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From Africa to America: Precarious Belongings in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*

M. Rocío Cobo-Piñero
Universidad de Sevilla
rociocobo@us.es

This article analyzes NoViolet Bulawayo's critically acclaimed debut novel *We Need New Names* (2013), bringing to the fore the legacies of colonialism and the subsequent diaspora to the West. Like the work of other contemporary Afrodiasporic writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Taiye Selasi and Imbolo Mbue, Bulawayo's narrative recreates the problematic space of dislocated, transnational migrants who are attached to a postcolonial and a metropolitan "home," and denied fundamental rights in both. Unstable belongings are part of the new subjectivities forged in postcolonial contexts, where invisibility is also a social, political and economic sign of precarity. In Bulawayo's novel, social conflicts, abusive governments, linguistic imposition, displacement and migration are revealed through a group of African children, first in a Zimbabwean shantytown and then in the United States. This study contextualizes the diasporic dilemmas of belonging and identity formation, while at the same time exploring the possibilities of political agency within contemporary Afrodiasporic literature.

Keywords: precarious belongings; NoViolet Bulawayo; Afrodiasporic literature; postcoloniality; invisibility

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De África a América: filiaciones precarias en *We Need New Names*, de NoViolet Bulawayo

Este artículo analiza la aclamada primera novela de NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (2013), subrayando los legados de la colonización y la diáspora hacia países occidentales. De igual forma que otras escritoras afrodiaspóricas contemporáneas, tales como Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Taiye Selasi y Imbolo Mbue, la novela de Bulawayo reconstruye el complejo

espacio que habitan las personas migrantes y transnacionales, vinculadas a un hogar poscolonial y a otro metropolitano, en los que se les niegan derechos fundamentales. Las subjetividades que emergen en contextos poscoloniales se caracterizan por sus filiaciones inestables, además de la frecuente invisibilidad social, política y económica. En la obra de Bulawayo, las peripecias de un grupo de niños y niñas africanas revelan los conflictos sociales, el abuso gubernamental, la imposición lingüística, el desplazamiento y la migración, primero en un barrio marginal de Zimbabue y después en Estados Unidos. El presente estudio contextualiza los dilemas de identidad y pertenencia en la diáspora, además de explorar las posibilidades de agencia política en la literatura afrodiaspórica.

Palabras clave: filiