you are 25." Deborah Curtis (1995, 5 and 7) also relates it to Bowie's version of Jacques Brel's song "My Death" (1973) and Bowie's own song "Rock and Roll Suicide" (1972). But this is obviously a gross simplification of Curtis's inscrutable personal motivations and accidental circumstances,[8] as well as of the meaning in Bowie's song. The broken glass through which the singer, whether Bowie or Curtis, invites us to look inside his heart and soul has nothing to show behind, because it is a mirror-glass mask, like the two crystals resembling eyes that the Lover finds at the bottom of Narcissus' well in the Medieval *Romance of the Rose*: like Narcissus in love with his own reflection,

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[8] Curtis's suicide was an "unhappy" or "infelicitous" speech act in the Austinian sense (Valdés Miyares, 2013, 8), since the convention of song lyrics, no matter how much they may be based on true experience, is that that they are largely fictional, like the persona that the singer embodies, such that the audience could not interpret that he was stating a real intention to end his life.

Curtis was said to be "In love with a cold but crystallized 'other self'" (Ott 2004, 101). This would tie in with the interpretation of Bowie's "Breaking Glass" as being about a fractured personality, and with Deborah Curtis's suggestion that her husband might have been suffering from bipolar disorder (Rocamora 2010). All in all, the rock artist's texts always demand a double reading, in which the songs (both music and lyrics) and his story reflect on one another in both literal (explicitly meaningful) and figurative (symbolic or ironic) ways.

5. Fracture, reflection and refraction in song texts

All that is now

All that is gone

All that's to come

and everything under the sun is in tune

but the sun is eclipsed by the moon.

"There is no dark side of the moon really. Matter of fact it's all dark."

(Pink Floyd, "Eclipse," 1973)

One expects to find some reflection of real life in the lyrics of songs. The fragments of the desired "real" (in the Lacanian sense), however, are refracted in various directions, and the desired, subjective readings of songwriter and song-reader do not necessarily meet.[9] "Eclipse" is the concluding song on Pink Floyd's album *The Dark Side of the Moon*.[10] Years later, songwriter Roger Waters explained that the song is about "some dark force in our natures," and that the lyrics address the listener, telling him or her to "know you have these bad feelings and impulses because *I do too*, and one of the ways I can make direct contact with you is to share with you the fact that I feel bad sometimes" (Dallas 1987, 107; emphasis in the original). The attempt to rationally explain away the poetic text of the song and the entire album actually materializes in the prose statement that is heard spoken in the background as the music recedes: "There is no dark side of the moon really. Matter of fact it's all dark." Waters said that the statement was based on one of the interviews that he carried out to develop dialogue that would accompany some of the song lyrics. The words are attributed to Gerry O'Driscoll, the doorman at The Beatles's Abbey Road Studios, and that he then added: "The only thing that makes [the moon] look light is the sun" (Mason 2004,

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[9] Jacques Lacan ([1973] 1994, 184) conceptualizes the real as the state of nature (of natural need and pleasure), which the child loses forever as they enter into the symbolic order of language. Because of this loss we tend to enjoy ourselves, that is, to experience what Lacan called *jouissance* as a painful, traumatic sort of pleasure, not unlike the "unknown pleasures" of Joy Division. For the relevance of *jouissance* to some of Ian Curtis's songs, see Valdés Miyares (2014).

[10] However, Pink Floyd was the kind of progressive (or art) rock that a post-punk band like Joy Division would not have identified with, even if they did enjoy the technical facilities of Britannia Row Studios, in Islington, London, owned by Pink Floyd.

172). In textual terms this would suggest that one should not try to make light of lyrics (in either sense of the expression), since the only final meaning they have is intertextual: a reflection of other lyrics, much like moonlight is only reflected sunlight. They do not mean anything in themselves.

The kind of crystal-clear interpretation we can now easily retrieve from Wikipedia about a song like "Eclipse," however, was not so easily available when it was first released. Avid fans would look for possible clues in the music press, in interviews with band members and the opinions of reputed music critics, but for the most part they would remain on the dark (side of the moon). The average listener would just finish listening to the album, the dreamy tune perhaps lingering in their head, and hear those words prompting them to reflect on our personal darkness. They would then take the album sleeve to put the vinyl back in, and look again at the famous front cover design, all black with a stylized representation of a glass prism through which a beam of light is refracted, dividing itself chromatically to form a rainbow. This is not an unfit metaphor for song lyrics. For the dark glass prism, the context in which the song is consumed, cannot really unambiguously reflect the real. All it does is *refract* the original meaning in a number of colors, as many as there are communities of listeners and individual experiences of the song. Joy Division's most iconic sleeve, designed by Peter Saville for *Unknown Pleasures* (1979), is an even darker suggestion of song meaning: a diagram of the radio signal of a pulsar, a star which has probably burnt out but still sends out a beam of electromagnetic radiation (Christiansen 2015).

On the other hand, the words of a song can hardly be compared to a beam of light before it passes through a glass prism. They are actually fractured, and to some extent refracted, from their very inception. In the first place, popular song has always tended to narrate stories in fragments, rather than following a continuous narrative thread, giving the impression of a broken narrative structure. Scholars have noted the use of montage in the traditional popular ballad, which somehow makes them resemble cinema long before it existed (Hodgart [1950] 1962, 28). For example, Joy Division's "Glass" (1980) falls into two very distinct parts which, taken separately, might well have made two different song lyrics: the first goes from "Young hearts fail" to "Put your hands where it's safe," and can be read as warning, while the second urges you to "Do it again and again," which by juxtaposition reads as encouragement for young people to live fast and over-exert their hearts.

In popular balladry narrative montage was largely due to traditional methods of formulaic composition, balladeers tending to re-produce the text from ready-made phrases and images as if they were building-blocks. The narrative form in modern rock songs still resembles the old ballads, perhaps because they are often composed somewhat collectively by the band and adapted to the music, and they still tend to prefer allusiveness and emotional impact to narrative realism and reference. Moreover, certain pop music genres are still largely ruled by convention, and to that extent influenced

by formulas in the composition of lyrics.[11] In the case of rock bands like Joy Division, however, the process of composition is different: Curtis would act as the "principal editor" and "great orchestrator" of the songs (Nice 2010, 34), and Joy Division as a group would adapt his writings to rhythm, melody and in terms of what we might call the verbal impact of certain catch-words or phrases. Like in the ballads, in pop/rock songs it is the repeated chorus that can give a sense of unified meaning to the text, which, nevertheless, often looks fractured (like some films do, for cinematic purposes), compared to the smoother narrative transitions of other kinds of narrative text.[12] Finally, at the stage of song reception the meaning of lyrics is further refracted, acquiring new connotations and significance in tune with the listener's cultural background.

6. Conclusion: Glass for *Glas*'s sake

> "We are dealing not with reality, after all, but that image of reality which reaches the surface through the cracked looking glass of the media" (Morley 2008, 360-361)

Songs are multi-media texts, drawing on images, noise and words: a palimpsest of fragmentary reflections, the fragments of a broken looking glass turned to words. Whether lyrics can actually be *read* depends on how they relate to the meaning of songs as a whole. In a chapter on "Texts and Meaning" of popular songs Brian Longhurst (1995, 158-190) first looks at the various layers of meaning that songtexts have, including denotation/connotation, context and performance. Then he refers to the shortcomings of content analysis, and the need for accounts which also include what Roland Barthes (1990, 293-300) called the "grain" of the voice and the pleasures of *jouissance*—in the Lacanian sense, and perhaps also in the title of Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures*, as argued by Valdés Miyares (2014)—in the audience, and finally the image or star-text of the music group or singer.

Quantitative methods (e.g., Weber 1990) may seem to offer a more scientific perspective from the linguistic point of view, but a corpus-assisted analysis of Joy Division's lyrics, for example, would hardly alert us to the significance of the word "glass" as an image schema, until we examine the biographical accounts. On the other hand, theories for the discourse analysis of song lyrics as a social practice could be more rewarding. Their theoretical foundations are summed up by Aleshinskaya (2013): the

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[11] Reception theory, as it has been applied to the English traditional ballad, accounts for the significance of the "implied audience" (and the reader's "consistency-building"), the "gaps of indeterminacy" of ballad texts (the "unwritten" parts of texts), the constraints in the possible range of meaning as a result of the interpretive framework embodied in the concept of traditional referentiality (the "horizon of expectations"), and the generation of meaning by metonymy from formulaic phrases and traditional themes or motifs (Atkinson 2002, 8-13).

[12] However, Peter Hook did not generally like songs with a chorus, and many of Joy Division's songs do not have a conventional one (Hook 2013, 235): what they often have is the repetition of a catchphrase, especially at the end of the song for a climactic effect, as in "Glass" (Curtis 1995, 156): "Do it again and again and again."

right approach would be that of multi-modal discourse analysis, which takes account of relevant social, linguistic, psychological, visual, gestural, ritual, technical, historical and musicological aspects. All these key components of song discourse are present in the image schema of "breaking glass": in the breakthrough of post-punk bands (as narrativized in the film *Breaking Glass*), in the psychological fragility of Curtis's energy as a singer and dancer, in Joy Division's technical innovations (including sonic anaphones of glass-breaking), and so on.

Pop songs are most often enjoyed with little or no attention at all to their lyrics, as when Spanish people like me heard Joy Division's music for the first time. Even for the English-speaking public it was a revelation when Deborah Curtis's book not only disclosed the biographical details of her husband's life, but also included an appendix with the lyrics he wrote, some of which were hard to decipher while listening to the songs.[13] Yet, as Morley said in purposeful overstatement, "In the end 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' is about its melody" (Morley 2008, 365),[14] just as their song "Digital" could be said to be a self-reflection on the digital delay machine the band had just started using when they recorded it.[15] Inevitably, however, "a writing that refers back only to itself carries us *at the same time*, indefinitely and systematically, to some other writing" (Derrida 1981, 202; my emphasis). Thus I have been trying to illustrate this intertextual phenomenon affecting Joy Division's "glass." The more I read Joy Division, the more I read into their reference to other texts, and this very intertextuality makes the lyrics the more meaningful.

The present article began by reading Joy Division's songs intertextually, setting them in relation to literary works and films to which they could only be loosely connected. It will close by taking the same strategic operation one step further, *grafting* Joy Division's "Glass" on a Derridean text which barely resembles it at the most superficial orthographic and phonetic levels. Derrida's *Glas*, a deliberately fractured text like Bowie's "Breaking Glass," demonstrates how even texts from opposed fields, namely, a philosophical text, by Hegel, and a literary one, by Jean Genet, produce new meaning by being brought together, though they may never achieve a full conflation. It is a demonstration of the idea of *grafting* that the philosopher had used in other writings (Derrida [1972] 1981, 202). Derrida advocates metaphor in philosophical thought, in this case a metaphor for the double reading of sense, the reading in-between sound

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[13] Joy Division's manager Rob Gretton wrote in 1979 "we do not particularly like publishing our lyrics, because we would like the listener to put some effort in trying to understand them" (Savage 2014, xxv).

[14] Morley's conceptualization of "melody" should probably be understood in the sense that Moore (2012, 20) gives to the "*melodic layer*" in the textural composition of a song, that is, only one of the layers shaping the meaning of a song, but sometimes the most important.

[15] According to Middleton (1990, 221), Jacobson's theory of syntagmatic equivalence, that is, the "introversive signification" or "auto-reflection" characterizing all semiotic processes, is especially noticeable in music. In Gee's 2007 documentary *Joy Division* at minute 26-27, graphic designer Jon Wozencroft argues that the lyrics of "Digital" are "actually digital: there's on/off, day in/day out, and the switching is weirdly related to Curtis's persona itself which, we now know, is bipolar."

and meaning. In French the word "glas" means the death knell tolling of a bell, and Derrida's "knell" announced the death of totalizing logocentric philosophy, questioning the boundaries that separated different books, different genres, and disciplines, for example, literature from philosophy. What I have proposed here is to challenge the boundaries dividing song lyrics from literature, including biography and biopic.

All approaches to the level of secondary signification in structuralist terms (which is the level this paper deals with, through its focus on intertextuality) have their problems (Middleton 1990, 233): the hermeneutic analysis of lyrics must confront their ultimate ambivalence; the reconstitution of the intention of the producer(s) is haunted by the intentional fallacy and experimental testing of listener responses, such that perhaps the most rewarding reading will tend to expose the virtually infinite, context-bound, polysemy of song text. Which is not to say that song meanings cannot be discussed, indeed I have done just that in the preceding pages. Nor am I suggesting that the lyrics of, say, Kurt Cobain's "Rape Me, My Friend" (1993) or Pete Seger's "We Shall Overcome" are irrelevant to their meaning. On the contrary, not only are they meaningful in themselves, as it were in mirror self-reflection, but even more so in the proliferation of intertexts and contexts, and the refractions, that various readers and times bring to them.

As a coda, I would like to allude to a reconfiguration of Joy Division's symbolic glass in a song by New Order, the band that the members of Joy Division formed after Curtis died: "Crystal," released in 2001 as the first single off New Order's seventh album. The lyrics begin by explaining away the "crystal" metaphor in plain terms: "We're like crystal, we break easy." The plainly stated simile is a far cry from the subtle suggestion about the breaking of young hearts in "Glass," but echoes of this song are quite evident, since other details confirm that "Crystal" looks back on the early days of Joy Division: thus the official video for the song features a fictional young band called "The Killers" ("The Kill" was the title of one of Joy Division's early songs), and the music signals a departure from the synthesizers and electronic style that characterized New Order back to a more guitar oriented style, like in early Joy Division. A real band, The Killers, was named after the fictional band in the video of "Crystal," and they would openly acknowledge the influence of Joy Division on their music, and cover Joy Division's "Shadowplay" on one of their own albums. In the end, this is what the influence of a particular rock band may bequeath: either it is imitated by tribute bands (including Peter Hook and The Light, a band formed by Joy Division's bass player to play and record live versions of their songs), or it becomes a progressively faint and scattered, scarcely acknowledged influence (for example, Joy Division's influence on Editors). However, from 2007, the "Year of Joy Division" proclaimed in the press, film, documentary and book (Nolan 2007, 172), many people either recalled their experiences of listening to the band or got to know it for the first time (see also Heim ed. 2012). Their late 1970s story gained another significance in a new age, not only the "cracked looking glass" media image that Morley mentioned in the epigraph of

this final section (2008), which is part of the fandom image Otter Bickerdike names "Joy Devotion" (2014) but also the fragmented responses of all those listeners, as so many reflections on Joy Division's "glass." The influence of the group continues in the circulation of refracted meanings which might well constitute a definition of culture as a whole, adding the notion of refraction to Stuart Hall's circuit model (Hall 1997, 1) as well as Derrida's notion of dissemination ([1972] 1981). Understanding the words of songs as *literature* would therefore be a far more demanding task than enjoying them as music fans. The case study of Joy Division suggests that, more than with any other strand of literary analysis, reading song lyrics calls for an open and plural, intertextual and contextual, connotative approach.

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Anglicisms in Music Fandom Terminology: The Idiosyncratic Use of Self-Referential Nouns in the Language of Youth

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Within the global phenomenon of music fandom or "fan universe," this study examines a lexical sub-component of the language of youth which is still unknown to a majority of the general public: the anglicisation of fan base nicknames. Nowadays there exists a prolific coinage of specialised self-referential terms denoting young fans of pop music singers or bands. In peninsular Spanish, such words have been either borrowed from English as direct anglicisms, such as *belieber* "a Justin Bieber fan" or *selenator* "a Selena Gómez follower," or have been idiosyncratically created following English patterns, as in *abrahamer* (< Abraham Mateo) or *casanover* (< Casanova)*.* In this article, I will describe the word-formation processes at work in this extremely productive technolect, while pinpointing major morphological trends such as the internalisation of the English suffix *-er* by Spanish speakers*.* Likewise, I will address the functions of this anglicised lexis, which will help to understand its impact not just on the conceptualisation of young people's identity but also on Spanish in general.

Keywords: anglicisms; hybrid loans; language of youth; music fandom; self-referential nouns

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Anglicismos en la terminología del *fandom* musical: el uso idiosincrático de sustantivos autoreferenciales en el lenguaje juvenil

Dentro del fenómeno internacional del *fandom* o "universo de fans musical," el presente estudio examina un sub-componente léxico que es todavía desconocido por la mayoría del público general: la anglización de nombres de grupos de *fans*. En la actualidad, se está dando una acuñación prolija de términos especializados auto-referenciales que denotan jóvenes seguidores y admiradores de grupos o de cantantes de la música pop. En español peninsular, dichas voces han sido unas veces apropiadas del inglés como anglicismos directos tales como *belieber* "fan de Justin Bieber" o *selenator* "fan de Selena Gómez," y otras han sido creadas de

forma idiosincrática partiendo de modelos foráneos ingleses como *abrahamer* (< Abraham Mateo) or *casanover* (< Casanova). En este artículo, describiré los procesos de formación de palabras que se dan en este tecnolecto tan extremadamente productivo, a la vez que señalaré las principales tendencias morfológicas, como la internalización del sufijo inglés *-er* llevada a cabo por hablantes españoles. Asimismo, trataré las funciones de este léxico anglizado, lo que ayudará a entender su impacto no sólo en la conceptualización de la identidad de los jóvenes, sino también en la lengua española en general.

Palabras clave: anglicismos; préstamos híbridos; lenguaje juvenil; *fandom* musical; sustantivos autorreferenciales

1. Introduction

The expansion of English all around the world and its influence on modern languages seems an unquestionable reality. The reasons for its hegemonic status can be analysed from synchronic and diachronic perspectives. From a historical viewpoint, economic, cultural, political and military reasons have all certainly played their roles in the prevailing position that English still enjoys. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the main focus of influence exerted worldwide came from England in fields such as sports, navigation and new technologies. However, the emergence of the US as a superpower after the Second World War completely shifted the focus from England to the other side of the Atlantic.

At the present time, the widespread use of English as a *lingua franca* for global communication and its pervasiveness, through American cultural productions and other social realms such as politics, economics, technology and science, have both led some authors to state that we are witnessing an "Anglicization of European lexis" (Furiassi, Pulcini and Rodríguez González 2012). This is not surprising since languages build their word-stock either by making use of their own lexicogenetic mechanisms or by borrowing lexis or phraseology from other languages, particularly from English.

However, not all words that seem to be English in form are truly so. At this stage it is important to distinguish "true anglicisms," *de facto* English words borrowed without or with only minor formal changes and/or semantic integration (Furiassi, Pulcini and Rodríguez González 2012, 6), from "false anglicisms," also known as "pseudoanglicisms" (Onysko 2007, 52; Furiassi 2010, 19-20). As Furiassi states, "false anglicisms may be defined either as autonomous coinages which resemble English words but do not exist in English, or as 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).

Besides these lexical borrowings, the powerful impact of English has also prompted a noteworthy hybrid phenomenon whereby speakers coin neologisms by drawing on their knowledge of English but using native lexical material. Words undergoing partial substitutions are known as "hybrid loans" or "loanblends" (Haugen 1950), which are characterised by the merger and re-combination of morphological material retrieved from both the source and the recipient language.

Such a cross-linguistic formation is used humorously in Spanish *-ing* forms (e.g., *puenting, edredoning, balconing*, etc.) or in colloquial words such as *porfaplease* or its variant *porfaplís,* a tautological compound in which the reduplication of English and Spanish lexemes is used for emphatic purposes.[1] Even more significant for the present article is the appropriation of loanblends—to use Haugen's (1950) terminology—by young fans as a means of encapsulating their identity. I will discuss all of these idiosyncratic coinages in the following pages.

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[1] See Rodríguez (2013) for an overview of the different types of loanblends in Spanish.

2. Anglicisms in Music Fandom Terminology

2.1. Objectives and methodology

The aim of this article is twofold: on the one hand, I will attempt to account for the "universe" of music fans as depicted in the anglicised lexis of teen magazines, with particular reference to the monthly Spanish magazine *Top Music & Cine.* In order to do so, I will place the phenomenon of music fans in a broader context by briefly characterising the use of anglicisms in the present-day Spanish music panorama (§2.3). I will subsequently analyse linguistic aspects of self-referential anglicisms and hybrid loans used as the group nicknames of followers of a particular artist or group (§3). Taking into account the extensive variety of morphological patterns employed in the coinage of these fan base nicknames, I will formally describe each of the word-formation processes at work—namely, suffixation, compounding and other minor processes—while pointing out major trends in anglicisms and hybrid forms in Spanish. On the other hand, I will refer to the functions of anglicisms by drawing on Rodríguez González's terminology (1996) in section 3.2. This will help me to examine the anglicisms selected from both a linguistic and an extralinguistic perspective, which will hopefully create a more comprehensive view of the use of anglicisms in the vocabulary of pop music fans.

2.2. Database

The primary database analysed consisted of issues 168-175 of the monthly teen magazine *Top Music & Cine* (2014-2015). This relatively low number of issues is due to the extreme novelty of the terms themselves; their use in the Spanish printed medium cannot be traced further back. Their novelty is such that this lexis has not yet made its way into any established corpora of modern Spanish or general dictionaries—e.g., the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (2014; henceforth *DRAE)* or María Moliner's *Diccionario de uso del español* (2013)—unlike other anglicisms described in the previous literature. That is why I have also complemented this textual material with online sources whenever possible.

I decided to concentrate on *Top Music & Cine* because of its distinctiveness: even though the specific anglicisms to be analysed also occurred in other magazines, a greater significant frequency of use was detected in the section from *Top Music & Cine* entitled "Twitterías." In this section young, adolescents, eager to make new friends, introduce themselves, announce their interests and give their social media accounts for the magazine's readers to contact them. This is an interesting consideration to keep in mind when addressing the motivations behind the use and functions of these anglicisms. Consequently, after having noticed that most of the self-descriptive fan base terming was used on the Internet, particularly on the social media website Twitter, I turned to the web as corpus and traced their use on the Internet by making use of the online concordancer *Webcorp* (1999-2016). The search options of this online resource enabled me to confirm my hypotheses about whether some terms were really anglicisms or false anglicisms.

2.3. Anglicisms and music: sociocultural and linguistic characterisation

In the case of Spain, a multilingual country where, according to the European Commission's Eurobarometer survey of 2012, 54% of the respondents consider themselves unable to speak any foreign language, the role of English may not appear to be as paramount as in other geographical areas. Nevertheless, this figure is misleading as regards the presence of English in Spain, which is widely attested by the following aspects: (1) its preeminent position as the most demanded foreign language studied in educational settings, having replaced French (Lorenzo 1996, 17; Luján-García 2012, 3); (2) its role in the country's linguistic landscape, the manifest linguistic actualisation (for instance, via shop names) of the underlying sociocultural realities in multilingual contexts (Luján-García 2013); and (3) its long-standing presence through the ample number of anglicisms existing in the Spanish language—see Pratt (1980), Gómez Torrego (1995), Rodríguez González and Lillo Buades (1997), Gómez Capuz (2000; 2004; 2005) and Rodríguez Medina (2000).[2]

Most anglicisms enter the language through the written medium and are mostly coined in technical and specialised fields. However, as suggested by Rodríguez González (2012), another important societal dimension in which anglicisms abound is in leisure activities—for instance, sports. Along these lines, popular culture in general has also welcomed a large amount of terms—mostly coming from American English—as a result of the pre-eminence of US cultural productions in the cinema, television and music industries.

In the globalised field of music, where lyrics and song titles are preserved in their original language, unlike films, the longstanding influence of English is crystallised in the sheer number of anglicisms in Spanish. These can be broadly categorised according to the new extra-linguistic realities introduced, such as music styles—e.g., *hip-hop, pop, rock, rap* or *punk*—and commercial or promotional products—e.g., *CDs, albums, videoclips, covers* or *singles*—to name but a few.[3]

All of these borrowings have been integrated to varying degrees into the language: some of them, like *álbum* or *roquero*, were adapted and fully integrated into the Spanish linguistic system, as attested by the *DRAE*, whereas others have been only recently borrowed, thus presenting a more foreign flavour. Within the latter class, there are new sub-types of music style—e.g., *Asian pop* or *dancehall*—nuanced musical terms, such as *tracklist* or *playlist* ["a list of songs to be played on a portable media player"] and *set list* ["a list of the songs that a band or singer intends to perform at a concert"] or the very recurrent compounds in my corpus *boyband* or *girlband*: "a pop group entirely composed of either male or female young singers, whose music and clothes style attempts to appeal to a young audience."[4] These two recently adopted compound anglicisms, *boyband* and *girlband*, show graphic variation, being written either as solid compounds or as two

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[2] Rodríguez González's *Gran diccionario de anglicismos* (forthcoming) documents over 3200 entries.
[3] For a study of anglicisms in music see, for instance, Olivares Baños (2009).
[4] All the working definitions provided are of my own devising unless otherwise stated.

separate words. Occasionally, because of the "newness" of this lexis in Spanish, they are not even inflected to form their plural forms but use zero morphemes. These uninflected lexemes, in conjunction with plural determiners, sometimes occur in formal written media as the following example shows:

> Kevin Richardson y Backstreet Boys. Las "boy band" son un negocio muy complejo. Muchas presión [*sic*], muchas fans y muchos conciertos para que un grupo de adolescentes los puedan asumir y actuar en consecuencia. A los Backstreet Boys les acabó pasando factura (*El Mundo.es* 2015).

Given the large amount of anglicisms in the field, for the purposes of this article, I will mainly concentrate on anglicisms employed in teen magazines. This choice is motivated for the following reasons: on the one hand, young people are at the forefront of linguistic innovation because of the inherently playful and ever-changing nature of their speech. Specifically, Eckert insightfully described adolescents as "the linguistic movers and shakers" in Western societies (1997, 52).

As pointed out by Rodríguez González and Stenström, if in the past young people attempted to imitate the manners and ways of adults, from 1960s onwards, "the age of youth revolution," "adults of all ages, both men and women, have been trying to adopt a young appearance and lifestyle, which includes the use of language" (2011, 236). This is definitely confirmed in the corpus of teen magazines analysed, since, even though they address a teenager readership, many sections are written by adults who attempt to emulate the language of young people.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the language of youth epitomises relevant characteristics common also to slang, namely playfulness and group identification. Eble (1996), among many others points out that slang serves to identify speakers as members of a particular group—e.g., punks, sports players, etc.[5] This same function of slang language as an in-group marker can be tentatively applied to adolescents' use of anglicisms, an issue already discussed by other authors, like Caballero Fernández-Rufete (1994), Drange (2009), González-Cruz, Rodríguez Medina and Déniz Santana (2009) or Luján García (2013). Anglicisms keep the "too old" outside the youngster's circles and conversations, as neatly demonstrated by the following sentence extracted from my corpus: "Las fans quizás me veis muy cool, decís que tengo mucho flow y mucho suag [*sic*] en el escenario, bailando . . . pero yo no me veo." (*TopMusic & Cine* 172, 21). All in all, the idiosyncrasies of the language of youth make their speech somewhat slangy from a sociological perspective, even when no slang terms *per se* are being used. This is particularly noticeable in the coinage of fan base names, such as *belieber* used for "an avid fan of Justin Bieber" or *katycat* for "an avid fan of Katy Perry," as I will discuss later on.

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[5] See also Stenström, Andersen and Hasund (2002), Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulos (2003), Stenström and Jørgensen (2009) and Wiese (2009).

Finally, the widespread use of the Internet and social media has globalised the music market to such a degree that many Spanish boy/girl bands and young singers have adopted English or English-looking words as their names, e.g., Sweet California, Auryn, Clover or Gemeliers. Their designations are an important part of their image projected on a potentially international scale, which is why, as López Rúa also suggests in relation to alternative musicians, "in many cases the names are purposely devised to catch the audience's attention by appealing to the senses; in other words, they try to strike the eye and the ear by resorting to all types of linguistic deviation: typographical, phonological and morphological" (2012, 24).

Groups of enthusiastic fans have even come up with self-referential terms or nicknames either morphologically related to the group name itself, like One Direction > *directioner*—thereby facilitating their identification to a certain extent—or completely dissimilar: Lady Gaga > *little monster*). Creating nicknames for groups of fans is not a recent practice whatsoever. For instance, for many years football fans in the UK have identified themselves by names like *Gooners* ["Arsenal fans"] or the *Toon Army* ["Newcastle United fans"]. In the field of music, this tradition can possibly be traced back to 1971 (see Budnick and Baron 2012). It began with a simple note inside the back cover of the album *Grateful Dead,* in which fans were addressed as "Dead Heads." Nonetheless, it seems that there has recently been a proliferation of fan nicknames—particularly denoting female fans of pop music—which have been borrowed from English as direct anglicisms, but they have also served as patterns for the creations of hybrid linguistic varieties, as this article will attempt to show.

Nicknames of fan groups are part of a larger societal phenomenon known as fandom, "a fan universe." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth *OED*), the word *fandom* originated in the US meaning "the world of enthusiasts for some amusement or for some artist; also in extended use" (s.v.). Interestingly enough, the first written record in which this word occurred—an entry from *Publishers' Weekly* June 30, 1928—shows its usage in the field of sports: "Ty Cobb, the idol of baseball fandom" (*OED* s.v. "fandom"). This evidences the close association between sports and music *aficionados*, as in both spheres strong bonds arise out of common interests. The fandom or fan kingdom phenomenon, which is nowadays usually associated with young people, is not new in Spanish either, as Puig demonstrates (2002, 98) in his study in the field of pop music comprising the years 1976-2000. Even so, it is important to note that with the advent of the Internet and other means of communicating worldwide, fan kingdoms and their names are acquiring international dimensions rather than being geographically limited to a specific country.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

3.1. Morphophonological description of the anglicisms

All lexical borrowings related to the fan universe are direct anglicisms: at the graphemic level, they have remained unaltered, even though they may present consonant clusters

which are incompatible with the Spanish phonological and graphic system, notably
<cs> in final position, as in *lovatics*, or the geminate consonant <tt> in the French-
sounding word *vampettes.* Nonetheless, one of the most characteristic and recurrent
morphemes that facilitates their identification as English words is the suffix *-er*, as
in *directioner* or *beaster*, which is indeed compatible with the Spanish distribution of
consonants in final position. This makes these words formally permissible, as there are
no phonotactic constraints. Because they have recently permeated the Spanish language
of youth through the written medium, these words are still in their earliest stages in
which anglicisms usually preserve their spelling totally or partially.

From a phonological viewpoint, even though most of them are almost entirely
restricted to the written language, fan base names such as *beliebers* have roughly
preserved their initial pronunciation to a greater or lesser extent: in Spanish there are
no long vowels, such as /iː/ in *beaster* or *belieber*, and graphemes characteristically match
with phonemes, but the adolescents who use these anglicisms are familiar with the
names of their favourite singers and their original pronunciation. This is why it is very
unlikely that these words undergo any significant graphemic alteration reflecting their
phonological make-up either in the short or in the long term.

In addition, the preponderance of American English powerfully influences
pronunciation too. For instance, the unstressed syllable *er* could be pronounced /ə/,
following British English, and so being adapted in Spanish as an <a>, as in *corner > cona,*
attested in Canary Islands Spanish: "si había sido o no *cona*," "tiró un *cona*" (González
Cruz 1995, 554; quoted in Rodríguez González, forthcoming). Still, among Spanish
learners of English, the sequence vowel + /r/ in the suffix *-er* is, most of the times,
realised as an r-coloured vowel as in American English. This significantly reduces any
chance of *-er* being spelt otherwise.

I will now proceed to provide an overview of the main lexicogenetic mechanisms
used, which I have attempted to systematise in the following sections. As suggested
above, the most interesting linguistic aspect to consider in fan base nicknames is
morphology, as many of these nouns denoting fans have been subject to word-forming
processes.

3.1.1. Suffixation
3.1.1.1. The agent suffix *-er* and its variant *-or*

According to Plag, "*-er* should be described as rather underspecified, simply meaning
something like 'person or thing having to do with X'" (2003, 89) because there is a
plethora of semantic possibilities concerning this suffix: it is used to indicate place of
origin or residence—e.g., *Londoner*, *New Yorker* or *New Englander*—performers of actions—
e.g., *singer*—or instrument nouns—e.g., *mixer* or *toaster*—to list just a few of its uses.

As pointed out by Rodríguez González (2002, 141), "*-er* anglicisms" in Spanish are
usually deverbal and refer to either a human performer—e.g., *mánager*, *latin lover* and

líder—or an inanimate object, *thriller* and *escáner*. Spanish is particularly receptive to this English suffix when denoting agency since the recipient language has a cognate suffix, *-ero*. The use of *-ero,* as opposed to the English (and original) variant *-er* in Spanish/English doublets such as *rocker/rockero, raper/rapero, surfer/surfero* or *windsurfer/windsurfero* evidences morphological integration of *-er* in Spanish (see Rodríguez González forthcoming).

In the case of fan names, the suffix *-er* performs a unique function and differs considerably from the aforementioned *-er* doublets in several aspects. (1) Prototypically, *-er* functions productively attached to common nouns; despite this use in more traditional word formations containing *-er*, fan nickname anglicisms may have proper names as lexical roots. (2) From a semantic viewpoint, this suffix conveys the meaning of "avid fan" in anglicisms such as *belieber*, *directioner*, *mixer* or *beaster*, which at the same time proves the wide semantic flexibility of the morpheme; in other words, it has adopted a new meaning within the microcosm of music bands and singers. (3) *-er* names for musician fan bases are not so well established as the *rocker/roquero* paradigm. The latter model mainly originated in sports and music terminology, and its continuous use facilitated its progressive integration into Spanish both in formal and informal registers. In contrast, novel *-er* nicknames are "underway" and continue to enlarge the lexical repertoire of the fandom universe.

Other *-er* examples—besides those recorded in the corpus of teen magazines used for this study—which confirm the widespread use of this suffix by young people, are *gouldiggers* ["Ellie Goulding fans"], *jepseners* ["Carly Rae Jepsen fans"], *rushers* ["Big Time Rush fans"] or *smilers* ["Miley Cirus fans"], among others. This wide spectrum of *-er* fan base nicknames makes a provisional systematic categorisation possible. The simplest process consists of attaching the suffix in question to one of the words making up the singer/group's name without any root modification as in *jepseners* < (Carly Rae) Jepsen*, rushers* < Big Time or *mixers* < Little Mix.

However, the coinage of fan base nicknames may go beyond morphological boundaries, and so fans may have nicknames playing with existing phonologically similar words as in *gouldiggers* (< Ellie Goulding) / *gold diggers*, *beliebers* (< Justin Bieber) / *believers* or others which, apparently, are not related to the singer/group's name but rather have a more elusive connection. These clever fan nicknames require greater knowledge on the fan's side in order to understand their etymological origin, as in *smilers* ["Miley Cirus fans"].

Not only is the denominal suffix *-er* very common in fan base anglicisms, but it has also become extremely productive in present-day Spanish spoken by young people. In fact, its pervasive use in English-derived words has led Spaniards to create analogous forms with native Spanish material: *abrahamer* (< Abraham Mateo) or *casanover*—derived from Casanova although the root has undergone a process of final vowel apocope—are just some instances of this phenomenon. Thus, occasionally, Spanish coiners need to draw on lexical material in their own language since proper names simply lack an

English correspondence, as shown by *abrahamer* < Abraham Mateo. However, nonce-formations such as *gemelier* evidence a notably different word-formation process, resulting from the fusion of an existing Spanish common name, which already has a human referent—*gemelo* ["twin"]—and the English suffix *-er*. This latter type is akin to hybrid formations or loanblends present in general Spanish. However, the case of *-er* fan base hybrid nouns is strikingly distinctive because of its purely native origin, that is, it is not based on an existing anglicism of the *rocker-rockero* type.

Interestingly enough, the variant *-(t)or* is also present in the corpus of derived anglicisms as in *arianators* ["Ariana Grande fans"], but its preference over other suffixes does not seem to be grounded in derivational morphology. The root ends neither in <s> or <t>—unlike the Latinate bases *conductor* or *oscillator*—but rather the consonant <t> is inserted intervocalically. This may be due to euphony or even playfulness because of their phonological resemblance to other words, like *terminator*. But this is a hypothesis that should be confirmed in future works with larger data samples.

The recurrent use of this suffix is further exemplified by *selenator* (< Selena Gómez) and *sheeranator* (< Ed Sheeran), both appearing as anglicisms in Spanish too. *Selenator* has even been found at the "Listas" section of the widely-read Spanish newspaper *20 Minutos*, one of whose headings reads "13 señales de que eres una SELENATOR" (*20 Minutos.es* 2013). Concerning the second example, its integrated use in Spanish has also been attested: "Contar con millones de seguidoras, cada una en un punto del planeta, hace incrementar la posibilidad de recibir regalos y obsequios por parte de las **Directioners** y las **Sheeranators**" (*MeltyFan* 2015; bold type and capital letters in the original).

As can be inferred, the sources for these derivative words partially share the same ending: the vowel <a>, although an intervocalic <n> is maintained in *sheeranator*. This implies certain regularity and establishes another lexicogenetic pattern which can be exploited to create neologisms.[6] Nonetheless, because of the intrinsically peculiar morphological ending of this type of nicknames, *-tor* will not probably become as productive as the derivational morpheme *-er*, which is more easily attached to base forms.

Having considered all these examples, it could be argued that there is also a visible trend concerning the relative position of the source words employed in these nicknames: when multi-word names (frequently, name + surname combinations) are examined, the second element prevails over the first one in the creation of nicknames. Taylor Swift > *swiftie/swifter*, Demi Lovato > *lovatic* or One Direction > *directioner* are just some examples of what it is now a noticeable tendency.

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[6] Rodríguez González (forthcoming) compiles several humorous nonce-formations containing *-ator*. Among them, *acojonator* (< acojonante + or) and the variant *-eitor*, as in *termineitor* (a result of the phonological spelling of *terminator*).

3.1.1.2. The French suffix -ette

The French-origin of this suffix seems to imply that it is used to form feminine nouns in such a case as *vampettes* ["The Vamps fans"]. However, the lack of a masculine form, unlike gender-marked fan names such as *juggalos/juggalettes* ["male/female fans of Insane Clown Posse"]—the terms coming from the band's song *The Juggla*—enables me to conclude that it is indistinctively used for both women and men as a neutral term: "La banda británica ha querido tener con todos sus vampettes un detalle súper bonito con esta edición navideña que incluye el álbum original y 8 canciones de Navidad." (*TopMusic & Cine* 172, 6).

This follows the modern tendency of using gender-neutral words even though the suffix originally denoted female gender, as in *suffragette*. The suffix *-ette* is not very productive in English, which is why more recent words making use of it, like *punkette*, tend to connote a humorous tone, which is a characteristic feature of the language of youth as well.

3.1.1.3. The suffix -ie

As regards *-ie* (and its variant *-y*), prototypically, it creates diminutive nouns or adjectives and hypocoristic names: *Bessy* (< Elizabeth) or *Annie* (< Anne). In addition, according to the *OED,* it is appended to surnames to form familiar names, like *Kitey* (< Mr. /Mrs. Kite) or *Coxy* (< Mr. / Mrs. Cox). This second sense of the suffix can be aptly applied to nicknames for fans such as *Swiftie* (< Taylor Swift), which convey a feeling of family affection among fans and singers.

Apart from the aforementioned anglicism, there is another occurrence of this type in the corpus, namely *sweeties* from the Spanish girl band called Sweet California. Fans of this band have appropriated an anglicism and have semantically endowed it with a more restricted meaning, "followers of Sweet California," as in "Los fans de Sweet California, los *sweeties,* son en su mayoría chicas, pero cada vez tienen más seguidores masculinos" (*Semana.es* 2014).

3.1.2. Compounds

In comparison to derivation, compounding represents a less frequent word-formation mechanism employed in the corpus of anglicisms. Some compounds include the following: *katycat*—denoting "a fan of Katy Perry," after her tour *Hello Katy* (2009)—, the English-looking term *XusoLover* (*TopMusic & Cine* 172, 31)—which was in fact coined by the Spanish singer Xuso Jones for it to be used mainly on Twitter—and the anglicism *redhead* (*TopMusic & Cine* 172: 10): a word created after the American boyband Midnight Red.

Regarding the latter, because of the semantics of *-head*—which may refer to X enthusiasts, as in *webhead*—it has been productively used in the coinage of other fan nicknames such as *blockheads* ["New Kids on the Block fans"] or *jonasheads* ["Jonas

Brothers fans"]. As already mentioned, the fan name precursor of this trend can be traced back to 1971, when Grateful Dead fans started to be called *Dead Heads.*

Head, as a base of compounds, was widely used in American drug slang signifying "drug-user" (e.g., in *basehead* or *cubehead*) and, in general slang, it still functions as a negatively loaded suffix meaning "a foolish person," in *airhead*, *chucklehead*, *dickhead* or *meathead*.[7] This meaning is closer to the original sense of *Dead Head* in 1971, a word which subsequently underwent a process of amelioration. However, the overall specificity of this base, mostly restricted to the field of drugs, makes this type of compounds infrequent in Spanish.[8]

3.1.3. Other word-formation mechanisms

Other word-formation processes at work include, for instance, the extension of the singer Becky G's short name (i.e., *B),* in *beasters* ["Becky G fans"] as in "También le encanta estar conectada con sus fans, los "beasters," a través de las redes sociales, en las que tiene ¡casi nueve millones de seguidores!" (*TopMusic & Cine* 173: 77; see also *ABC News* 2012). This nickname plays with the word *beast* in allusion to her "rebellious" nature, as the singer herself explains. Another interesting case is the combination of an initialism and a clipped form in *5sosFam,* which stands for "5 Seconds of Summer [i.e., the band name] family." The inclusion of the word *family* in this anglicism is indeed very revealing in understanding the true sense of belonging to a fan community. With similar collectivist purposes, other singers have employed such terms as *navy* as in "Y como él no pierde la oportunidad de contarlo todo en twitter, ha subido esta foto con la diva. ¡Tenemos un nuevo miembro en la Rihanna Navy!" (*El Mundo.es* 2013).

As a final comment in this section, it is worth mentioning that there are a few fan groups which use simple or mono-morphemic words to refer to themselves, generally coined after the name of an emblematic album or song. This is the case of the American band Green Day, whose followers are called *idiots* after the album *American Idiot.* Because of the negative semantic load of the term, followers tend to use it indicating its meaning in a paraphrase. It rarely occurs on its own. These two tendencies are illustrated in the following examples retrieved from online forums: "Soy idiot ejeje pero no hace mucho, desde el año pasado; pero los conocía desde hace unos 2 años por Boulevard of Broken Dreams" (*Slim Shady Bitch* 2014) and "Soy Idiot [Fan de Green Day] […] sin Green Day el Punk ahora estaría olvidado para las nuevas generaciones" (*Mind Attacks* 2011)

3.2. Functions of these anglicisms

The significant number of English-looking hybrid formations in Spanish replicating English morphological patterns, like the addition of the suffix *-er*, rather than using

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[7] See Thorne (2007) for a complete compilation of *head* compounds in English slang.

[8] *Acid head* and *head shop* are the only anglicisms of this type recorded in Rodríguez González (forthcoming).

the native equivalent (-*ero*) suggests that young people coin their nicknames out of cultural snobbery in order to be trendy or fashionable. Still, the motivations behind these coinages go far beyond this extralinguistic reason.

The functions of the aforementioned anglicisms and hybrid formations can be better explained by referring to the "interpersonal" or "expressive function" and to the "textual function," in Halliday's terms (1970; 1994).[9] Concerning the former, the use of these nicknames helps to create bonds and reinforce solidarity, as already mentioned in connection with sports fans. However, fan phenomena are acquiring unprecedented dimensions thanks to the role of social media—Twitter, Facebook—and video-sharing websites which facilitate the dissemination of music as well as communicative exchanges among fans from all over the world.

Within this global context, the already discussed fandom is not trivial in the least. Fan base monikers are created to identify an in-group community of young people who feel strong devotion to certain singers and organise fan events in which followers worldwide come together to spend a few days with their idols, in, for instance, *MyCamps* (used as a single word), or in meetings with their favourite singers after concerts, known as *Meet&Greets* (also written as a single lexical unit).

Not only do these terms form strong communities, but they also create layers of commitment. While all fans are characterised in the same way from an outsider perspective, contemporary fandom has devised an intricate hierarchical system whereby true fans need to rank first as far as their knowledge of the artist/s is concerned. In other words, while ordinary fans will simply be familiar with some songs, nicknames for fan groups represent the superlative manifestation of commitment (see also Bermingham 2014). In this respect, the following comments retrieved from a blog which discusses the differences between *swiftie, swifter* (after the singer Taylor Swift) and *fan* are illuminating:

SWIFTIE: Ser swiftie implica que realmente te guste ella, que te guste su música, que escuches una canción suya como si fuera la primera vez (aunque la tengas ya súper machacada), que la sientas y que la vivas, que conozcas sus historias y sus inspiraciones, que la defiendas y que la apoyes por encima de pocas cosas en el mundo [...]

FAN: Ha escuchado "IKYWT" [I Knew You Were Trouble], "WANEGBT" [We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together], "22" y a lo mejor hasta "Everything Has Changed" y sabe que Taylor tiene cuatro álbumes en el mercado, aunque solo ha oído el último.

SWIFTER: ADOOOOOOOORA A TAYLOR. Siempre lo ha hecho, solo que ahora que "se ha vuelto más pop" la escucha más. (*El rincón de Taylor* 2014)

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[9] For a detailed analysis and application of these tenets to the study of anglicisms, see Rodríguez González (1996).

The author's post details her own views on the differences between *fans* and the apparently similar nicknames *swiftie* and *swifter*. While *swiftie* is an anglicism, *swifter* is here employed as a false anglicism. *Swifter*, meaning "fan of Taylor Swift," is *prima facie* exclusively used on Spanish websites because that specific meaning is only activated within an exclusively Spanish-speaking community. If *swifter* were used in isolation, there would be a semantic clash with the homophonous comparative form of the adjective *swift*, which would be, in turn, a source of misunderstandings.

Furthermore, the fact that the word *fan* is an abbreviated form of *fanatic*, which itself implies an obsessional degree of interest in a singer, seems to be completely neglected. This is probably due to the fact that *fan* is a well-established anglicism which has undergone a diachronic process of amelioration, thereby adopting more neutral connotations than *fanático*, "preocupado o entusiasmado ciegamente por algo" (*DRAE*, s.v.).

This corroborates Rodríguez González's statement that "connotations and stylistic markings of borrowings at times lead to specialised meanings, giving rise to a distribution of usages between the native and the foreign term" (1996, 112). In this particular case, the high degree of integration of *fan* into Spanish may suggest that it functions as a native word despite having originally been borrowed from English.

Regarding their function in a text as a whole, there is a clear tendency towards "simplification" (Rodríguez González 1996, 116), as anglicisms and hybrid formations are short terms that would require longer paraphrases in Spanish in order to encapsulate their specific nuances. This tendency towards economy of the language is exploited to its fullest on such social media as Twitter, which limits Tweet length to 140 characters and, thus, users have to describe themselves and their feelings in an economical way.

On the other hand, however, the adult writers of teen magazines—who are indeed outsiders—lack the terminological precision that these fervent fans share as background knowledge; and so, non-specialist writers or speakers use particular fan nicknames indistinctly. Even more importantly for stylistic purposes, writers of teen magazines attempt to achieve variation of expression, whereby fan names and phrases of the type *fan of X* are set at the same semantic level. To put it differently, they are used indistinctly in cases such as the following:

Con este grito de guerra Abraham dejaba su tour por las teles españolas para aterrizar en este país donde, viendo los 2000 retuits y 3000 favoritos de su comentario, tiene ya miles de abrahamers […] En otros lugares en los que aún no ha podido estar, como Panamá, ya tiene clubes de fans reclamando un concierto. (*TopMusic & Cine* 174, 16)

Este año, los sueños de todas las directioners van en una única dirección, ¡y nunca mejor dicho! España no parece entrar, al menos de momento, en la ruta del "OTRA Tour," así que a los fans de la boy band no nos queda otra que soñar. (*TopMusic & Cine* 174, 18)

Having considered all of this, I can confidently uphold that fan nicknames do not experience graphemic variations or changes in terms of register when imported from English to Spanish—as they tend to be used in informal specialised contexts—although there is in fact a great variation as regards their usage. This is an inevitable outcome of the subtle nuances that fans attempt to capture in these short, yet powerful, lexical units.

4. Final remarks

Within the framework of the global phenomenon of fandom, this study has delved into a part of the language of youth which is generally unknown to the public at large, namely the use of anglicisms and coinage of hybrid formations denoting fan nicknames. As I have attempted to show, a great number of word-forming processes are at work in the creation of what could be considered self-presenters. Derivation is arguably the most frequently employed mechanism nowadays, although the constant coinage of this type of lexis may alter the state of affairs in the future.

Concerning derivation, I have drawn particular attention to the suffix -er, which represents an epitome of the lexical creativity developed by foreign—in this case, Spanish—speakers once they have internalised the grammatical system of such an influential language as English. This suffix, despite being typically English, has spread across languages to such an extent that it is used independently of its originally native lexical material. With increasing significance it has become semantically specialised to function as a productive morpheme in nonce-words coined out of admired groups'/singers' names, thereby creating a whole new onomastic "microsystem" within music fandom.

After having formally examined these terms, I have addressed their textual and expressive functions, which may provide insights into the sociolinguistic dimensions of the universe of young music fans. Adolescents aim to create strong communities which share common interests while distinguishing themselves from other peers who are not at the same level of commitment on the fan scale.

Strictly considering their low frequency of use and restricted means of dissemination—mostly teen magazines and social media—it could be argued that they are foreignisms rather than adopted anglicisms. However, this very limited approach to borrowings does not account for the important expressive force with which these nicknames are endowed, which explains their growing popularity.

Besides, even though some authors would argue that these types of nicknames—particularly hybrid forms—are mere nonce-formations, "sometimes [nonce-words] are seen as fully representative of the system of word-formation defining 'possible words'." (Štekauer and Lieber 2006, 363). This especially applies to the morpheme -er, now attached to proper names rather than simply to common nouns.

Young people are at the "vanguard" of lexical innovation, which partially explains why the most common derivational suffix, -er, has pervaded other realms of the Spanish linguistic scenario, such as television series. For instance, the word Cayetaner (after the

actress Cayetana Guillén Cuervo, who plays a role in the television series *El ministerio del tiempo*) has been recently traced on social media (see *El Diario.es* 2015). All in all, because of the aforementioned linguistic and extralinguistic reasons, analogous hybrid forms are forever likely to continue to make their way either into general language or into other specialised fields which have fan bases.

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Appendix 2: List of fan nicknames attested in the database

ABRAHAMER.- *n.* A fanatic of the Spanish pop singer Abraham Mateo.

ARIANATOR.- *n.* An avid fan of the American singer and songwriter Ariana Grande.

AURYNER.- *n.* An enthusiast of the Spanish boy band Auryn.

BEASTER.- *n.* An enthusiastic fan of the American singer Becky G.

BELIEBER.- *n.* A devotee of the Canadian singer and songwriter Justin Bieber.

CASANOVER.- *n.* A keen follower of the Spanish boy band Casanova.

CAYETANER.- *n.* A follower of the actress Cayetana Guillén Cuervo, who plays a role in the Spanish television series *El ministerio del tiempo.*

DIRECTIONER.- *n.* A devoted fan of the English-Irish pop boy band One Direction.

KATYCAT.- *n.* An admirer of the American singer Katy Perry.

LITTLE MONSTER.- *n.* A fan of the American singer and songwriter Lady Gaga.

LOVATIC.- *n.* A fanatic of the American singer and actress Demi Lovato.

MIXER.- *n.* A committed follower of the British girl group Little mix.

REDHEAD.- *n.* An enthusiastic follower of the American boy band Midnight Red.

SELENATOR.- *n.* An avid fan of the American singer and actress Selena Gómez.

SHEERANATOR.- *n.* An enthusiastic fan of the English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran.

SWEETIE.- *n.* An enthusiast of the Spanish girl band Sweet California.

SWIFTIE (also SWIFTER and SWIFTIER).- *n.* A fervent fan of the American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift.

VAMPETTE.- *n.* Nickname for the fan base of the British pop band The Vamps.

XusoLover.- *n.* An admirer of the Spanish singer Xuso Jones.

5SOS family (also 5sosFamily or 5SOSFam).- *n.* Name for the fan base of 5 Seconds of Summer, an Australian pop punk/rock boy band.

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INTERVIEW

ENTREVISTA

"The Day Is Not Yet Done":
An Interview with Earl Lovelace

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Novelist, playwright and short-story writer Earl Lovelace is part of a middle generation of West Indian writers that started writing in the milieu of independence. A pivotal figure in Caribbean letters, Lovelace was born on July 13, 1935 to working-class parents in Toco, northern rural Trinidad, and unlike the majority of his counterparts, he has remained in the West Indies. In 2002 he received an honorary doctorate of letters from The University of the West Indies, Trinidad Campus.

Lovelace's oeuvre includes the novels *While Gods Are Falling* (1962), *The Schoolmaster* (1968), *The Wine of Astonishment* (1982), *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979), *Salt* (1996), which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1997, and his latest *Is Just a Movie* (2011), which won the OCM Bocas Prize in 2012. He has also written the collection of plays *Jestina's Calypso and Other Plays* (1984), the short story collection *A Brief Conversation and Other Stories* (1988), and the collection of essays *Growing in the Dark* (2003). His writings are embedded in the political and cultural frameworks of the day, and aim at offering a vision of the Caribbean as a place which is just as much a part of the world as any other.

In the course of this interview, Lovelace offers his perspective on issues such as the traditional notion of the Caribbean intellectuals and their role in Caribbean society, the importance of art and artists in the region, and the artist's connection with grassroots culture. Lovelace also foregrounds the importance of his having taken a different route from the vast majority of West Indian writers, and of rejecting labels such as "postcolonial," "intellectual" and "activist," and instead proposing others such as "writer of independence." The long-standing yet seldom mentioned issue of reparation closes the interview.

This interview took place at Earl Lovelace's house in Cascade, Port of Spain, on October 25, 2013, shortly after the writer had returned from participating in "The Vancouver Writer Fest." The interview started and finished on his wonderful veranda, accompanied by the soothing sound of the creaking of bamboo poles. A sudden and typically Caribbean downpour forced us to go momentarily inside to then return to this

evocative place. As his character Bango explains in *Salt*, "things here have their own mind [and] rain decide when it going to fall. Sometimes in the middle of the day, the sky clear, you hear a rushing swooping sound and voops it fall down" (Lovelace 1996, 5).

Maria Grau Perejoan: *You are one of the few Trinidadian writers of your generation who have chosen to remain and write from Trinidad. How important is, or has been, staying for you? Why did you choose to stay?*

Earl Lovelace: I think that there are a number of reasons. I don't think I wanted to go. I went abroad after I had won the BP Independence Award with my first novel *While Gods Are Falling*. So I was published in the UK while living here. I am probably one of the few to get published abroad while living in Trinidad. But I did want to go outside of Trinidad, which I did. Then I found that I wanted to live in Trinidad, or live in the Caribbean at least. I don't think I ever thought about going away to live abroad permanently.

I think one value of staying is that you don't have to write of a remembered place. The value of staying is that I have been present to see everything unfold not just as a spectator but as a participant as well. I was involved in village councils, in playing football and cricket in the countryside, in the Black Power movement and in carnival. Being born in the Caribbean does not mean that you automatically know the place. The Caribbean was not a place you knew really, it was a place you were getting to know, and I think we are still getting to know. The whole idea of: Who are we? What is independence? How have we arrived? Where have we arrived? These are real questions that we are still answering. From the outside, I think you deal with the assumed Caribbean, the Caribbean that has been represented in history, the idea of the Caribbean that has been cultivated by the various interests.

MGP*: Would you say that Caribbean literature needs Caribbean voices to explain what the Caribbean is?*

EL: Right, right, right, and to examine again and to re-examine what it has been about and what it might be about. To explain the inequalities in the societies, to explain the society to itself, its promise and beauty and potential and in a way to present a different story than the simple calypso singing fun-filled one that represents the Caribbean people in the common imagination.

MGP: *And validate a certain culture that was dismissed or undervalued?*

EL: Yes, to validate the culture by way of validating the people who produce the culture. So, yes.

MGP: *Do you consider yourself a West Indian intellectual?*

EL: Well, I would imagine so. I consider myself a West Indian intellectual in the sense that I have been thinking from ever since about the concerns of the Caribbean and

writing about them. However, I don't know with whom I would be grouped. I have the sense that the formally educated West Indian intellectuals occupy another space and respond to issues, if not with the Western establishment guiding their hands, with it looking over their shoulders. Maybe to answer your question we should look at some people who are considered West Indian intellectuals: [Marcus] Garvey, [Lloyd] Best [and so on].

MGP: *C. L. R. James?*

EL: Well, C. L. R. James is a class in a way by himself. I would not see him as a West Indian intellectual but *the West Indian intellectual*. Such an intellectual has always been on the outside—Garvey, James, [Walter] Rodney. The intellectual I am thinking about has been a scholarship winner, someone anointed at a very early age, who seems to consolidate rather than veer too far away from the narrative developed by the colonial order to explain us to ourselves.

MGP: *I understand, as you argue, that yours is a different path. However, even though you are not part of that local intelligentsia that decided on how the Caribbean should be, you can be said to have proposed the direction the Caribbean should take in your work.*

EL: Yes, yes, yes. I suppose I am seeking to separate myself to some degree. In identifying with people at the base, the underclass if you will, I have come to emphasize the Caribbean as a place to which particularly African people (but this can be extended to other people as well) were brought stripped of name and rank, and whose struggle is fundamentally a human struggle for personhood. The narrative voice in my fiction does not have the authority of the traditional narrator who sees himself wiser and more privileged than those he is writing about. I try to find the voice of the ordinary person, not privileged by class and rank but by belonging to an elemental humanness. This gives me quite a different perspective from those who come with a narrator whose authority is derived from education, but also from class and rank.

MGP: *How would you define yourself?*

EL: Well, I don't know. I haven't really thought about it, or thought it through. I think that I will be defined at some point.

MGP: *Even though you have consciously opted for staying, you have also denounced the difficulties of making a living as an artist—in your case as a writer—in the region. Would you say that the lack of infrastructure and public support for the arts would be one of the main impediments for writers in the region?*

EL: This brings us back again to the intellectual question in a way. I don't know what system the government or the country has of supporting thinkers. The intellectuals we support with jobs. They are teaching at universities or functioning

in CARICOM [the Organisation of Caribbean countries, established in 1973, which seeks to promote economic integration and cooperation within the region] or such institutions, the university has not really made a place for writers. The society has not made a place generally for writers, nor have we the writers made a place for ourselves as independent voices engaging in the society. All of this can be understood by a closer look at the society. I am writing something now called "Reclaiming Rebellion," in which I argue that generally the artist in the Caribbean has explored and advanced the ideas raised by the rebellions: justice, reparation, humanness. Quite understandably, rebellion was seen by the rulers as delinquency and was punished. And the institutions that might have advanced their messages and concerns were banned and were compelled to adopt disguises to survive. These institutions—I am thinking of calypso and carnival and the arts coming out of them—that revived in the early days of political independence have continued, but if we pay close attention to them we would discover that they no longer seem to challenge the status quo, express rebellion, affirm humanness in the way they used to do. We see them now as valuable, but the value we ascribe to them is principally one of entertainment. I fear that our writers follow such a path. Rebellion, outcasts, entertainment. That has been the trajectory of the arts.

It is easy in this situation to see how important it is for the country to produce independent writers with concerns connected to their origins in rebellion.

MGP: *Do you think that the current Caribbean milieu is slightly more accommodating for artists? In other words, does a writer who chooses to remain in the region, as you did in your time, have it easier than you had it?*

EL: Well, I want to hope so. There is much more literary activity in the region. And we welcome it. However, not much has been done to make it beneficial or easy for our writers to live here, and that has to be addressed. Recently we have the congress of Caribbean writers that offers a prize for fiction, poetry and prose writing and that meets in Guadeloupe and draws writers from every language group in the entire Caribbean— Spanish, French, Creole, English, and that includes writers who live in metropolitan centers. We have the Bocas Literary Festival in Trinidad and each year there are literary festivals in the various islands. These developments suggest that we are trying to find a way. But there is much more that we have to do.

MGP: *Do you consider the specific award for writers living in the region, the Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize, to be a good initiative?*

EL: I am saying that these festivals provide us with another starting point, but we will have to decide what we want to make of them. Are they to seriously take on the challenge of the Caribbean as a space or are they to consolidate things as they are and make the situation more palatable for all of us—without the challenge?

MGP: *In general terms would you say that West Indian diasporic writers are the ones mostly representing the West Indies outside of the region? Do you believe diasporic writers are being privileged over writers like yourself who have chosen to remain in the region?*

EL: It is probably quite convenient for some people to have a Caribbean in the US, the UK, Canada and so on. But I believe there is still a Caribbean in the Caribbean, with entirely new possibilities, useful to itself and valuable to the world, and my concern is with keeping that Caribbean and those possibilities alive. What is the question?

MGP: *The question is who represents the Caribbean? Due to the privileging of diasporic writers, I believe national writers like yourself are not as widely included in the curriculum of Western universities nor are they as widely promoted.*

EL: I have the feeling that the Caribbean is not at the center of the concerns of these curricula. The Caribbean is not really being addressed. When people talk about postcolonial, for example, they are continuing to pursue the line established by colonialism. Colonialism is not all that has happened to these islands and those who people them. What concerns those of us who live here is what has happened, is happening to these islands as they seek to overcome colonialism and establish a new and humane society. That is really the question we face: What are the levels of woundedness inflicted by colonialism? What are the levels of a desire for a new society? Are we interested in the future of colonialism or in the future of the people on these islands? If the world is interested in the islands or in the previously colonized people, then they have to be looked at in terms of the movement of independence. The question should be what has happened to the movement of independence and not what has happened to colonialism. Colonialism is not our goal. Putting it at the center is just blunting, and has blunted, the pursuit of independence. So if you focus on independence you will begin to see all its aspects, its flaws as well as its promise. If this examination is encouraged then we'll have to focus on national writers.

Postcolonialism is tethering our scholars to colonialism. Is it laziness, a habit of patronage, of patronizing that keeps the West Indian states being treated by the West as if we are still in some ways their colonies? Why is there a need to keep this region tethered to European colonialism? I think it could be useful for all to look at the Caribbean as another experience and its independence as having within it a new set of possibilities for all of us. I would want to see myself as a writer of that kind of emerging Caribbean, a really new place, as a new world writer. It is against this background that diasporic writers can be said to be privileged and those who have remained in the region ignored. Independence is like a stepchild of colonialism.

MGP: *Would you then say that the starting point is wrong?*

EL: Yes, there has been really no new starting point for the Caribbean. Independence was expected to provide one. Independence was granted to Jamaica and Trinidad in 1962. There was no radical change. Nothing reparative. There was a very, very short

period when independence was emphasized. By 1970 the nationalist government in Trinidad and the region faced the challenge of the Black Power movement prodding it to change. Nationalism has not lasted long, either as an economic or political expression. So what is nation?

MGP: *Would you say that diasporic writers would be postcolonial writers, whereas you would consider the more national writers as writers of independence?*
      EL: I don't know if I would want to make such a rigid distinction.

MGP: *Would you agree that those who are not writers of independence are the privileged ones?*
      EL: Privileged in the sense of audience? I think it is not so much about the writers as about the focus. Some people have made their mark living in the diaspora and have been taken to be representatives of their home countries. But that is not entirely so. If we are interested in what the Caribbean is saying, it would be useful to see what the writers at home are saying. I really don't know if you can have a region defined and represented by those in exile. There are writers who are living in the diaspora, and who have opportunities not open to writers at home. That makes them privileged in a way, but we have to bear in mind that all writers are still relevant because of the human story they tell. But, I understand where you are heading. If being in the diaspora brings all the plums, what then about writers who remain? What is their value? This has to be discussed too, the day is not yet done. I think that being here is of great value, we will discover it and it will reveal itself as we proceed. It also has to do with the West Indian people themselves. What do West Indian people want? What do West Indian politicians want? What vision of the West Indies do politicians have? What ideas of humanness are we advocating? I mean, where are we going? These are all questions that a lot of us have to answer. How can writers aid in the process of the development of the Caribbean? And how can they do that living abroad? I am not in their shoes. It would be good to know their thinking.

MGP: *Furthermore, Trinidad, like any island in the region, is continuously evolving, and as you were saying, if you haven't lived in the region for a long time, can you really continue to represent the region?*
      EL: I suppose you can represent an idea of the region. Each one of us has his/her own Caribbean.

MGP: *You have explained that you write for your people, about what you have termed the "ordinary people"* (Lovelace 2003: 4). *Would you say that a non-West Indian audience shapes your writing in any way? Do you share your character Philo's view in* The Dragon Can't Dance *that "if they come to the tent, let them walk with a Trinidad dictionary"* (Lovelace 1979: 229)*?*
      EL: Firstly, I am saying that in order for you to maintain a language you have to use it. The people to do it, to keep it alive must be those people writing the literature. A

language is a way of seeing as well. If we Caribbeans are saying anything new it will be transmitted by language and people have to spend a little while to understand it. We spend a lot of time understanding standard English, turned the other way.

MGP: *I would say that in your novels you represent the linguistic situation of Trinidad and Tobago. How important has the use of Creole been in your novels? Have you been conscious about it?*

EL: Well, yes, I am conscious about it. As someone of the region, a Caribbean myself, I go back and forth between standard English and the Creole. And then there is the matter of rhythm. Yes, I try to bring the Creole sensibility, if you will, into the language I write, not as an inferior but as a language with its own integrity.

MGP: *Do you think that the role of Creole should be different in society? For example, should Creole be incorporated in education?*

EL: For the ordinary people Creole is part of their everyday speech, so what creole speakers ask is to be accepted and respected. Since Creole has roots in many languages, teaching it could facilitate a more intimate understanding of our history and ourselves. In this way it would have another and a useful role in education. When you say Creole, what do you mean?

MGP: *According to linguists, the Anglophone Caribbean is characterized by a language continuum. At one end of the continuum is the official language, that is, the standard English of each respective island, and at the other are the different English-lexicon Creoles, the unofficial and informal languages.*

EL: In fiction writing, those who are presented not speaking standard English generally have the words they speak rendered phonetically—*dat* for that, *mus* for must, etc.—as one indication of their class or foreigner status. I think I fight that because if I accepted that summation, the characters that I write about would, because of language, be one of those inferiors, like the maid or the foreigner. I am saying that the people who speak Creole are not necessarily uneducated and so I do not use phonetic spelling to indicate the Creole speaker, I look at the rhythm of the language and the construction of sentences. We have to be aware also that language has also been a tool for maintaining and constructing class differences and in that way keeps people in their place. I try to utilize language in such a way to indicate the Creole but also—and principally—to express the humanness of the people.

MGP: *Nowadays, though, standard English or Trinidadian English continues to be the official language, while Trinidadian English Creole is only the informal and undervalued language.*

EL: Right, but Creole is also becoming the language of the arts. It is used liberally if not exclusively in calypso, in rap, in spoken word poetry and in poetry and fiction. I suppose as long as it remains spoken by people it will be utilized by all kinds of writers.

MGP: *Since you have published in foreign publishing houses, have you ever encountered negative attitudes towards the use of Trinidadian English Creole by editors or publishers?*

EL: Well, I would say no, but I remember when I wrote *The Wine of Astonishment* I was in North America for a little while and I gave the manuscript to somebody to type for me—it was a little bit before the computer—and this person corrected the whole grammar, brought back a totally different novel to me. I had to change it back because that was not what I wanted. Increasingly I am becoming bolder. I was aware of what I was trying to do. One instance I can remember interestingly was with *The Dragon Can't Dance.* The editor said that she wasn't too sure about the prologue. I understood what she was saying because the prologue was almost a poetic addition or preface to the story that begins more concretely, if you want. It was because of the poetic nature of the language as opposed to the beginning of the novel with the characters and the movement and so on. But this language surveyed the novel so to speak. So she wrote to me about it and I saw the point actually, and then she wrote back and withdrew the comment. At the same time I was writing back to say I was going to keep it anyhow. But it never came to that.

MGP: *In the 90s in order to engage Trinidadians who were more in the habit of reading the readily available newspapers,* The Dragon Can't Dance *was serialised in* The Express. *Did this initiative bring positive feedback from ordinary people?*

EL: I know it was quite popular. Actually it was Keith Smith, the editor of *The Express*, who was behind the idea. I thought it was well done and some people collected the daily installments and made up a book. The feedback was good. In fact, Keith, who lived in Laventille and wrote about it, told me that he felt it one of his achievements as editor of a daily paper to have been responsible for having the book serialized in the paper.

MGP: *In terms of publishing, you started publishing abroad because that was the only choice you had, right?*

EL: Well, it was the only choice and the happy choice as well because having won the prize [BP Independence Award], part of the prize was that the book would be published. So that was very good. It meant I didn't have to be concerned about a publisher in the same way. It didn't have any publishers here and it is more beneficial in the sense that first of all publishing has to do with marketing. If somebody published in Trinidad, you could hardly get it in the Caribbean. So publishing abroad has always been quite useful for someone living here, though, of course, if you were abroad much more would be done in respect of publicity and marketing. But I don't know that it will necessarily remain that way. But we here in the Caribbean have to do much more. We need to seriously make the Caribbean a market for books. I believe that it can be done and I would want to do what I could to help to advance it as a project. There is a whole lot that can be done.

MGP*: The publishing world in the West Indies has never been a prominent one. Do you envision an ending of this dependency on external publishing firms?*

EL: Today, we have a number of young writers who live in the region. And while they would want their work published internationally, there are many other aspects to consider—marketing, circulation, reviews. This dependency will end, I believe, when we place more focus on the Caribbean as a market and introduce the region to our writers.

MGP: *As far as I know, none of your writings has ever been translated into Spanish. Only your novel* The Dragon Can't Dance *has been translated into French, German, Italian, Japanese and Dutch. Have you had contact with your translators?*

EL: I went to Tokyo some time ago and met a young woman who was a poet. She would become the Japanese translator of *The Dragon Can't Dance*. She was a student at the time. She now teaches Caribbean literature. I understand it is a very good translation and it has been well received in Japan. The other translator I met was the person who translated *Dragon* into French, but that was after the translation.

MGP: *What would you expect from the prospective translator of your work?*

EL: I think it would be important to retain the language, that is, the integrity of that Creole that is used, and not to see the narrator as distinct from the people, but rather to see him as the voice of authority emanating from the community. So I would think language would be one [thing]. A sense of the characters would be another thing too. One of the things, in *Dragon*, particularly, is that I see the people in the yard as the royalty of the hill: the queen of the band, the dragon, the princess, etc., and while they live in this "regal poverty"—in a certain kind of poverty if you want—poverty is not the central idea of their lives. Poverty is a factor but for me what is important is that they are seeking to assert themselves as human beings. For me this is important to understand and not to see them just as poor people here but to see them in that other dimension.

MGP: *Finally, what prospective projects do you have in mind? You mentioned earlier on that you are writing about reclaiming rebellion. Is that a novel or the topic for a non-fiction piece?*

EL: Well, I am trying to write it as a non-fiction book but we'll see. Then there is an autobiography, and I know a novel is there somewhere nearby, I should start it very soon.

MGP: *What is this future novel going to be about?*

EL: About reclaiming rebellion—and this proves the point about the value of the writer being here in the Caribbean space, trying to ask something of this place. Actually, there is an article on it in *Wasafiri*, published in June 2013. Essentially what I say in the article is that we have to reclaim rebellion as a starting point. That the starting

point that we have had is really not a starting point at all. Emancipation was something that emancipated the previously enslaved people into nothing. Emancipation was an act of bad faith that was sold to us as liberation. There is a lot to fight for. The battles we thought we had won have not even been fought. Goodwill is not enough. We cannot proceed to develop a society on the assumption that "every creed and race finds an equal place" [from the lyrics of Trinidad and Tobago anthem] when we know the injustice at the roots of the society. It is very tough to ask somebody who has emerged from a previous condition of servitude to continue to carry on his back the burden of a society without any kind of reparative address to their situation.

MGP: *The issue of reparation has been very present in your writings. Recently CARICOM has brought the topic back to the forefront. What do you think about it?*

EL: Hilary Beckles, one of the persons involved, has written a good book, *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Slavery and Native Genocide* (2013). I think that the question has to be raised within the Caribbean. I think that initially the leadership of the Caribbean has to take responsibility for some things. I don't know that the Caribbean leadership could easily just say to Britain or to whoever: "Well, you did this and so on and so on, and we want reparation." You yourself must initiate the process by addressing the kind of inequality and injustice you have inherited.

It is a big question, it is the question of the Caribbean. Just as the Caribbean was exploited and so on, this question of repairing has to be equally big.

MGP: *Do you think it is too late for the issue of reparation to be addressed?*

EL: No, it is not too late. Carnival, as you know, is our biggest festival here. One of the things I have written about in terms of carnival is that we, the people who set out to parade, want to show our best selves to ourselves and each other. In real life, we need to demand our best selves from ourselves and each other. Carnival, in a way, is a presenting of our best selves, not only in terms of the costumes we wear but the behavior we exhibit, the generosity, the caring. While a lot of unsavory things have happened, while there have been serious levels of inequality and injustice, especially in dealing with those historically disadvantaged, we have managed to maintain, even if [only] symbolically, a sense of goodwill. We need to draw upon justice and that goodwill to deal with the question of reparation. We will need to demand from ourselves our best selves: "Look me!" is a wonderful idea.

MGP: *Thank you very much.*

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REVIEWS

RESEÑAS

Daniel Morris. 2013. *Lyric Encounters: Essays on American Poetry from Lazarus and Frost to Ortiz Cofer and Alexie*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic. ix + 225 pp. ISBN: 978-1-441-11017-6.

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Lyric Encounters: Essays on American Poetry from Lazarus and Frost to Ortiz Cofer and Alexie is a collection of single-authored essays that challenges traditional readings of the lyric form as either soliloquy, intrapersonal communication or monologic discourse. Morris organises his book chronologically, devoting each chapter to the interplay of particular characters, artwork or texts to create a dialogue between them. Consequently, the collection benefits from an interdisciplinary approach to poetic interpretation, such that the contextualisation of poems is effected through visual art, music and prose genres as well as other poems. The lack of formal coherence between pairings—Langston Hughes's "Theme for English B" (1951) and its pedagogical implications, William Carlos Williams's "The Crimson Cyclamen" (1936) and Charles Demuth's eponymous watercolour (1917-1918), Emma Lazarus's "The New Colossus" (1883) and Judith Ortiz Cofer's "The Latin Deli" (1993)—may seem elusive, despite the fact that the intermedial connection of the poems to other discourses is carefully thought out, thus enriching the critical analysis of the texts.

The introduction challenges the lyric as monological discourse. For Morris, it is not a "short poem expressing the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker" (Kennedy and Gioia 2009, 10) nor "the genre of private life" (Vendler 2002, xl), but rather a "social genre" (1) as it strives to make "persons acknowledgeable" to each other (Grossman 1992, 3). If the lyric is read as the monadic expression of a self, the potential neglect of interpersonal aspects can deface the interpretation of the poem. Opposing this approach, the author aims to interpret poems within a wider textual framework. As an example, when comparing Sherman Alexie's understanding of the interpersonal in a poem, Morris intersects it with other texts—including verse, but also novels and articles—in order to historicise and make a case for a dialogic interpretation of the text. Thus, the *lyric encounters* in the title refer to "poems that represent dialogues between a lyric speaker […] and another character," but also to "the encounter between lyric poetry and other texts" (4). However valid this approach may be, the book misapprehends close reading

as necessarily restrictive; unjustifiably, Morris misconstrues interpreters such as Helen Vendler as being narrow-minded. While she has been a master of close reading with British Romanticism (Vendler 1980) and early American Modernism (Vendler 1969), she has proved her versatility when combining textual interpretation of poets such as T. S. Eliot, Allen Gingsberg, Louise Glück, Seamus Heaney and John Ashbery with their coeval art, music and politics (Vendler 1983, 1998, 2005). Morris's tirade against close reading as a limited practice, in any case, renders itself moot as he exploits close reading within his contextualised readings in order to expose the interpersonal within the poems under scrutiny.

In the second chapter, Morris exemplifies the subversive power of irony that he claims works against interpreting poems as the expression of a single self. Langston Hughes's "Theme for English B" (1951) dramatises the misunderstanding between an unruly but brilliant student and an insensitive teacher upon the latter's assignment to "go home and write a page tonight" (13). In free verse form, Hughes "uses irony and subversive humor to challenge the teacher's assumptions" (15) about what self, home and truth mean to the black, underclass student. Aptly, Morris outlines the problem of identification of the lyric voice with a universal speaker, which he contrasts with John Keats's "When I have fears I may cease to be" (1818) to show how Hughes uses "resistant reading strategies to deconstruct universal notions of lyric subjectivity" (15). Morris, however, fails to notice here that these notions are received and, particularly because of the canonical weight of Romanticism in English poetry, belong to a tradition. It may be conceded that the lyric has been perceived as subjective in Western literature, but this is far from universal. Furthermore, more modern theoretical approaches to the lyric—Altieri (2006), Aviram (2001), Perloff (2002)—have broadened our concept of the lyric genre beyond monologism, a fact which is overlooked by Morris in his discussion.

Chapter three outlines the creative encounter between William Carlos Williams's poetry and Precisionist pictorial art, in such a way that Charles Demuth's deconstructive ways in the watercolour Cyclamen (1917-1918) are echoed in the eponymous poem by Williams. For Morris, these "differences between seeing […] and actively creating" make the poem become a "transgressive or queer poetic act" (7). He details how formalist approaches have missed the opportunity to go beyond stylistic comment, suggesting a "queer approach" for the interpretation of a poem, "a reading that challenges existentialist ideas about a person's identity as a sexual being with a fixed gender" (29). Morris asserts that formalist readings work "to distance, remove, conceal, or cool down" (30) the poem's rendering of a passionate encounter between flowers— but this needs not be the case. Nevertheless, Morris manages to unearth hidden codes to allude to Demuth's homosexuality from Williams's rendition of the watercolour. In doing so, he makes a successful transition from text to painting that illuminates both.

The fourth chapter traces the dialogue in Allen Ginsberg's "America" (1956) between poetry and mass culture which, set against the poet's ambivalent response to his

commoditisation, foregrounds his contradictory self-fashioning as both countercultural and mainstream figure. For Morris, the poem responds to the containment of the Cold War, even though it manages to "deconstruct Cold War discourse—conservative mainstream/radical progressive—on a deep structural level" (43). Ginsberg "occupies multiple positions," thus "turning the monologic lyric genre into a zany dialogue" (43) between poetic voices, from the "countercultural critique" of the opening stanzas to the "Cold War paranoia" (45). Reading the poem alongside Theodor Adorno's premise of modern "culture industry" to produce a "thoroughly calculated efficacy in its most typical products" (Adorno 1975, 13), he readily conceives Ginsberg to announce "his alternative masculinity" (47). Morris overinterprets the poet here, making it difficult to reconcile such an assertion of masculinity with the fact that Ginsberg's lukewarm responses make him "in the end ambiguous and contradictory" (66) towards his personal stance. Ginsberg's performance of combined masculinity and queerness in the 1950s, and its evolution, has been chronicled and examined more successfully in other texts (Penner 2011).

Chapter five sets Emma Lazarus's classic sonnet, "The New Colossus" (1883), which reifies the Statue of Liberty as the unofficial greeter of incoming immigrants, against Judith Ortiz Cofer's rendition of Miss Liberty—the owner of a Latin-American Deli that caters for exiles longing for the tastes and smells of their culture— in "The Latin Deli" (1993). The dialogues with her "unassimilated, and often dissatisfied customers" (68) transcend the binary situation—us/them—in Lazarus's poem to present a much bleaker and complicated reality. Although the patroness represents "mother tongue and the motherland" she "sells products that fail to deliver the promise of a fulfilling return to the original space" (75), which Morris extends to "represent the relationship […] between a poet and a reader" (76). On a figurative level, the poem represents a prospect that is ultimately marred: no culture can be fully replicated outside its ecosystem. The thematic coherence of both texts ensures the success of Morris's method in this case, and despite no direct intertextual relation being offered, it reveals itself to be as poignant as it is intriguing.

The sixth chapter is devoted to jazz music, and it explores the interaction between John Coltrane's improvisations and the collage aesthetics of Michael S. Harper's poetry. Morris interprets Harper's tactics as a means to sublimate queer lust, arguing that the "age-old verbal-visual controversy" entails "a veiled expression of queer desire" (8). The author explains how Harper's "Dear John, Dear Coltrane" (1970) exemplifies the way in which the poet "collapses paradoxically contrary elements such as space and time, history and myth, love lyric and elegy" (83) to mimic the sound of jazz music. This accurate point could have been applied to other poems or poets, but Morris prefers being more elusive and biographical to support his queer reading. With the last years of Coltrane's life as a background, he goes on to explore "homosocial and socially disruptive aspects of queerness" (83) in the desexualisation of the poems. In doing so, he exposes Harper's "ekphrastic fear" of fusing "artistic homage" with the "worship

of the (sick) body" of a dying Coltrane (97). As with Ginsberg, in the end the poet is seen as suspect to heteronormative subjection—which risks being more an instance of presentism than an accurate interpretation on Morris's part.

Chapter seven delves into the materials of Frank Bidart's "Ellen West" (1990) to indicate how the passages taken from the medical case notes of a suicidal Swiss Jewish woman—anorexia nervosa and other possible mental illness—were heavily edited by the poet in order to avoid the internalisation of anti-Semitic discourse. The depictions of her body hatred and the prevalence of Aryan physical values on the part of the reporter resonate when Bidart tries to construct Ellen West as a historical figure. For the author, the poem is "at least triply mediated" and therefore "heteroglossic" in Bakhtinian terms (106). Its palimpsestic nature is exposed by the ideological qualms on the part of "Bidart's dramatization" so that it "extends the reach of lyric subjectivity," answering the "concomitant critique levelled against it as a solipsistic genre" (131). In doing so, Morris manages to foreground the role of ethical implications in the creation of a new artistic discourse based on a historical interpretation of the past.

Chapter eight continues exploring this interplay of individual history and poetry. It traces the real-life correspondence between the Native-American poet Leslie Marmon Silko and the white Midwestern poet James Wright. Morris shows how both agree that creation serves primarily as the translation of authorial voice into poetic artefacts. He stresses how, for Silko, stories within poems reflect not only personal but communal experiences. Wright's "poetry of mourning […] for despicable persons" (141) such as murderers and political incompetents can be better understood in dialogue with Silko's conception of "a correspondence between collective representation and personal identification" (150), since poetic discourse transcends the individual voice which originates it. A piece of instructive research on the real-life contact between two very dissimilar poets, the chapter succeeds in illuminating the interpretation of Wright's poems separate from their formal innovation.

The ninth chapter is the longest in the collection. It argues the misapprehension of the "interpersonal, multicultural, and gendered tensions" (3) that animate poems like Sherman Alexie's "On the Amtrak from Boston to New York" (1993) by formalist interpreters who primarily read poems as closed artefacts, deceivingly giving Helen Vendler's reading of the poem as an example (2002, 246-251). Morris, nevertheless, makes his case for a contextualised reading of earlier poetry in light of his detailed interpretation of Alexie's writings after the 9/11 attacks. If previously interpreted as participating in "a terrorist imagination of the United States as an Evil Empire" (156), the poem is later able to be acknowledged as a much more nuanced and complex thought on favouring "multiculturalism over tribalism […] or individual identity as incorporating, and transcending, simplistic nationalisms" (199), which sheds new light on this much-discussed text.

The conclusion briefly eschews a personal reflection on Frost's "Mending Wall" as the potential catalyst for the author's own contribution to the Judaic notion of *tikkun*

olam ['world mending']. Morris explains how Frost's "symbolic event of wall-mending" allows the speakers "to discuss fundamental values" (203-204). In interpreting Frost's poem as a negotiation, Morris makes a case for a cultural interpretative field that is set, like his readings in the book, within "dialogical cultural practice" (206). It follows that his method can be further extended and applied to other authors successfully, despite Morris being quite modest in this respect.

The collection, nonetheless, has a strong pedagogical tendency; not only because Morris acknowledges that the essays in the book stem from his teaching, but also because the explications of the poems are very detailed and culturally contextualised. His poem selection is wide-ranging and, as is the case with any miscellany, questionable: Gary Snyder, John Ashbery, Adrienne Rich, Mark Doty or Julia Spahr would also fit there. Morris's use of theory is more problematic: he avoids extended commentary on formal concepts—like Shklovsky's defamiliarisation or Bakhtin's dialogism—and overlooks key texts and modern discussions. Furthermore, he is inconsistent in his queer-theory reading of the poems, despite these sharing the disruption of "dominant and hegemonic discourses" (Johnson and Henderson 2005, 5). His reading through debunking tactics fails to notice the institutionalisation of his own approach, and he misses recent conceptualisations about the lyric which establish a tradition of the interpersonal within the genre that dates back to Romanticism (Hurley and O'Neill 2012; Thain 2013). These establish Romantic poetry as creating dialogic discourses, dispelling author claims that Alexies's "On the Amtrak" (1993) "re-enters the Romantic Lyric mode" in a way that the poem "is bent on resisting how the speaker imagines the world" (5). Furthermore, Morris goes here against the premise of his own book: a lyrical poem cannot choose to work as either explicit or implicit communication. After the uses of the lyric within Romanticism, poems are invariably communicative acts when read, discussed and analysed. Despite these minor shortcomings, which may render his interpretation as subjective and partial, Morris explicates poems profusely and accurately, and the dialogic nature of poetry is put forward and developed pertinently. Though not equally relevant in every case-poem—and sometimes with an overimposition of queer analysis—he illustrates a valid way of interpretation which deserves to be explored further in other poems.

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Jordan Cofer. 2014. *The Gospel According to Flannery O'Connor: Examining the Role of the Bible in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction.* New York: Bloomsbury. 144 pp. ISBN: 978-1-62356-088-1.

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In keeping with Flannery O'Connor's increasing prominence in the literary canon, a growing number of critical studies of her work have come out in recent years. Some approach O'Connor's fiction from the perspective of Christianity, in accordance with the writer's religious impulse and literary objectives. As she put it herself,

> for me the meaning of life is centered in our Redemption by Christ and what I see in the world I see in its relation to that. (O'Connor [1969] 1970, 32)

> I write the way I do because (not though) I'm a Catholic. This is a fact and nothing covers it like the bald statement. (O'Connor 1979, 90)

For instance, Ralph Wood's *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South* (2004) analyses O'Connor's fiction in the light of Christian theology and Southern culture, while George A. Kilcourse's *Flannery O'Connor's Religious Imagination* (2001) and Susan Srigley's *Flannery O'Connor's Sacramental Art* (2004) examine the writer's work from the perspective of her philosophical and theological beliefs. Although drawing from these sources—comparatively more abstract or general in scope—Jordan Cofer's *The Gospel According to Flannery O'Connor* follows the path set by J. Ramsey Michaels's *Passing by the Dragon: The Biblical Tales of Flannery O'Connor* (2013): both are devoted to tracking the echoes of the Bible—both the Old and New Testament—in O'Connor's fiction. Although Cofer does not mention Michaels's book, his study offers a complementary analysis to the work of the latter. As Cofer himself argues with respect to previous approaches to O'Connor's fiction, "there are significant biblical allusions which have been overlooked," and above all, "the methodogy behind these allusions as a whole has been neglected" (3).

In the introductory chapter, Cofer discusses the book's objectives and quotes passages from O'Connor's essays to support the pertinence of his approach. In the same

vein as O'Connor deplores in *Mystery and Manners* the flood of bad fiction "for which the religious impulse has been responsible" (quoted in Cofer, 3), Cofer is concerned with "avoiding a monologic reading of O'Connor's work" (1), which would result in a formulaic and reductive interpretation. Nevertheless, the monologic/dialogic dichotomy does not seem particularly relevant in this book, given its aim of an unambiguously comparative close-reading. In my view, Cofer offers a substantial analysis of O'Connor's fiction, particularly appropriate, and perhaps even necessary, in a time when readers—including academic readers—have increasingly become unfamiliar with the contents of the Bible.

Although O'Connor remarked that in the American South "belief can still be made believable" because in that region "the Bible is known by the ignorant as well" ([1969] 1970, 203), the truth is that many biblical allusions in her fiction may pass unnoticed by present-day readers, including those from the American South: as O'Connor ironically portrays in "Good Country People" (1955), the Bible is no longer kept on the bedside table, but "in the attic somewhere" (278). That is one of the reasons why in her essays, she clarifies her authorial intentions, highlighting the difficulty of writing for an audience who does not share her beliefs and biblical background:

> When you assume that your audience holds the same beliefs you do, you can relax a little and use more normal means of talking to it; when you have to assume that it does not, you have to make your vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures. (O'Connor [1969] 1970, 34)

These lines, which evoke the task of the biblical prophets—a role that O'Connor appeared to assume—are quoted by Cofer as the starting point for his analysis. He finds three methods in O'Connor's fiction, which are discussed in the introductory chapter and further examined throughout the book: (1) recapitulation or retelling of biblical stories; (2) inclusion of prophetic figures, also called backwoods prophets; (3) ironic reversals based on the Bible's reversing techniques. As such, the first chapter of Cofer's book, "Towards a New Approach to Flannery O'Connor's Fiction" (1-18) is devoted to a description of his objectives and to the explication of these three methods.

The chapter ends with the analysis of "Good Country People" (1955), a tale that conveys all three techniques working together. Cofer draws the connection between the term good—also central in O'Connor's best-known story, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1953)—to the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus replies to the rich young ruler: "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone" (Luke, 18:19). No doubt, it is the elusive notion of goodness that constitutes the core of the story, which O'Connor undermines in an original manner both in this tale and in the shocking "A Good Man," as Cofer points out. Surprisingly, however, he fails to relate O'Connor's focus on goodness to Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), a tale

similarly engaged with ethical and religious issues, and full of biblical echoes and ironic reversals—an inescapable intertext for both tales by O'Connor. Cofer completes the analysis of "Good Country People" with a study of the main characters, Hulga Hopewell and Manley Pointer (the latter a Bible salesman), who unwillingly embody the figure of the backwoods prophet and also the method of ironic reversals. As Pointer says, quoting Matthew 10:39, "He who loses his life shall find it" (O'Connor [1971] 1990, 280): a foreshadowing statement that prefigures Hulga's surrendering of her wooden leg to the salesman and her finding of grace through his improper behaviour and shocking-but-enlightening final revelation (Cofer, 15-18).

Chapter two, titled "*Wise Blood* as a Primer for O'Connor's Religious Vision" (19-50), examines the development of the three Biblical-based techniques in O'Connor's first novel. Cofer pays special attention to this text, since, as he argues throughout the chapter, "many of the religious approaches to writing which she continued to cultivate through her writing career originate from within her debut novel" (23). The chapter opens with an introduction to *Wise Blood* (1952), and is followed by a section corresponding to each of the methods Cofer identifies in O'Connor's work, as mentioned above. The introduction summarises previous critical views and points out the influence of two novels on O'Connor's text: William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), which prefigure the grotesqueness and shocking violence of *Wise Blood*. Even though the concerns of these works depart from the objectives of O'Connor's fiction, the allusion to these novels is wholly appropriate, since it helps remind the reader that the Bible coexists with other intertexts in her writing.

While discussing a variety of biblical sources, Cofer focuses on the figure of Saul/Paul, given the striking parallels between his life, conversion and ministry and the character of Hazel Motes, the protagonist of *Wise Blood*. While the connections between Paul and Motes are quite evident (such as the similar violent impulse and literal blindness), there are other aspects that Cofer's study brings to light, like the duality suggested by the character of Enoch Emery: this name points not only to the Enoch who "walked with God," but also to Enoch, the son of Cain (45-46). Cofer includes this feature, dualism, in the section of "Reversals" and relates it to O'Connor's repeated use of "doppelgangers." As Cofer notes, this device "would become a stock trait in O'Connor's fiction" (46), and is conveyed, for instance, in the parallels between Julian's mother and her African-American counterpart in "Everything that Rises Must Converge" (1965). Furthermore, Motes can be taken as Enoch's ironic reversal and spiritual double, since both constitute two different sides of the same paradigm (48).

Chapter three, "From Dishonor to Glory: Biblical Recapitulation in 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find' and 'Judgment Day'" (51-72), examines O'Connor's method of biblical rewriting, connecting one of her earliest tales to one of her final ones. While "Judgment Day" (1965) is "possibly the most theologically explicit story within O'Connor's corpus," as Cofer contends (63), the biblical allusions in the former are

rather more subtle and have been completely overlooked, as Connor's critique of this tale demonstrates. In Cofer's approach, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (1953) "is not merely an allusion to, but a radical re-writing of Christ's encounter with the rich young ruler" (56). In light of this original interpretation, the Misfit's attitude proves to be similar to that of his biblical source and double: both are troubled questers, but unwilling to give up their way of life and accept a new one. They "don't want no hep [*sic*]," and implicitly claim "I'm doing all right by myself"; in the end, both of them express their inner dissatisfaction: while the rich young ruler "went away grieving," the Misfit concludes: "It's no real pleasure in life" (62).

In chapter four, "The Terrible Speed of Mercy: Flannery O'Connor's Backwoods Prophets" (73-94), Cofer discusses the characteristics of these peculiar characters—the most powerful ones in her fiction—focusing on three works: "A Circle in the Fire" (1954), "The Lame Shall Enter First" (1965) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960). Following the structure of previous chapters, chapter four starts with a general introduction and continues with three sections devoted to the analysis of the selected texts. Cofer notes the American South's traditional fascination with backwoods prophets, which O'Connor recreates through eccentric, violent, Bible-inspired figures "associated with austerity and fear" (74). As he discerningly concludes, "the myth of regeneration through violence" pervades not only the South, but American experience as a whole (76), and the Bible offers diverse instances of renewal through destruction, which O'Connor, prophet-like, adapts with visionary genius.

Chapter five, the last in the volume, analyses the most prominent examples of reversals in O'Connor's fiction: its title (which quotes from Matthew 20:16)—"So the Last Shall Be First, and the First Last: Biblical Reversals in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor" (95-131)—evokes not only a variety of biblical passages but also O'Connor's mastery of irony. As Cofer remarks, she was "the consummate ironist," and one of her tales was reprinted in Wayne Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony* (1974) (Cofer, 95). The structure of previous chapters is maintained and the chapter focuses on three texts: "Parker's Back" (1965), "Revelation" (1965) and "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" (1954). Cofer highlights O'Connor's interest in the Pauline epistles, foregrounding the quote from 1 Corinthians (3:19) that she marked in her own Bible: "For the wisdom of the world is foolishness before God" (97). Thus, in the last chapter of the book, Cofer refers again to the significance of one of his initial contentions: that the epistles of Paul are the most influential biblical texts in O'Connor's fiction (2).

To conclude, Cofer's book is a carefully structured and well-researched essay, which includes numerous and pertinent critical references to O'Connor's work and background. The volume contains an extensive and updated bibliography, and two different indexes, one of them devoted to the list of biblical references, which range from "Genesis" to "Revelation" (141-144). In short, a very useful and instructive study, which can be recommended to students, teachers, researchers and common readers of Flannery O'Connor's work.

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David Rio. 2014. *New Literary Portraits of the American West: Contemporary Nevada Fiction.* Bern: Peter Lang. 300 pp. ISBN: 978-3-0343-1590-6.

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Tupelo Hassman's *Girlchild* (2012), one of the novels discussed in David Rio's book, is presided over by an everyday oxymoron, the mobile homes that constitute the confined space where the protagonist moves, or rather, fails to move. This paradoxical combination of change and stasis is likewise captured by the image on the book cover. Here, Nevada is figured as place: a relatively stable arid landscape cut through by a human-made road, a less permanent feature that suggests mobility. The desert, in our human timescale, conjures up a vision of Nevada as permanent—even though the boundaries of the state have changed over the years. The road, at first, when seen in the foreground, looks simple and straight, though later, in the distant background, it becomes winding and convoluted. Likewise, Nevada fiction, Rio implies, has moved from the straightforward master narrative of the frontier experience to a more diverse and dynamic literary panorama. The interpretation of this image is confirmed by Campbell (2000), who describes the emerging New West as "a complex space—city and desert, settled and transient, fragile and booming at the same time" (2000, 154, quoted in Rio 248). In this book, Rio takes up the task of exploring precisely the complexity and "dynamism of present-day western writing" (243) that Campbell had talked about.

Rio's *New Literary Portraits of the American West: Contemporary Nevada Fiction,* as the title itself suggests, has a very ambitious scope in that it tries to capture *both* the commonalities that Nevada literature shares with other Western literary traditions *and* the distinctive features that characterize it. The book is structured as an introduction, three chapters—the third of which is itself subdivided into four major sections—and a brief final chapter of conclusions. Rio's introduction "vindicates place and regions as [the] fundamental analytical categories" (12) that will buttress his study. The author also explicitly states here the need to complement regionalist and place-based perspectives with "other relevant critical categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, class and religion" (14). Attempting to proffer a broad survey of Western literature along all these axes is beyond the scope of this book, so Rio narrows the literary corpus to "mainstream fiction

set in Nevada" rather than covering all the literature written by Nevada authors (15). It is therefore the setting of the story rather than the writer's birthplace or residence that becomes the criterion for selecting the texts to be analyzed. As Rio reminds us, there has been, until now, no volume specifically devoted to Nevada fiction, partly because, like Western literature in general, it has been neglected or "underestimated in the critical realm" (16), to such an extent that "certain western works, in order to be legitimized by the academy, have been classified in non-regional terms," as belonging to "Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, or Environmental Studies" (37-38). Thus, one of the author's aims in writing this book is to reverse this critical neglect.

The chapter that opens the volume, "The American West Revisited" (19-44) provides the historical and literary background necessary for the subsequent analysis. Drawing on previous work on Western literature, Rio reviews canonical theories, like Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis (1893), at the same time that he explores the first signs of the revision of the myth of the West which was to allow "postfrontier fiction" to emerge in the 1960s. In "The Silver State vs the Sin State" (45-64) Rio complements his general description of Western literature by zooming in on the literary tradition associated with Nevada from its inception until the 1970s, with special attention to Laxalt and Clark. In these two initial chapters, the author starts to map out the major thematic threads that will structure his longer third chapter, namely: the demystification or debunking of the western formula; the impact of women and multiculturalism; the rise of environmental concerns; and, last but not least, the increasing fictional attention given to city life. While all these trends are noticeable in Western literature as a whole, Rio argues, there are also certain features that prove unique to Nevada fiction: the prominent presence of Basque American writers; the centrality of nuclear concerns in Nevada; and the special relevance of Las Vegas in recent Nevada literature.

In chapter three, Rio finally arrives at what constitutes the core of his study, the fiction *about* Nevada published in the last four decades. For clarity's sake, the author chooses to divide this long chapter into four different sections corresponding to distinctive thematic trends in recent literary works: "Reinterpreting the Wild West," "A Multicultural and Feminized West," "The Environmental West" and "The New Western City." This strategy makes a lot of pedagogical sense, even if, in proposing four topic subchapters and thus reading Nevada literature along thematic lines, the author implicitly relegates formal categories to a secondary position. In addition, by choosing a thematic structure for the book, Rio inevitably pigeonholes literary texts in one of the pre-assigned categories: revisiting the Wild West, multiculturalism, women's issues, environmental concerns and urban focus. However, as acknowledged in the book itself, many of the works included in this study cut across these boundaries and explicitly tackle two or more of these themes. Thus, while the author tries to explain how his interpretations necessarily dovetail into one another, there is still a considerable degree of overlap that might have been avoided.

In "Reinterpreting the Wild West" (66-91), the first section of chapter three, Rio highlights "the growing concern with historical accuracy" (91) and the concomitant revision of the mystified Wild West in novels like Frank Bergon's *Shoshone Mike* (1987) and Thomas Sánchez's *Rabbit Ross* (1973). In the second section—"A Multicultural and Feminized West" (91-149)—the author broadens the horizon of the "white male" version of the west by encompassing multiethnic and "female-oriented" texts. The huge gap between racialized minorities and people of European descent cannot be underestimated and, as Rio himself admits, non-white authors continue to be underrepresented in literary and academic circles, even if, demographically speaking, they are more significant than ever. This may explain why more than half this chapter is devoted to the analysis not of Native American or Chicano literature, but of Basque American writings. When the chapter turns to describing the 'Feminized West,' only texts penned by women writers are associated with "women's topics," a fact that could be misinterpreted as denying the contribution of male writers to this field. However, after the academic ostracism that women writers have suffered, this compensatory measure is understandable. As Rio convincingly argues, female authors, just like minority writers, have long been "excluded from dominant literary discourses," and this is all the more true in the case of western literature (139).

While the first sections of chapter three offer informative explanations of the main narratives dealing with the myth of the Wild West, multiculturalism and women, it is in the last two sections where Rio offers his most original and insightful analysis. Section three, "The Environmental West" (150-183), offers a cogent explanation of why the state has come to be known as "nuclear Nevada." In particular, the pages devoted to the Nevada test site subgenre prove the author's point as regards the centrality of region and place in this literature. Throughout this section Rio skillfully demonstrates how contemporary Nevada fiction has ingeniously incorporated "the increasing concern for ecological fragility and degradation" (184), even if the use of some theoretical concepts like orientalism or internal colonialism is occasionally unclear. In the last section, "The New Western City" (184-242), Rio teases out some of the most intricate issues at work in recent Nevada fiction, and he also carries out the most innovative analyses in the book. The interpretative study of novels like Willy Vlautin's *The Motel Life* (2006) and Tupelo Hassman's *Girlchild* (2012) proves especially valuable: very little critical work has been published on these narratives to date, so the author is clearly opening new ground here. According to Rio, despite their diverse perspectives, most of the urban novels analyzed in this section share an increasing concern with class. In these texts, as the author insightfully puts it, the trope of the "Nevada wasteland" acquires "a socio-economic" dimension that is bound to be more and more relevant in post-recession US (248).

Understandably enough, in the concluding chapter the author prefers to highlight the realistic impulse of new Nevada literature, in contrast to the previous chapters' hundred year span of mythologized, formulaic and monolithic versions of the west. In fact, throughout

the whole book, there is a noticeable emphasis on the value of historical accuracy, of being faithful to "true" Nevada, even though the object of study is not biography or history but fiction. Rio is surely conscious of this conundrum, which might be the reason why he chooses to include Vu Tran's warning that "the emphasis on realism has often become a handicap when offering a proper novelistic portrait" of Nevada icons like Las Vegas (213). That same mimetic approach to literature prompts Rio to reinforce the privileged position of insiders, i.e., Nevada authors. Paradoxically enough, in the introduction Rio had cogently defended his own stance as an outsider. In what David Simpson (2002) and Jeffrey Gray (2011) call an *azza* statement, whereby the critic acknowledges her/his own situatedness, Rio explains: "As a non-American, non-westerner, and non-Nevadan I lack the insider's perspective;" and yet, he adds, the increasingly multicultural nature of Nevada fiction and "its power to engage the imagination of a transnational audience justify the use of an outsider's point of view" (18). To quote Bakhtin, as Rio himself does, such a stance is not only justifiable, but desirable, for "it is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly" (1986, 7; quoted in Rio 18).

All in all, *New Literary Portraits of the American West* is an excellent piece of literary history. As a critical survey of literature about Nevada, Rio's book constitutes the perfect complement to *Literary Nevada*, the comprehensive anthology edited by Cheryl Glotfelty in 2008. Due to its panoramic scope, Rio's volume cannot be expected to engage in an in-depth analysis of every single text featured in its corresponding section. As a result, this book should be read side by side with other volumes offering author-specific studies, like Lynn Marie Houston and William V. Lombardi's *Reading Joan Didion* (2009) or Ángel Chaparro's *Parting the Mormon Veil* (2013), or together with books engaging in theoretically-informed criticism of selected Western narratives, like Neil Campbell's *The Rhizomatic West* (2008).

At the end of the book, and implicitly departing from his accustomed realistic stance, Rio claims that Nevada writing epitomizes the "interaction between place and fiction in western writing" to such an extent that "present day Nevada exemplifies the power of fiction to reinvent both a state and a region" (249). In this power of reinvention lies the trope of mobility or change, which once more intersects with that of rootedness or stasis. Like Hassman's mobile homes and Vlautin's motel culture, contemporary Nevada fiction acknowledges both roots and routes: the road draws our eyes towards the unknown future, but it winds its way through and around the well-known landscape of Nevada's past.

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Josep M. Armengol. 2014. *Masculinities in Black and White. Manliness and Whiteness in (African) American Literature.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 190 pp. ISBN: 978-1-137-48560-1.

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As Richard Dyer insightfully noted in *White,* if the supremacy of whiteness is to be dismantled, whiteness has to be made strange (1997, 4, 10). In *Masculinities in Black and White. Manliness and Whiteness in (African) American Literature,* Josep M. Armengol takes on Dyer's proposal, and succeeds in making whiteness strange. From a corpus that consists of mainstream American texts—Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855) and Ernest Hemingway's autobiographies, *Green Hills of Africa* (1935) and *Under Kilimanjaro* (2005), along with other less illustrious works in the form of James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956) and Martha Gellhorn's "White into Black" (1983)—Armengol's persuasive analysis demonstrates how race and gender are, as Dyer asserts, "ineluctably intertwined" (1997, 30). Hence what follows is a study in American masculinities where whiteness is identified as an inherent component of the heteropatriarchal model that has traditionally defined manhood in American literature. This conflation of masculinity and whiteness brings to the fore what, to my mind, is probably the most thought-provoking postulation on Armengol's part, namely, the blurring of boundaries between the categories "white" and "black" that permeate his approach to American literature. At this point, it is paramount to highlight the parenthesis in the title—(African) American—as endemic to Armengol's theory that the label "African-American" should be questioned, and, as a consequence, "traditional academic divisions between 'black' and 'white' texts […] may oftentimes be less significant than the differences *among* each group" (6; emphasis in original).

The first chapter, "Slavery in Black and White. White Masculinity as Enslaving in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*," offers a compelling examination of whiteness from the perspective of a black male slave. In this sense, Armengol's argument that class and racial interests coalesce in the formation of whiteness as ideology comes to fruition in his realization that "white working-class men's assertion of their racial (and gender) supremacy over both black men and women implied their

own [undesired] virtual transformation into white slaves" (25). When placed alongside traditional readings of Douglass's emblematic slave narrative, which veer around the representation of black masculinities, Armengol's steady focus on whiteness is enlightening in both its revelation that whiteness is, after all, a construction, and that maleness is its unavoidable companion.

"'Of Gray Vapors and Creeping Clouds': White (Male) Privilege as Blinding in Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno'" is the rather elusive title of chapter two, which renders a captivating reading of this notorious short story. This is one of the most solid sections of Armengol's book since it provides readers with an alluring and, in a way, *obvious* interpretation of "Benito Cereno" (1855). It is Captain Delano's unequivocal belief in the supremacy of whiteness that propels his demise, and yet Delano's *white* faith would have remained imperishable unless the black slaves had intelligently appropriated *white* knowledge and transformed it into their own *black* supremacy. In other words, and as Armengol succinctly exposes, the black slaves act according to what the whites expect from them, that is to say, submissiveness and inferiority, but, as their rebellion demonstrates, they are far from submissive and inferior; they have liberated themselves from the internalization of the equation of blackness equals inferiority, and have instead managed to inscribe intelligence onto blackness. In an instructive and enticing manner, Armengol discloses the obvious, to wit, the invisibility and taken-for-granted normative stature of whiteness in which Melville's story is rooted.

Armengol's reading of Hemingway's autobiographies, *Green Hills of Africa* (1935) and *Under Kilimanjaro* (2005) is, following the ethos of the book, substantiated by a deviation from classical critical interpretations which define Hemingway's work as essentially the outcome of a profoundly sexist view. Without entirely disengaging himself from this view, Armengol, as the title of the third chapter promises— "Revisiting Masculinity and/as Whiteness in Ernest Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* and *Under Kilimanjaro*"—does attempt to revisit masculinity but, unfortunately, his allegation that Hemingway's patriarchal masculinity, boldly exhibited in *Green Hills of Africa,* was somehow ameliorated via his more empathetic stance on blackness in *Under Kilimanjaro,* sounds excessively celebratory. Although one can surmise that age endowed Hemingway with a more mature, allegedly more restrained manliness, his apparently real romance with a black woman cannot possibly guarantee that his masculinity changed significantly. Also, the transformation from "heroic male pitting himself against nature" (83) into "eco-friendly man" (83) that this chapter delineates proves to be a suspicious rendering of Hemingway. Nature has often been utilized to propose an alternative model to patriarchal masculinity. In truth, the alternative masculinity of the "eco-friendly man" is often deceivingly—and firmly—anchored in patriarchy.

The annihilation of the polarization "white" and "black" in American literature that Armengol's pervading argument relies on is convincingly validated in chapter four, "Dark Objects of Desire: The Blackness of (Homo)Sexuality in James Baldwin's

Giovanni's Room." The choice of text shows, on the one hand, Armengol's intuitive disposition and, on the other, and in view of the dissection of the text conducted in this chapter, his academic expertise. *Giovanni's Room* (1956) is, as Armengol incisively points out, a novel usually discarded by American literature syllabuses. Neither of the main protagonists of the novel, David and Giovanni, are black, a fact that contributes to the identification of *Giovanni's Room* as a rarity within James Baldwin's work since his other novels always feature black characters. This chapter ascertains precisely how intentionally disruptive Baldwin's novel is. What Armengol unfolds in his perceptive analysis of the novel is a complex array of conflations: race with class, whiteness with blackness and homosexuality with heterosexuality. Giovanni is indeed white but his whiteness is severely tainted by his working-class and Italian background. In its turn, David's Anglo-Saxon whiteness is fatally *spoiled* by his homosexuality. As Armengol's reading of Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* testifies, within patriarchy, heterosexuality and whiteness are indissoluble, and homosexuality is spuriously linked with blackness. However, what his otherwise excellent analysis fails to fully elucidate is whether Baldwin's text perhaps unintentionally—or indeed intentionally—perpetuates the association of blackness and homosexuality with deviation.

There is a recent trend in North American history that seeks to establish alliances with Postcolonial studies. The methodology that results from such a convergence, as Ann Laura Stoler's "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies" confirms, shapes America as a postcolonial scenario. The confluence of America and postcolonial configures a fertile critical space whereby racial categories can be dissected and disassembled. Martha Gellhorn's autobiographical essay, "White into Black" (1983), seems to bend effortlessly to an analysis of racial and gender constructions from an American/postcolonial angle. In this respect, Armengol's recovery of Gellhorn's text in his last chapter, "Race and Gender in the Mirror: A (White) Woman's Look at (Black) Racism in Martha Gellhorn's 'White into Black'" is highly stimulating and perspicacious. In this chapter, Armengol steps outside his comfort zone—American studies—to embrace postcolonial criticism, which is a brave and noteworthy move, but which lamentably does not allow him to steer the text with the dexterity he shows in the preceding chapters. The blurring of the *white* and *black* levels that worked so finely in his critical reading of Melville's "Benito Cereno" and Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room,* cannot be applied to Gellhorn's narrative. To put it differently, the transposition of American *white* and American *black* onto Haitian—postcolonial—ground cannot be sustained. While this is indeed Gellhorn's *own* translation, it is one that Armengol incorporates decidedly in his analysis to the extent that he turns it into the epicenter of his study. The reversal of racial roles that Gellhorn supposedly experiences—in the non-white environment of Jacmel (Haiti) the white woman becomes *black*—falls prey to dangerous essentializations since the construction of blackness follows a different, albeit intimately connected, path to that of whiteness. An excessive confidence in the work of Frantz Fanon ([1952] 1998)

somewhat debilitates Armengol's interpretation. Fanon's concerns were entirely devoted to the configuration of blackness and his gender stance was inexistent, which makes his critical work insufficient to grasp the complicated racial and gender experience that furnishes Gellhorn's text. I believe that an analysis of Gellhorn's compelling experience in Haiti through Sara Ahmed's lucid examination of whiteness (2004, 2007) would have strengthened the import of this overlooked narrative and would certainly have contributed to unmasking the narrator's invisibility towards her *own* whiteness. Unlike the self-centeredness elicited by ontological investigations of whiteness, Ahmed's phenomenological approach, with its emphasis on the surroundings, allows the white body to be apprehended as "a body at home": a body that acts *freely* upon a space that *it* occupies (2007, 156). In Haiti, Gellhorn's whiteness turns her body into a body-not-at-home but the cause of her white body's displacement cannot be explained through an internalization of blackness, a position that Armengol endorses, and which perilously and unfairly victimizes the white body. Ahmed's phenomenological frame of reference places its emphasis on the construction of whiteness itself and from this methodological framework, a white body cannot, under any circumstances, replace a black body.

One of the defining traits of colonial texts, as Armengol rightly states, is the feminization process that non-white bodies undergo in the colonial imagination. However, his assurance that there is a recurrent absence "of *actual* women from colonial texts" (132; emphasis in original) should be amended since this absence affected all non-white bodies, male and female; the colonial imagination, as Robert C. Young notices in *Colonial Desire,* feminized and stereotyped non-white bodies in an attempt to preserve the imperial mechanism—genuinely heteropatriarchal— which was built upon the conjunction of whiteness and maleness (1995, 111). This is the point of convergence between American studies and postcolonial studies; this is where America becomes truly postcolonial. And Armengol's book is appreciatively aware of this.

In 2015 *Masculinities in Black and White* received the Javier Coy Research Award SAAS (Spanish Association for American Studies). The prize is recognition that Armengol's book makes a significant contribution to American literature and, I would add, whiteness studies. *Masculinities in Black and White* is "part and parcel"—an idiom the author perhaps tends to overuse—of a valuable body of works determined to topple whiteness from its pedestal and make it auspiciously and dutifully strange.

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Susana Onega and Jean-Michel Ganteau, eds. 2014. *Contemporary Trauma Narratives. Liminality and the Ethics of Form.* New York: Routledge. 253 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-02449-6.

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Jean-Michel Ganteau and Susana Onega's latest edited volume, *Contemporary Trauma Narratives. Liminality and the Ethics of Form* (2014), shares with its predecessors a similar interest in the relationship between the literary and the testimonial representation of atrocity, as well as in the ethical demands placed upon trauma witnesses. Its greatest merit, however, is a commitment to engaging "the ceaseless struggle" (Laub 1992, 61) that the representation of trauma demands by "performing the void instead of anatomizing it" (Onega and Ganteau, 10). The idea of performativity suggests the possibility for literature to embrace the liminal nature of trauma—its *in-betweenness*—as a means to enact or stage this representational crisis and facilitate an encounter with the Other—"the Other of trauma and […] the traumatized Other" (11)—in a way that does not obliterate its Otherness, its traumatic dimension.

Based on what Dori Laub and Daniel Podell call "the art of trauma" (1995), the volume provides a theoretically sophisticated and innovative analysis of a variety of hybrid or liminal contemporary fictions, and of the various narrative strategies to which they appeal, with the purpose of delving into trauma not only to relive it, but also to live it from a further, deepening perspective, reshaping its connection to narration by both "react[ing] to the openness of the wound" as well as "perform[ing] an openness to the wound" (Onega and Ganteau, 11). Since the unpredictable and ungraspable nature of trauma only allows for similarly elusive and indirect treatment, Onega and Ganteau advocate the "study of these narratives' ethical position from the perspective of the 'liminal ethics'" (10). This approach not only sheds greater light on the complexity of trauma narratives as a literary subgenre, but also gives, very much in line with Dominick LaCapra's notion of "empathic unsettlement" (2001), "insights into the formal and stylistic devices privileged by trauma narratives to secure an ethical distance from overidentification while ensuring an ethical empathic relation to the story and the protagonist" (2001, 41; quoted in Onega and Ganteau, 13).

For those who are looking for an introduction to trauma theory and its relevance to literature, the editors provide an enlightening initial chapter as well as a useful bibliography with references to the most important classical and contemporary studies in the field. They review the scholarship, starting with Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer's formulations on the "talking cure" ([1893] 2001), and stressing the significance of Emmanuel Lévinas's concept of "excendance" ([1935] 1982) and of Leigh Gilmore's "limit-case paradigm" (2001), as well as the notion of "discursive ethics" brought about by the ethical turn in the 1980s and 1990s. These theoretical-conceptual frameworks are thereafter recalled, endorsed or confronted in the different essays of the volume—a volume whose ultimate goal is to determine whether the hybrid texts under study succeed in offering a faithful and ethical depiction of the various traumatic experiences represented within them.

Given the connection between formal experimentation and ethics throughout the volume, as well as the importance of this connection in the articulation of trauma, the book is divided into three sections (four essays in each): "Ethics and Generic Hybridity"; "Ethics and the Aesthetics of Excess"; and "Ethics and Structural Experimentation." This division seems appropriate as it structures the diversity of approaches in which the contributors discuss hybrid narrative strategies according to how this formal-ethical connection is verbalized in the texts.

Part I, "Ethics and Generic Hybridity," explores generic transgression and border crossing as the immediate consequences of the emptiness at the core of the traumatic event. The essays contained in this section explore the ethics involved in the relationship between trauma and self-narration, in line with what Leigh Gilmore calls "limit-case" trauma narratives, that is, "contemporary self-representational texts about trauma [that] reveal and test the limits of autobiography" (2001, 14). Gilmore herself inaugurates the section with a discussion on issues of truth and reliability and on the ethical implications raised by the fake memoir. Her chapter considers a variety of examples of false memoirs to expose "the vulnerabilities at the heart of the memoir" (23). The significance of such an approach becomes apparent in its demonstration that "fakery exists whenever it is possible to tell the truth" (23) and that the severe boundaries between fiction and non-fiction are, to some degree, to blame for the ways in which writers incorporate lies and fabrications in the confrontation of traumatic memories. In the second chapter of the volume, Maria Grazia Nicolos analyzes two of Jenny Diski's "fables," the fictional memoir *Skating to Antarctica* (1997) and the autobiographical novel *Like Mother* (1998), to convincingly illustrate how traditional autobiographical forms are both resisted and challenged when tackling the trope of maternal loss. In her view, Diski's ethical dimension lies in "the aesthetic failure occasioned by trauma" (40). Dwelling on Emmanuel Lévinas's notion of the "meanwhile" ([1987] 1998, 11) and on Cathy Caruth's "belatedness" (1995, 8), Nicolosi claims that Diski's ethical encounter with the mother comes to light as "an 'intermittent' aesthetic form" that allows for trauma to emerge in the text

without losing its alterity (42). Next, Maria-Louise Kohlke's appealing consideration of Margaret Atwood's post-apocalyptic novel *Oryx and Crake* (2003), takes limit-case narratives further into the realm of the dystopian. Kohlke's chapter explores the "(im) possibility of witness-bearing in the absence of an Other" (55). In what seems to be a rather hopeful reading of the apocalypse, Kohlke suggests that Atwood's narrative strategies broaden the categories of both witnessing and trauma by encouraging a concern for others and for the world (66). Rudolf Freiburg's essay concludes the section with a highly persuasive and original analysis of the representation of Irish historical trauma in Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* (2008). His reading of the novel further complicates the debates on objectivity and truthfulness built upon the fiction/non-fiction dichotomy. Barry's liminal historical narrative, as Freiburg interprets it, adopts a particular kind of humanism, both historical and postmodern, which is in keeping with the "multilayered complexity" of Ireland's troubled past and, in some measure, with the post-modern genre of historiographic metafiction (80). In Freiburg's words, "Barry presents an alternative to the grands récits of official Irish history" (83), an alternative that not only provides a platform for a dialogic relationship between fiction and first- and second-hand testimony, but also for hybridity to permeate through the shaping of characters and the palimpsestic fabric of the novel.

Central to part II, "Ethics and the Aesthetics of Excess," is formal excessiveness in the understanding, and hence representation, of trauma, particularly in connection with the performance of alterity and vulnerability, as described by Levinasian ethics. Jean-Michel Ganteau persuasively explores the excessive aesthetics of Jon McGregor's *Even the Dogs* (2010) in some of its recognizable ingredients: the spectral voices of the narrators, the use of amorphous temporality, and the instances of "vulnerable form" in the novel's "poetic choices" (97). Ganteau reads McGregor's obscene exposition of the world of drug addicts, alcoholics and vagrants as a limit-case trauma narrative and as a move towards a politics of care which is not only limited to a shift in the treatment of traumatized subjects "from the status of suspects to that of victims," as described in *The Empire of Trauma* by Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman (2009), but also incorporates an "openness to the Other's trauma and to the cultural and political trauma of society's Others" (100). In her analysis of Lawrence Durrell's *Avignon Quintet* (1985), Dianne Vipond takes up this idea of openness to otherness in order to offer an interesting discussion of the novel as an "act of social conscience" (116). Citing Wittgenstein's well-known line, "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (104), as an inspirational starting point, Vipond singles out the novel's "metafictional devices, metarealistic style and characterisation" (115) as the most suitable ethical framework for addressing war and death in the context of the German occupation of France and of the Holocaust. She argues that the proliferation of aesthetic effects is meant to destabilize and question the relationship between the self and the Other, both within the narrative itself and in "the encounter with

the Other of the text as a whole" (115) in the pursuit of an ethics of care that, in line with Arendt's thinking, should be regarded as an incipient, and especially human morality. Drawing on Freud and Breuer's "talking cure," Gerd Bayer reads David Mitchell's *Number9Dream* (2001) as "a dreamlike alternative" (120) through which trauma victims verbalize their repressed traumatic experiences. It comes as no surprise that Bayer highlights what seems to be the great protagonist of Mitchell's novel: the text itself. In an interesting argument, Bayer claims that the linearity of the family romance breaks to let other narrative forms—"dreams, achronicity, cross mediality, and interior monologue"—fill in the gaps left by the characters' "unspoken desire" and "intense emotional turmoil" (120). To conclude this section, George Letissier also calls upon the therapeutic power of talking and self-disclosure to deliver an engaging analysis of Will Self's *Umbrella* (2012). By contending that the narrative choice of "High Modernism as an aesthetic model" is clear evidence "of excess as the incontrovertible condition of fiction writing in a traumatic age" (137), the essay offers a fascinating discussion of how the use of uninterrupted stream of consciousness, recurrently associated with the concept of "the knot," renders the tangled nature of post-World War I trauma palpable and enables the text to represent an interplay among different realms of experience: "a state of internalised chaos" (139); the topic of EL (Encephalitic Lethargica); "the transhistorical parallels" between the madness of the contemporary world and the Troglodyte World of the trenches (152); and finally, the possibility of re-establishing an empathic bond, in LaCapra's sense, between the characters' streams of consciousness and the reader of the text.

The chapters in part III, "Ethics and Structural Experimentation," demonstrate, through the consideration of formal experimentation, that the disruption in perception or the alteration of consciousness elicited by traumatic experiences might shed light on the dynamics of individual and collective memory and identity. The original French title of the novel—*Mal d'archive*—describes Marc Amfreville's main concern when analyzing Daniel Mendelsohn's *The Lost* (2006), namely, how the memories of the Holocaust are constructed, not only by direct witnesses but also by post-Holocaust generations. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch's notion of "post-memory" (1992) and on Eva Hoffman's assessment of the condition of "post-ness" well beyond the offspring of survivors (2004, 185-186), Amfreville considers *The Lost* as a post-memory rethinking of the Holocaust, which mediates the past in the present in "an act of sympathy in the strongest sense of the word" (161). What establishes his framework of analysis is, firstly, Mendelsohn's desire to go beyond the fate of his own family and touch deeper truths about the collective trauma of the *Shoah*, and secondly, the unrestrictive, spiralling nature of the text based on "two jointly present meanings of the word 'story': fiction and/or facts, united by the infinitely challenging Freudian concept of 'psychical reality'" (160). The chapter also finds an ethical interpretation of Mendelsohn's quest, as both writer and narrator, "along the

lines of proximity [empathy] and distance [critical reflection]" (160). The next essay, Ivan Stacy's analysis of W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (1998), sticks fairly close to Amfreville's ethics in its consideration of the Holocaust from this identification-distance perspective. Starting from Caruth's view that literature can give voice to traumatic experience "*through the wound*" (1996, 2; emphasis in original) and from Roger Luckhurst's claim that there is "an implicit aesthetic for the trauma novel" (2008, 87), Stacy describes Sebald's novel as orbiting within "the Roche limit," that is "between the centripetal drive to return to the memory of traumatic events, as identified by Cathy Caruth and Roger Luckhurst, and the centrifugal energies produced by magnitudes of suffering" (176). In Stacy's view, the idea of writing at the Roche limit works on three distinct levels of analysis: the position of Sebald as belated witness, that is, as a German writer coming to terms with the aftermath of the Second World War; secondly, the novel as a limit-case narrative mixing "apparently veracious historical material with a fictionalised account of the narrator's travels around Suffolk" and a view of non-linear history as described by Walter Benjamin in his notion of "constellation" ([1968] 1999: 255); and finally, the need for the reader as a mediator to complete the act of witnessing. The title of Silvia Pellicer-Ortín's next chapter, "Separateness and Connectedness" is eloquent in its account of the role performed by the second generation of trauma survivors in relation to their parents' experience. Her analysis of Anne Karpf's *The War After: Living with the Holocaust* (1996) reveals much about the author simultaneously approaching and distancing herself from her subject, as the novel contains both a remarkably passionate personal narrative and a scholar's objective analysis of historical events. Most importantly, Pellicer-Ortín claims that the liminality of *The War After* results from the writer's ethical "need to fill the gap, to create a bridge connecting her story to that of her parents and, by extension, to that of Holocaust survivors in general" (197). In the last chapter of the volume, the consonance between title and narrative choice plays a crucial role. Susana Onega's reflection on Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces* (1996) departs from an illuminating analysis of the relationship between the title's "intertextual complexity, contradictoriness and self-consciousness" and the excessiveness of romance as the most significant formal feature of the novel (212). Based on generic hybridity, structural duplicity and stylistic homogeneity, as well as on the collapsing of linear time, Onega connects the two narrative voices, one a survivor of and the other a witness to the Holocaust, suggesting that they converge to give shape to a collective Holocaust narrative. The chapter also contributes to a further exploration of the ethical responsibility of "the absolute Other," as described by Lévinas ([1947] 1987), which is exemplified in the abnegation and warmth of the Jewish woman.

The essays in this volume are an enlightening and up-to-date contribution to Trauma Studies, disclosing as much about formal experimentation as about ethics, and vindicating a critical approach to trauma narratives that values, as an ethical

imperative, the necessity to define new ways of representing, or rather, performing "the wounded self's vision of the void" (5) and of the traumatic events or experiences that have caused it. Speaking in connection to *El impostor* (2014), his recently published non-fiction novel about Enric Marco, the Spanish unionist who invented for himself a fake Holocaust-survivor identity, Javier Cercas claims:

> La novela no es el género de las respuestas, sino el de las preguntas: escribir una novela consiste en plantearse una pregunta compleja para formularla de la manera más compleja posible, no para contestarla; consiste en sumergirse en un enigma para volverlo irresoluble, no para descifrarlo. Ese enigma es el punto ciego, y todo lo que tienen que decir muchas grandes novelas (y relatos) lo dicen a través de él: a través de ese silencio pletórico de significado, de esa ceguera visionaria, de esa oscuridad radiante, de esa ambigüedad sin solución. Ese punto ciego es lo que somos. (Cercas 2014, 8)[1]

In line with Cercas's understanding of literature as an endless and fulfilling attempt to confront this 'punto ciego' [blind spot], this 'enigma' for which there are no answers, the texts analyzed here open up a horizon of innumerable possibilities that is far wider than the texts' capacity to encompass the questions they evoke. By attempting to perform rather than represent the unrepresentability of trauma, the visions offered by the editors and contributors to this volume accrue a transformative ethical framework, often overlooked in Trauma Studies, and successfully find responsive and innovative ways to link various forms of hybridization—generic transgression and border crossing, formal excessiveness and experimentation, among others—to tackle a subject that resists one-dimensional characterizations.

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[1] The following translation is my own: "The novel is not the genre of answers, but rather the genre of questions: to write a novel means posing a complex question to formulate it in the most intractable manner possible; it is not about answering it. It means submerging yourself in an enigma in order to turn it once again into something unsolvable; it is not about deciphering it. This enigma is the blind spot, and everything that many of the great novels (and tales) have to say, they say through this: through a silence charged with meaning, through this visionary blindness, through this brilliant darkness, through this irresolvable ambiguity. This blind spot is us; it is what we are."

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Ana María Fraile-Marcos, ed. 2014. *Literature and the Glocal City: Reshaping the English Canadian Imaginary.* New York and London: Routledge. 195 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-77563-3.

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Volume twenty-nine of Routledge's prestigious "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Literature" series brings together ten insightful essays addressing both the impact of globalization on Canadian culture and the ways in which critical discourses are dealing with it. This is not an unprecedented endeavor, as for the last decade a number of monographs and collections have attempted to "unsettle" Canadian literature—to echo the subtitle of Laura Moss's *Is Canada Postcolonial?* (2003)—from different approaches. However, *Literature and the Glocal City* makes an original contribution to ongoing critical conversations on the subject by locating a niche in the interface of the global and the local. The work's emphasis on the city as the hub where these two opposing forces struggle for control displaces the canonical preference for Nature (with a capital "n") in traditional literary and cultural analyses which found in the natural environment the *essence* of Canadian identity. While the conceptualization of space continues to be vitally important, and indeed one might say that it binds the essays together, the book turns towards more recent understandings of space as relational, and at the same time fraught with conflict and with fresh possibilities. Drawing from theorists such as Doreen Massey, Marc Augé, Edward Soja, Manuel Castells and Zygmunt Bauman, the book's contributors strive to resituate the study of Canadian Literature by engaging with diverse literary manifestations of the trope of the 'glocal' city. For the editor, Ana María Fraile-Marcos, Canadian cities are thus reimagined as "sites of resistance, conflict, creativity, and agency that challenge or alter previous homogenizing understandings of globalization and exclusionist imaginings of national subjectivity and (literary) identity" (8).

To that purpose, Fraile-Marcos has brought together an international team of scholars who examine Canadian literature from within and without, crisscrossing the nation from city to city. *Literature and the Glocal City* opens with two chapters on indigeneity. This is an interesting editorial choice, suggesting as it does that indigenous matters deserve prominence in all things Canadian. Deena Rymhs focuses on two plays by Métis

playwright Marie Clements, *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (1999) and *Burning Vision* (2003), to reflect on mobility, territory, and the racialization of space or, as the chapter's title proposes, "Mobility and its Disenchantments" (21-38). The earlier play memorializes the women murdered by Gilbert Paul Jordan in Vancouver's downtown Eastside between 1965 and 1988, eight of whom were indigenous, thus exposing the racialized histories of violence within segregated urban space. *Burning Vision* expands those insights onto a transnational sphere, the so-called "highway of the atom" connecting the extraction of uranium in the Northwest Territories via North American laboratories to the atomic bomb's targets in 1945 Japan. For Rymhs, Clements's fusing of worlds is paradigmatic of a glocal imaginary. Less enthusiastic about her chosen corpus is Michèle Lacombe in the second chapter, "Embodying the Glocal" (39-54), which examines how Caribbean writer Tessa McWatt tackles immigrant and indigenous ideas of home in her first novel, *Out of My Skin* (1998). Set in Montreal during the 1990 Oka crisis concerning Mohawk defence of their ancestral burial grounds, this novel has received wide critical attention to date precisely because of its unusual double perspective. Lacombe, however, contends that, while it successfully highlights how the city is inhabited by people with different kinds and degrees of agency, ultimately it fails to support indigenous rights and land claims, preferring to endorse a neoliberal version of multiculturalism.

"From Rowanwood to Downtown" (55-68) turns the gaze towards Toronto and sets out to account for the changing representations of the city over fifty years. Coral Ann Howells's contrastive analysis of Phyllis Brett Young's *The Torontonians* (1960) and Maggie Helwig's *Girls Fall Down* (2008) allows her to identify a shift from the modern to the postmodern, and from the affluent suburb to the inner city as a site of social exclusion. Furthermore, Howells's gender analyisis pinpoints major modifications in the representation of women: the conservative 1950s confined them to domestic private spaces while in in the 2000s Helwig emphasizes the vulnerability of women's bodies alongside other forms of inequality. Women's bodies and inner cities also preocupy Belén Martín-Lucas in "Dystopic Urbanites" (69-82), a chapter dealing with renderings of Toronto and Vancouver in two speculative fictions published around the turn of our century: Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1998) and Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* (2002). In the grim futures of these authors, the geography of the cities has been invested with new meanings by the workings of globalized capital, its spaces being similarly restructured according to hierarchies of wealth and power. The survival of the dispossessed can be achieved only through building new networks of exchange, solidarity and cooperation, which is the ideological message encoded in these two alternative futures that Martín-Lucas concludes are "moderately optimistic" (79).

The following three chapters introduce an urban semiotic approach in considering the materiality of cities. Eva Darias-Beautell's "The Intrinsic Potential of Glassness" (83-100) divides the modes of signifying the urban in Vancouver into three classes: narcissistic, opaque, and organic. An example of the first is Douglas Coupland's *City of*

Glass (2000), where the fractal city stands as an image of idealized space. On the contrary, in David Odhiambo's *diss/ed banded nation* (1998) the descriptions of the poorer Eastside enact the critique of idealization that characterizes the opaque; in the organic mode, the combination of above and below views of the city produces glocal confluences such as the sculptural installation *Lookout*, which reminds us of the unpredictable, complex negotiations between site and bodies. In "The Refugee as Signifier in the Semiotics of the Glocal City" (101-116), Ana María Fraile-Marcos looks into the city as a space of encounters with the foreigner/stranger by means of Michael Helm's Toronto-set *Cities of Refuge* (2010). Rather than one city, the multiple perspectives in the novel (to which Fraile-Marcos adds the reader's) create many separate cities, as the author contrasts the easy mobility of citizens, for whom the city has no borders, to the constrained mobility of the undocumented, who are left to inhabit a handful of restrictive places within a city full of invisible borders. Helm's novel thus invites us to reflect on the diversity of systems and ideologies operating within the city. "Responding to Late Capitalism" (117-129) by Kit Dobson follows, and enquires into cultural responses to shopping in Canada. The mall, now perhaps on the wane, became prominent in North America in the postwar period. This is a glocal site where goods from afar reach the hands of consumers, an urban space at the crossroads of the private and the public that both departs from and is continuous with previous forms of shopping experience, e.g., nineteenth-century arcades. Dobson examines what is allegedly the largest mall in North America alongside Heather Spears' poetry sequence "The Dolphin in the West Edmonton Mall," confirming a sense of malaise at how we are embedded within the ideologies of neoliberalism.

The next two essays in the collection continue the thread of the critique of globalization and neoliberal policies. Brandon McFarlane's "Hipster Urbanism and Glocal Toronto" (130-144) charts 1990s anxieties about the generational shift in Canadian literature and dispells misunderstandings around the Toronto writers controversially labelled "the Brat Pack." For McFarlane, this group is skeptical of neoliberalism because it has been disenfranchised by the recession. While it is true that they valorize the post-industrial, globalized city as the metaphorical basis for a contemporary national mythology, rather than the rural landscape favored by the established writers of the centennial generation, they do not constitute a true alternative, but rather a reimagining of the same cultural nationalism and regionalism that is "decidedly reactionary" (140). In "Glocalization and Liberalism in Michael Winter's *The Architects Are Here*" (145-159), the late Herb Wyile offers a close reading of Winter's novel as an exploration of a globalized economy in which the city, whether a large metropolis like Toronto or a relatively small location like St. John's in Newfoundland, is part of a network of global flows of people, goods, money, and information. Rather than standing in isolation from, or even in opposition to, each other, the city and the rural are connected by just such ongoing, ceaseless flows in a tangled (hi)story that brings to the fore the narrative of Canada's internal as well as external diasporas.

Closing the collection, George Elliott Clarke's "Ian Fleming's Canadian Cities" (160-182) traces Canadian connections in Fleming's biography, particularly during World War II, when he learnt about Canadian spy activities on behalf of the Allies. From that vantage point, Clarke then surveys the presence of Canadian cities in the James Bond stories, concluding that they fulfil a "go-between" function between the declining British Empire and the (rising) American one. Generally, Canadian cities— and Toronto most of all—are rendered as multicultural, multilingual sites that can be deployed by the forces of both good and evil.

Literature and the Glocal City is a strong collection of essays, both individual contributions and as a whole. The introduction identifies several key topics and overarching themes that are aptly pursued by contributors in threads running through the book and connecting the chapters. Thus readers can see the continuities within the collection even though there may not be explicit cross-referentiality. *Literature and the Glocal City* also enters into critical dialogue with other notable books of the last decade, namely Kit Dobson's *Transnational Canadas* (2009) and Herb Wyile's *Anne of Tim Hortons* (2011) alongside the earlier collection edited by Smaro Kamboureli and Roy Miki, *Trans.Can.Lit* (2007). All of them constitute worthy attempts to resituate the study of Canadian literature within the transnational while keeping the nation well in sight. *Literature and the Glocal City* also moves forward a critical conversation that started in *Unruly Penelopes and the Ghosts* (2012), an earlier collection edited by Eva Darias-Beautell featuring the work of several of the contributors and attesting, like this one, to the high quality of the research on Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies carried out in Spain. These essays knowledgeably tap into contemporary cultural concerns and anxieties arising from the shifts and transformations brought about by globalization, and thoughtfully identify the changing role of cultural artefacts arising in these times of crisis and renewal.

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Claudia Bucciferro, ed. 2014. *The Twilight Saga. Exploring the Global Phenomenon*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press. 253 pp. ISBN: 978-08-1089285-9.

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In the last few years, the vampire seems to have become a ubiquitous figure in popular culture. From young adult literature to television, the cinema or the Internet, these supernatural creatures seem to be everywhere and this recent fascination owes much to the huge success of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* novels—*Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008)—which were soon turned into a series of blockbuster films: *Twilight* (2008), *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (2009), *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* (2010), *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn-Part 1* (2011) and *The Twilight Saga: Breaking-Dawn-Part 2* (2012), respectively directed by Catherine Hardwicke, Chris Weitz, David Slade and Bill Condon. But the appeal of this saga has not only generated a highly profitable merchandise market but has also opened a debate on this global phenomenon that has been analyzed from a variety of perspectives, focusing on the relation between this series of novels and films and social and cultural trends in the twenty-first century.

This book results from the Popular Culture/American Culture Association national conferences held in Boston in 2012 and Washington DC in 2013. It is structured in five different but interrelated sections that, as Claudia Bucciferro explains in the introduction, intend to offer an interdisciplinary social and cultural analysis of the *Twilight* saga, which is understood not only as a mere text, but also as a pop culture product that has transcended its own boundaries and expanded into different media.

The first section includes three chapters intended to contextualize the fascination *Twilight* exerts in its audience and construct the foundations for theoretical approaches to the saga from a variety of perspectives. In "Mythic Themes, Archetypes, and Metaphors: The Foundations of *Twilight*'s Cross-Cultural Appeal," Claudia Bucciferro gives a lengthy comprehensive account of the main issues discussed by scholars regarding the saga and the growing interest it has generated. It is intended to establish the general theoretical lines that will be used in the following chapters as well as offer some hints as to what makes it a worldwide success. In that sense, it opens the debate on some of the controversial issues regarding the saga which will

prove to be highly informative for those interested not only in this series of novels and films, but also in Cultural Studies in general. The next chapter, "Manifest Destiny Forever: The *Twilight* Saga, History, and a Vampire's American Dream," by Michelle Maloney-Mangold, draws attention to Stephenie Meyer's belonging to the American literary tradition, and how her presentation of the vampire family—the Cullens—as the perfect embodiment of American exceptionalism underlines an ideology that links it to current US political and social policies, as well as the nation's own history of imperialism. This section closes with a study carried out by Barbara Chambers and Robert Moses Peaslee, "Reading *Twilight*: Fandom, Romance, and Gender in the Age of Bella." The similarity of themes and appeals with Janice A. Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1984), means that this work was used as the foundation for Chambers and Peaslee's analysis of seventeen women ranging from seventeen to forty-five who participated in four separate focus groups. However, the results are not conclusive, not only because the sample was too small, but also because, as the authors themselves recognize, the research methods used were obsolete.

The second section of the book aims to provide further information on *Twilight*'s audiences and their influence on social networks. Laura K. Dorsey-Elson opens by exploring the origin of the term "Twilight mum" and looking for a number of reasons for the appeal of this series of novels and films to women aged forty to fifty: "'Twilight Moms' and the 'Female Midlife Crisis': Life Transitions, Fantasy and Fandom." Her detailed theoretical review tries to establish a link between the female midlife crisis and the appeal of the saga to this age group. However, it does not provide any specific details and offers instead her own personal experience in order to validate her point. In "*Twilight* Anti-Fans: 'Real' Fans and 'Real' Vampires," Victoria Godwin tries to rebut anti-fan criticism towards the saga by providing specific examples, and pointing at Bram Stoker's Dracula as the *real* vampire against whom anti-fans oppose Meyer's vampires. Unfortunately, not all the comments raised against the *Twilight* saga are discussed and she fails to acknowledge that part of the issue might arise not from contrasting the Cullens with other *real* vampires, but rather from the construction of Edward as a vampire, and the conservative ideology and values the narrative reinforces, which are based on Stephenie Meyer's own Mormon beliefs. Finally, in this section, Michelle Groover explores in "*Twilight* and Twitter: An Ethnographic Study" the impact of Twitter as a way of forming social connections among women who talk about *Twilight*, and illustrates how this social phenomenon is understood within this culture-sharing group.

Section three is devoted to some of the characters in the saga and their cultural referents. Lisa Nevárez concentrates on the figure of the vampire child in "Renesmee as (R)omantic Child: A Glimpse into Bella and Edward's Fairy Tale Cottage." She contributes to the further exploration of the romance of the series by focusing on the traditional traits of fairy tales present in *Twilight*, and explores the role of Renesmee—Bella and Edward's daughter—not only as a hybrid between human and vampire, but also as a romantic child. Her singularity is suggested here by comparing her to other

vampire children appearing in previous narratives, but, in addition, her isolation is demonstrated in terms of the Bella-Edward story and the narrative as a whole. Next, drawing on gender theories, Gaïana Hanser's "Isabella Swan: A Twenty-First-Century Victorian Heroine?" analyzes how femininity is constructed in current narratives. Positioning Bella as a female heroine while at the same time keeping in mind Meyer's own background, Hanser provides an insightful account of the tensions that arise from the contradictory messages about women that appear in current narratives, and how they must be reconciled with women's sense of self and what she calls "today's search for lost bearings" (135). The last chapter in this section, "'Doesn't He Own a Shirt?' Rivalry and Masculine Embodiment in *Twilight*" complements the previous one by offering a comprehensive analysis of the two male heroes in the story, Edward and Jacob. Nicole Willms offers a reading on the way masculinities are portrayed in terms of binary oppositions—white and upper-class *vs.* native American (Quileute tribe) and working class—and how this portrayal is successful with audiences. The anxieties present in the narrative regarding masculinity and its embodiment are analyzed and it is suggested that they are used to symbolize particular ideologies on race and class.

The fourth section aims at foregrounding conceptual issues of gender, sex, class and race. The opening chapter "Chastity, Power, and Delayed Gratification: The Lure of Sex in the *Twilight* saga" attempts to offer a new perspective on the relationship between the two main characters, Edward and Bella. Unfortunately, Brynn Burskirk's interpretation of their relationship seems to be based on fans' perceptions rather than offering a valid reading from a theoretical perspective. Chapter eleven, "Alice, Bella, and Economics: Financial Security and Class Mobility in *Twilight*" seeks to analyze the link between the saga and materialism and consumerism in twenty-first century American capitalist society by focusing on the figure of Alice Cullen and her relation not only to Bella, but also to the rest of her family. Paul A. Lucas points to the social mobility present in Bella's transformation into a vampire. She comes from a relatively poor middle-class American family but her turning into a vampire means a new life of wealth and glamor and an acceptance of the materialistic world offered by the Cullens. However, Lucas does not read this financial dependence in terms of Bella's husband—Edward Cullen—but rather in terms of another female figure, Alice, who is the provider for the whole family, and gives them all financial stability. Using philosophy as the basis for her argument, Michelle Bernard discusses the question of otherness in the next chapter "'I Know What You Are': A Philosophical Look at Race, Identity, and Mixed-Blood in the *Twilight* Universe." By making race an issue, with the inclusion of the Quileutes and their war with the vampires, Bernard argues that the saga teaches "a lesson of tolerance" (186). But it is not this portrayal of racial others alone that the saga uses to promote the end of categorization and prejudice, but also the inclusion of Renesmee since she is the representative of this multi-racial society because of her status as a hybrid between her mother Bella (a human) and her father Edward (a vampire).

Section five moves away from the *Twilight* universe and engages with other related issues. Grounded on monster theory and discussing authors such as Ken Gelder (1994), Barbara Creed (1993) and Julia Kristeva (1982), "Mainstream Monsters: The Otherness of Humans in *Twilight*, *The Vampire Diaries*, and *True Blood*" offers valuable insights into current studies on the relation between vampires and otherness. Emma Somogyi and Mark David Ryan provide an outline of the evolution of the representation of the vampire since its first appearance in the nineteenth century until current times, emphasizing the change it has undergone in the last century. Nowadays, vampires have mainstreamed, as is proven through the careful analysis of different characters in the films and TV series mentioned. However, as they argue, the dichotomy between monstrous and virtuous vampire is still used in these narratives, and humans have now become the other. Chapter fourteen, "Individuality and Collectivity in *The Hunger Games*, *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*," written by Lisa Weckerle, is devoted to the exploration of these three sagas and tries to establish their links to current anxieties regarding individuality and collectivity. It is argued that in a context of globalization, they are constructed around contemporary concerns about privacy but also the potential of technologies for controlling individuals. In mythological terms, however, the heroes' journeys reflect a negotiation between the individual and the collective and point to the need of forming alliances among different groups in order to survive. On the whole, it is argued that they fulfil the function of being exemplary for their audiences. Sonia Baelo-Allué's "From *Twilight* to *Fifty Shades of Grey*: Fan Fiction, Commercial Culture, and Grassroots Creativity" delves into the complexities of online communities and their potential for changing commercial culture. Using E. L. James's fanfiction and its transition into the *Fifty Shades* series, the author draws connections between the original *Twilight* saga and this hugely successful series of novels that have also become a profitable franchise. This interesting analysis focuses on the different audiences the two texts are directed at and the cultural and ideological consequences of this. However, despite E. L. James's treatment of BDSM in her erotic novels, it becomes clear that it is still framed within a monogamous discourse with clear similarities to that appearing in *Twilight*.

This nicely edited volume brings together a variety of perspectives on the *Twilight* phenomenon in five separate sections that illustrate the underlying complexities of these narratives. While some of the contributions are more informative than analytical, the work explores the social and cultural context in which *Twilight* has originated, and addresses a series of issues related to this global trend and its impact on society. In her concluding remarks, Claudia Bucciferro does not deny the controversy that surrounds this franchise but focuses on its appeal to different audiences and how *Twilight* has paved the way for a new genre, the paranormal romance, which has become extremely successful in the last few years.

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Ángel-Luis Pujante and Juan F. Cerdá, eds. 2015. *Shakespeare en España: Bibliografía bilingüe anotada / Shakespeare in Spain: An Annotated Bilingual Bibliography*. Murcia y Granada: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Murcia y Ediciones Universidad de Granada. xlii + 532 pp. ISBN: 978-84-16038-54-1.

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Whenever one opens the pages of a new book by Professor Angel-Luis Pujante, one expects to find a thoroughly researched compilation of factual data and a clear, factual analysis of those data; this is a trademark that defined his editions of works by Shakespeare and, more recently, his studies on the reception of Shakespeare's works in Spain. Expectations are fulfilled once again with this annotated bibliography of Shakespearean criticism in Spain, compiled jointly with Juan F. Cerdá.

This book is the result of many years of intense research and analysis; it could not be otherwise considering that it comprises virtually all literary criticism on Shakespeare conducted by Spanish scholars or published by foreign academics in Spain since 1674, the date of the earliest known record.[1] The total list of essays collected (over a thousand) is given in a general bibliography, on pages 453-518; but the central core of this book is the annotated bibliography, that takes up 449 pages. It consists of 695 entries that provide the bibliographical data (author, title, publisher, etc.) and a brief summary, written by both the editors and a team of collaborators, of the contents of each essay. The entries are both in English (on even-numbered pages) and Spanish (odd-), in recognition of the more than probable interest that this book may arouse among scholars from fields other than English Studies (e.g., the history of theatre in Spain) as well as among those within this field.

The entries in the general bibliography are arranged alphabetically by author—a logical choice, and a useful one if one wishes to find what any given critic has published—whereas those in the annotated bibliography are listed chronologically. This is undoubtedly the most sensible choice, as it is the approach that most clearly facilitates a historical reading of Shakespearean criticism in Spain. However, it presupposes that scholars will wish to read through from beginning to end rather than

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[1] The adverb "virtually" is included here to make room for the possibility that some critical essay may have eluded the searches made by Pujante and Cerdá, although that possibility is quite remote.

merely browse or check for specific references. Selective browsing is still feasible, but the procedure will require some diversion: in order to find, for example, what Moratín said about Shakespeare, the reader must first consult the general bibliography, where all his publications are listed together; then the general index, which provides the number of the pages where Moratín's entries in the summaries are located; and finally, look for those pages. For searches by scholars whose contributions were published in the twentieth century, the only option is to check in the general bibliography, and then look for each essay in the annotated bibliography by its year of publication—a procedure that may take up several long minutes of page turning in order to find every entry. This problem could have been solved either by adding the names of all scholars to the general index or by marking in the general bibliography those entries that also appear in the summaries (for example, giving the entry number). This would certainly have saved time for searches—and prevent disappointment when the search involves one of the three-hundred essays whose content has not been summarized.

Still, an entry-by-entry reading of the annotated bibliography will prove an enriching experience. This will particularly be the case with essays published before the mid-twentieth century, most of which are not easily accessible to scholars. This mode of reading will also grant an unprecedented perspective on the evolution of research on Shakespeare in Spain in the last decades of the twentieth century. But whatever the motivation for consulting this book, the information provided in it will prove most valuable: this is a unique bibliographical source and gives scholars wishing to do research on Shakespeare a useful insight into the contents of an extensive critical corpus.[2] It is therefore bound to become an essential reference for all future studies in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain.

As noted above, Professor Pujante typically shies away from any sort of subjective or evaluative interpretation when it comes to analysing the materials he offers in his editions; his mediation can therefore only be noticed in brief, fact-based introductory essays. Here, once again, both he and Cerdá choose to mediate as little as possible between us and the material they have collected, and they constrain their analysis of the bibliographical corpus to a short introduction spanning thirty four pages—or in effect seventeen, as it too is split into a Spanish and an English version. It is indeed a very short introduction, especially if one bears in mind that it precedes a veritable treasure trove of data waiting to be shuffled through, classified and analysed in detail, and it therefore leaves one longing for much more.

The introduction does engage in some critical discussion, nonetheless, and will prove very useful as a first point of entry to the most recurrent topics in the essays collected. It is primarily a historicist account of Shakespearean criticism and therefore shows the progression in that criticism from the earliest to the most recent publications. It is also

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[2] This book widens the time span covered by a previous publication, Pujante and Campillo's *Shakespeare en España: Textos 1764-1916* (2007).

a thematic account, so each section offers a brief analysis of a specific topical highlight. Section I is a very short (one page) presentation, in which these central topics are first mentioned. Section II focuses on the influence exerted by neoclassical prescription in the assessment of the virtues and flaws of Shakespeare's drama in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century criticism. To readers as yet unacquainted with the history of Shakespeare's reception, it may come as a surprise to find that he was the object of a long controversy between neoclassicists and romantics, the former foregrounding the formal flaws of his works, the latter his genius, unfettered by any formal restrictions; to scholars already familiar with this topic, the pages in this section will bring clear echoes of research carried out by Pujante and his team, now confirmed by bibliographical evidence. Section III seeks to answer a question that persistently arises when reading early criticism on Shakespeare: what was the true extent of these critics' knowledge of Shakespeare's original texts? Pujante and Cerdá state their concern on the very first page of their introduction: Shakespeare did not come to Spain directly from England, but through France; and this, they fear, may have conditioned, even prevented, the reading of his plays, to the extent that in some early writings "'Shakespeare' is only a name, without reference to a single play of his" (xxviii). It can be surmised, moreover, that some critics may not have read any of his works, or read him only through French adaptations. Pujante and Cerdá seem relieved to find that the percentage of essays that mention no play by Shakespeare drops from 40% in the first half of the nineteenth century to 5% in the second half (xxviii). This second section addresses a second concern: which texts were most often studied by early critics? The corpus collected by Pujante and Cerdá shows that Shakespeare was preeminently known as a tragedian, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar* and *Richard III* being the plays most often quoted.

In Section IV, Pujante and Cerdá temporarily shift their focus onto the comparison of Shakespeare with various Spanish writers who could claim a similar status as *the* national poet. Nowadays it is taken for granted that Cervantes is the natural partner to Shakespeare; but a historical overview of the corpus allows the authors to discern a clear development, from the earliest coupling with Lope de Vega—in the eighteenth century—to Calderón—in the nineteenth—before Cervantes was finally settled upon. They also remark on the influence exerted by leading scholars, both at home and abroad, in each stage; hence, Cadalso and Moratín favoured Lope, while Lista and Schlegel backed Calderón. The pairing of Cervantes and Shakespeare has its inception in 1880, according to Pujante and Cerdá, with an essay by Blanco Asenjo, and it would be confirmed in 1916, with the tercentenary of their death (xxxvi; see also 56 and 459).

The last section of the introduction centres on the growth of Shakespearean criticism in the second half of the twentieth century—an all too evident increment, as a mere quantitative account shows: in the last four decades of the twentieth century, the number of essays rises almost exponentially from 38 (in the 1960s) and 41 (in the 1970s) to 143 and 240 in the last two decades, respectively. By comparison, between 1763 and 1900 the corpus comprises just 185 texts. This proves the increasing buoyancy of

Shakespeare studies in Spain, and attests to the influence exerted by scholars ascribed to Departments of English Studies, all of them created in the second half of the last century (xxxviii). It also shows that interest in Shakespeare and his work has both continued and widened in scope, as publications in Spain or by Spanish scholars now include research on all his plays and poems. Still, the figures collected by Pujante and Cerdá confirm that "Shakespeare begins and ends these three centuries as an author of tragedies" (xl). *Hamlet* is the play most often studied, with 160 entries, twice as many as the next two in the list (*Macbeth* and *Othello*) and three times more than the most recurrent comedy (*The Tempest*).

The introduction does however offer only a brief glimpse at what can be drawn from the analysis of the bibliographical corpus. There is still an extraordinary amount of information awaiting further research, and Pujante and Cerdá hint as much at the end of this introduction (xl). Future research is something indeed to be wished for, either by members of Pujante's research team or by other scholars. The compilers also state that this bibliography is a step forward in the pursuit of an additional goal, in which they have been involved for the last several years: "we still need documentary publications on the Shakespeare canon in other countries, not so much to measure ourselves against others as to develop a spirit of cooperation which, some day, will enable us to write the history of Shakespeare on the European continent, and, by extension, in the rest of the world" (xlii). This is a very ambitious goal that has no foreseeable conclusion in the near future; but Pujante and Cerdá's compilation is a very useful contribution.

This bibliography should perhaps not be constrained to its presentation as printed matter only, either. We are increasingly accustoming ourselves to the dynamic interaction with online corpora that our computer age provides. Formatting the bibliography as a searchable database would certainly prove a challenge, both technically and economically, but not an unsurmountable one: Pujante's research team already have one such database for the performances of plays by Shakespeare in Spain (www.um.es/shakespeare/representaciones); they would just need to use this as a model. A searchable online bibliography would not only make it more accessible to scholars worldwide and facilitate research; it would also grant the opportunity to correct and, if necessary, enlarge it. As it stands, it is evidence of the care which Pujante and Cerdá have taken to present a clear, well-organized, virtually typo-free text—no small challenge considering the amount of data compiled. But some revisions would be welcome. Most of them are minor and hardly worth mentioning: alphabetical order is occasionally disrupted in both the annotated and the general bibliography; the general bibliography should include additional entries for essays published by more than one author; and some inconsistency should perhaps be redressed in cases such as entry 428, a collection of essays in *Guía de Hamlet* (1988), all of them summed up in this entry instead of separately, as is done in other cases. Some other matters are more substantial; most particularly, the editors' decision to exclude works published after the year 2000. Their reasons—as stated in their

preliminary note—are understandable, yet one may be excused for the fantasy of a complete or ever-in-progress database, even if it is not fully annotated.

To conclude, this is a very welcome and extremely useful addition to the research carried out in Spain by scholars working on the history of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. It will be useful for scholars both here and abroad—and a compulsory reference source on the research done here. Their editors themselves, however, state that this is not yet the end, but rather one more—albeit a very important—step in their work; and one can only eagerly look forward to reading what they will produce in the future.

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Laura Monrós-Gaspar. 2015. *Victorian Classical Burlesques: A Critical Anthology*. London and New York: Bloomsbury. x + 298 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4725-3786-7.

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Traditional criticism has often held prejudices towards nineteenth-century popular drama. Oblivious to the popular appeal of Victorian comedy and farce and their inherent potential for revealing the intricate links in the triangular relations between dramatists, society and spectators, scholars have until very recently been reticent to seriously consider Victorian burlesque, an immensely popular form at the time but all too often ignored in academic criticism. Indeed, Alan Fischler has recently dismissed Victorian burlesque as a "parasitic form" which "degenerated into a riot of execrable puns, with little other point" (Fischler 2014, 375). However, in the wake of recent works which provide more positive insights into nineteenth-century popular theatre, such as Richard W. Schoch's *Victorian Theatrical Burlesques* (2003) and Jeffrey. H. Richards's *The Golden Age of Pantomime: Slapstick, Spectacle and Subversion in Victorian England* (2015), Laura Monrós-Gaspar's *Victorian Classical Burlesques: A Critical Anthology* (2015) proves a significant contribution to performance history within Victorian studies.[1]

In the context of nineteenth-century theatre, the term burlesque applies to a form of parodic drama which, by means of occasional music, witty punning, topical references and metatheatrical conventions, provided travesties of well-known stories.[2] The scope of the burlesque playwright's parodic pen was wide and all-encompassing, including takes on Shakespeare, the legends of King Arthur, Victorian melodrama, Italian opera and, as Monrós-Gaspar illustrates, classical antiquity. In the first pages of the introductory section to this anthology, significantly entitled "Why Classical Burlesque?" Monrós-Gaspar illustrates the extent to which the Graeco-Roman world

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[2] Concerning the definition and features of Victorian burlesque, the term "travesty" applies whenever an elevated or classical theme, work or character is vulgarised or portrayed in a low manner (Schoch 2003, xiii). Obviously the term often acquired a literal sense since cross-dressing, as Monrós-Gaspar highlights (23), was a recurrent staple in mid-Victorian parodic drama (Rowell 1985, 70; Booth [1991] 1995, 130; Hall 1999, 348).

permeated all kinds of cultural manifestations in mid-Victorian times. In a vivid and picturesque style, the author invites the reader to imagine a passer-by strolling around mid-Victorian London, marvelling at the Greek and Roman scenes in the paintings in the National Gallery, the manufactured products with mythological topics at the Great Exhibition, the *tableaux vivants* enacted in the Ancient Hall of Rome on Great Windmill Street or the heathen characters engraved in the portico to Covent Garden theatre (3-6). With this imaginary promenade, the author provides a meaningful backdrop through which to explain the infiltration of classical culture into Victorian burlesque, drawing on critical works which foreground the pervasiveness of classical antiquity in Victorian England (Richards 2009; Vance 1997; Goldhill 2011). Following George Rowell (1985, 66-67), Monrós-Gaspar additionally identifies the 1737 Licensing Act, which forbade the inclusion of political matters on the stage, as a rationale explaining Victorian dramatists' change of tack to mock classical works (8).

From the point of view of classical reception in Victorian burlesque, a point of debate among scholars is the degree of *knowingness* of classical mythology in the average spectator. Considering that Victorian popular theatre was enjoyed by audiences from all walks of life, we may assume that there must have been dissimilarities between individuals in their competence to fully comprehend the mythological references in the plays: formal education in classical literature would reasonably seem to be a necessary condition for a mid-Victorian theatregoer to fully appreciate the classical allusions in Victorian burlesques. Nevertheless, Edith Hall tellingly points out that "the dozens of theatrical entertainments on Graeco-Roman themes produced in the mid-nineteenth century […] show that knowledge of Classics was more widely disseminated across all social strata than has been recognised" (1999, 340). In tune with Hall, Monrós-Gaspar refers to late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century popular theatrical forms, such as the puppet show, ballad operas, fairground entertainment and tavern singing, which staged mythological scenes in their performances and which might have instructed uneducated spectators in recognising the classical hypotexts in Victorian classical burlesques (7-9). Conversely, the author speculates that topical references to everyday culture might have been more appealing for less erudite audiences than the classical referents (12).

Monrós-Gaspar's edition of the plays anthologised in this volume, comprising Edward L. Blanchard's *Antigone Travestie* (1845), Robert Brough's *Medea; or, the Best of Mothers*, *with a Brute of a Husband* (1856) and Francis Talfourd's *Alcestis, the Original Strong-Minded Woman* (1850) and *Electra in a New Electric Light* (1859), evinces the difficulties which often arise for an anthologist, whose task involves not simply selecting texts, but also complex textual archaeology and the making of annotations and other paratextual documents to the works anthologised. This task proves an even harder challenge to the literary scholar working on Victorian popular drama: original manuscripts of Victorian burlesques are scarce, and today only survive in acting editions in the British Library, originally delivered to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing (Schoch 2003, xii), or in rare

volumes published at the time such as Thomas Hailes Lacy's acting editions from the 1860s (Hall 1999, 340). As Monrós-Gaspar discloses in her introduction, her textual work on the plays in this volume has consisted in collating the plays surviving in the Lord Chamberlain's Plays collection of manuscripts with their respective versions in Lacy's edition, excepting Blanchard's *Antigone*, of which no printed version was ever published (39). The author's excavation into the textual history of the plays and the resulting collations, commentaries and annotations testify to the complexity of her work and her philological verve.

As the four plays in the volume under review reveal, the changing patterns of society which characterised the mid-Victorian period provided a background for the Victorian world of popular spectacle. In turn, Victorian burlesques responded to mid-nineteenth-century social changes in the form of topical references, anachronistic allusions and social commentary. Monrós-Gaspar follows Jacky Bratton's foundational concept of "intertheatricality" (2003) in order to get to grips with the interrelated semiotics at play between playwrights, works and spectators in the performance history of the plays.[3] A significant instance of the "intertheatricalities" at work in Victorian burlesque is the author's analysis of Edward L. Blanchard's *Antigone*, which is read against mid-Victorian financial culture, particularly the passing of the Bank Charter Act in 1844 and the swindle of the Independent and West Middlesex Insurance Company (21), a well-known financial fraud in nineteenth-century Britain indirectly alluded to by Blanchard (68). Among other topicalities which reveal Victorian classical burlesque as a mirror for mid-Victorian culture are anachronistic allusions to emigration to Australia because of bankruptcy (83), the London Metropolitan Force or Peelers (109, 159), child education (150-151) and Victorian technological advances such as the telegraph (165), the steam vessel (239) or cabs and railways (69-70).

Nevertheless, the volume's analytical focus on the plays' "intertheatricalities" is particularly placed on nineteenth-century perceptions of women, marriage and Victorian negotiations of gender, as is already anticipated on the cover of the volume, which features Ruth Herbert, a well-known Victorian stage actress at the time, as Diana in a production of William Brough's *Endymion* (1860) at the St. James's Theatre (Adams [1891] 2013, 61-62). As the author has argued elsewhere (Monrós-Gaspar 2011, 205-209), female heroines in mid-Victorian comic theatre drew attention to unorthodox models of behaviour which disclosed the social headway of women and anticipated fin-de-siècle feminism. This is the case with Antigone, Alcestis, Medea and Electra, whose female voices underpin pivotal concerns related to the

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[3] Jacky Bratton devises the concept of "intertheatricality" to illustrate the transactions operating in theatre reception. Bratton's intertheatrical reading into theatre history "seeks to articulate the mesh of connections between all kinds of theatre texts, and between texts and their users. It posits that all entertainments […] are more or less interdependent. They are uttered in a language, shared by successive generations, which includes not only speech and the systems of the stage—scenery, costume, lighting and so forth—but also genres, conventions and, very importantly, memory" (Bratton 2003, 37-38).

Woman Question in the mid-nineteenth century, such as debates on divorce or the rights of married women, and other issues which shocked Victorian audiences, such as adultery or infanticide. Victorian controversies on marriage feature prominently in Brough's *Medea* and Talfourd's *Alcestis*, both of which display the inequality of Victorian women within marriage. Monrós-Gaspar persuasively reads these plays on the grounds of notorious divorce cases covered by the press at the time and the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1857, which extended the accessibility of divorce to middle classes and women in particular (28-29). The author's insight into Brough's *Medea* and Talfourd's *Alcestis* within the backdrop of the mid-Victorian debates and press coverage of divorce legislation reveals the influence of Victorian journalism on the reception of the plays. Additionally, Alcestis and Electra are referred to by Francis Talfourd as "strong-minded women," a Victorian archetype of female resoluteness and intellectuality which, in light of Monrós-Gaspar's reading, served both as a prototype for the late-Victorian New Woman (33-36) and as an antithesis to the Victorian ideal female or the "angel-in-the-house," represented by Chrysothemis in Talfourd's *Electra* (219).

In closing, the publication of this anthology entails a noteworthy input into the recent critical re-evaluation of Victorian popular drama. The volume excels at effectively outlining how a throbbing classical culture found its way through Victorian comic theatre, revealing the appropriation of classical plots and characters as an effective tool to comment on the socio-political concerns of the time. In addition, the author's insight into the eponymous protagonists of the plays reveals fresh perspectives on female subjectivities and the politics of gender relations in the mid-Victorian period. The versatility of the volume makes it a compelling work for Victorianists working on classical reception, performance history or gender studies.

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Eliecer Crespo-Fernández. 2015. *Sex in Language. Euphemistic and Dysphemistic Metaphors in Internet Forums*. London: Bloomsbury. 248 pp. ISBN: 978-14-725-9652-9

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Sex in Language. Euphemistic and Dysphemistic Metaphors in Internet Forums addresses the ever-fascinating topic of the expression of sexual concepts. Crespo-Fernández bases his study on data from Internet forums written in English and applies concepts from Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Relevance Theory and Appraisal Theory, among others. This combination reflects his interest in analyzing the different source domains used for expressing sexual concepts, in order to explain their ideological value within Western culture, and their communicative functions. The book has two parts: one theoretical ("Metaphor, Euphemism and Dysphemism") and one empirical ("Sex-Related Metaphors in Internet Forums"). They are preceded by a foreword by taboo-expert Keith Allan and by a preface and an introduction by the author stating background, goals, data and methods. The main concepts are sketched out in the "Introduction" (1-19), although their application will only be fully understood in the following parts.

Part one, "Metaphor, Euphemism and Dysphemism," is an explanation of the author's terminological and theoretical standpoint. Chapter one, "Cognitive and Pragmatic Issues" (21-44), reviews the basic concepts in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980): the principle of unidirectionality, the embodied nature of metaphor, the importance of physical space for existing image-schemas and previous classifications of metaphors. Crucial to the author's analysis is the fact that metaphorical conceptualization is always partial, since only certain aspects of the source domain are highlighted. The author follows Gerard Steen's three-dimensional model of metaphor (2011), which includes linguistic and conceptual aspects, as well as communicative functions that link metaphor with types of discourse and extra-linguistic reality. This is consistent with a key notion followed by the author: that cultural variation has an impact on conceptualization (Shariffian 2011), which, in his view, is particularly well reflected in metaphor. In this vein, Kövecses's notions of *main meaning focus*, *central mapping* and *differential experiential focus* are essential for the analysis of the connections between source and target, and its cultural motivations (2005, 2010). The author also

applies Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986) to metaphor interpretation. In Crespo-Fernández's view, the addressee's interpretation of the addresser's meaning is mediated by the construction of *ad hoc* concepts derived from the particular metaphorical expression, without much cognitive effort. This is motivated by expectations of relevance and contextual aspects (Carston 1997).

Chapter two presents the "Cognitive Dimension of Euphemism and Dysphemism" (45-70). The x-phemistic phenomena are connected to politeness: their use is intended to save the face of the participants—through euphemism, or orthophemism—or to threaten it—dysphemism (Allan and Burridge 2006). Nonetheless, empirical analyses mentioned by the author reveal the fuzziness of these gradual categories, which can perform unexpected functions—quasi-dysphemism, quasi-euphemism (Casas Gómez 2012). The author considers dysphemism as "the only source of face-threatening expressions" (Crespo-Fernández 2015, 47), while the functions of the rest of the x-phemisms are varied and can be protective, consolatory, provocative, etc. The role of metaphor in the creation of x-phemisms is crucial, because metaphorical construal creates a particular perspective on the taboo concept. The author underlines the cognitive dimension of metaphorical x-phemisms, which rely on *contrast* of meanings, *neutralization* of certain semantic aspects and *displacement*. According to their degree of lexicalization, x-phemistic metaphors can be *lexicalized* (dead), *semi-lexicalized* (conventional) or *creative* (novel and artful) (Chamizo Domínguez 1998). As exemplified by the author, some of these different metaphors can challenge the "euphemistic treadmill" and the undirectionality of metaphor. X-phemistic metaphors have a strong persuasive and evaluative potential, especially evident when the meaning transfer—from source to target—intently seeks a change in the addressee's perspective, for belief manipulation or delegitimization among other reasons. In the author's view, from a cognitive perspective, the correct interpretation of an x-phemistic metaphor is an inferential process where the hearer plays an active role. It depends on her/his world knowledge and on her/his capacity to recognize the intentional ambiguity in meaning of the x-phemistic metaphor and to resolve it by virtue of her/his relevance expectations. An action which is determined by the context.

In part two, "Sex-related Metaphors in Internet Forums," the author applies the theories detailed in part one to his data. He analyses 240 (mostly conventional) sexual metaphors found in an admittedly restricted corpus of 188 postings in forums in the period 2011-2013. The author pre-classifies the metaphors into two large groups: euphemistic and dysphemistic—chapters three and four respectively. Each chapter is in turn subdivided into sections according to source domain. For each source, the author provides a description of the conceptual metaphor(s), the main meaning foci and an illustration from the corpus. Furthermore, the author gives his interpretation of the world knowledge that allows for the metaphor and the values it entails in the representation of the target concept. When relevant, the author relates the sources

with broader generic-level metaphors, basic image-schemas and other interplaying semantic mechanisms, like hyperbole and metonymy. The diachronic origin of the metaphor is sometimes provided.

Chapter three presents "Euphemistic Metaphors" (71-134). In his data, the metaphors used with euphemistic intention are based on thirteen source domains: WORK (e.g., *blowjob*) HEAT AND FIRE (*light one's fire*), GAMES AND SPORTS (*play doctor*), JOURNEYS (*reach the destination*), ADVENTURES (*adventurous*), CONTAINERS (*backdoor*), PHYSICAL FORCES (*electric shocks*), NATURAL PHENOMENA (*torrent of passion*), FIREWORKS (*bright lights*), ILLNESS AND INSANITY (*insane passion*), HEALTH (*sick*), DIRT (*filthy*) and FALLING (*head over heels*). The author acknowledges that some of these sources are not euphemistic, but rather provocative, ludic or quasi-dysphemistic, proving the subtleties of taboo. Crespo-Fernández ends the chapter by re-examining how the intended euphemistic meaning is reached by illustrating the different steps in the inferential process leading to euphemistic interpretation through the mediation of *ad hoc* inferred meanings.

Chapter four analyzes "Dysphemistic Metaphors" (135-186), which intentionally highlight the offensive traits of a concept. Metaphor proves to be extremely suitable for dysphemistic creation. The author finds the following seven domains for dysphemistic metaphor in his data: ANIMAL, such as SMALL FURRY ANIMALS (e.g., *bunny*), BIRDS (*chick*) and WILD ANIMALS (*foxy*); HUNTING AND RIDING (*prey*), FOOD AND EATING (*starved*), WAR AND VIOLENCE (*battle*), PLAYTHINGS (*doll*), TOOLS AND MACHINES (*screw*) and FLOWERS (*pansy*). The author again exemplifies the inferential process leading to the interpretation of dysphemistic meaning. In this chapter, though, he adds a section to underline the evaluative function of dysphemistic metaphors, based on the premise that the choice of source domain is ideological (Deignan 2010, 361-362). The author builds on heteronormative discourse studies (Cameron and Kulick 2006; Coates 2013) to explain that most of the dysphemistic source domains in the data adhere to a conceptualization of sexuality in terms of violence and dominance, related to hegemonic masculinity. The universes of women's sexuality and male homosexuality are negatively evaluated, as shown by the dysphemistic metaphors. Through them, the people posting take a belief-based ideological stance and try to persuade their target audience into what they consider to be appropriate social behavior.

In chapter 5, "Conclusions and Final Remarks" (187-192), the author concludes that metaphorical sexual language implies a general view about sexuality as an intense and irrational experience. The highlighting/hiding of particular semantic components determines the x-phemistic function of metaphors, but all those studied are evaluative and persuasive and imply particular entailments. In the context of sexual forums, the interpretation of sexual metaphors is cognitively effortless, because the metaphorical meanings are highly relevant. Finally, the author suggests further lines of research: the cross-linguistic study of sexual metaphors, a focus on sexual metaphor in gay and lesbian communities and the differences between men and women. At the end,

the book also provides two appendices of euphemistic and dysphemistic metaphors classified alphabetically by source domain, subdivided by source concept, linguistic realization, target concept and number of posting.

Overall, Crespo-Fernández's book is an interesting contribution to the field of linguistic taboo and conceptual metaphor and has insightful reflections at the semantic, pragmatic and cultural levels. From the "Introduction" onward, there is a marked interest for contextualizing linguistic use, and the domain of sex in particular, within a broader cultural reality, which gives depth to the analysis. The author often enriches his synchronic analysis with diachronic information. Despite the density of the theoretical notions, the author makes an enormous effort in terms of synthesis and clarification, making the topic accessible even for non-specialized readers. The combination of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Relevance Theory and Appraisal Theory is pertinent and sufficiently justified for his analysis. In spite of the difficulties of his fine-grained source analysis, the author manages to interpret the ideological implications of his data. He takes a critical stance against heteronormativity, going back on various occasions to works on Language and Sexuality that study the creation of heteronormative male dominance through discourse. Thus, even with only modest data collection, the author shows the potential harmfulness of established ideological structures.

I would like to comment briefly on some minor problems. On the theoretical level, the author's focus on metaphor sometimes leads one to think that some general aspects of meaning are exclusively features of metaphor, such as the fact of being perspectival (49). Moreover, following Chamizo Domínguez (2004, 9), he considers x-phemisms as a kind of metaphor, mixing, in my view, different levels—pragmatic and semantic—and generalizing a particular meaning construal to all x-phemistic expressions. There is evidence that other semantic strategies are more productive for x-phemistic expression in some contexts than metaphor—especially, for euphemism—as has been demonstrated in previous studies—such as vagueness, in Grondelaers and Geeraerts (1998), or metonymy, in Pizarro Pedraza (2013). On the interpretative level, apart from some debatable classifications (*adult films* or *sex worker* seem to me rather metonymical), the categorical division of sources into euphemistic or dysphemistic becomes ocasionally problematic for the author, who recurs to quasi-dysphemism and quasi-euphemism, when particular cases do not fit the initial classification of the source domain. A confirmatory quantitative analysis on a larger data set would help in reconsidering certain fuzzy cases and in calibrating the relevance of different source domains in sexual conceptualization. Furthermore, it would establish quantitatively the correlation between the sex of the message poster and the preferred source domain, which is currently only qualitatively perceived.

Despite these minor shortcomings, the monograph is a valuable addition to the increasingly productive research trend of studying linguistic taboo from a cognitive perspective (Chamizo Domínguez 2004; Crespo Fernández 2008; Casas Gómez 2009), especially for conceptual metaphor. The author eloquently connects his fine-grained

analysis of source domains with their axiological implications, which establishes a useful starting point for corpus studies on the social indexicalities of linguistic taboo (Christie 2013; Pizarro Pedraza 2015), a perspective that needs urgent attention. What the underlying ideologies of different sexual realities are and who—within a community— uses which sexual metaphor are of course, crucial questions for our time. In line with studies on sexist gender metaphors—such as Koller (2004) or Velasco Sacristán (2005)—Crespo-Fernández's analyses provide critical insights into heteronormative discourses present in metaphorical expressions. If we believe in the power of metaphor as a cognitive device, these results could contribute to understanding gender conflicts, which makes *Sex in Language* a recommendable read both inside and outside of the academic community.

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Samaddar, Ranabir. 1999a. *The Marginal Nation. Transborder Migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal*. Delhi: Sage.
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(Samaddar 1999a, 124)
(Samaddar 1999b, 241)

Books with two or more authors:

Allan, Keith and Kate Burridge. 1991. *Euphemism and Dysphemism. Language Used as Shield and Weapon*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP.
(Allan and Burridge 1991, 24)

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(Burford et al. 1988, 45)

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—, ed. 2005. *Mathematical Discourse: Language, Symbolism and Visual Images.* London: Continuum.

Translations/editions:

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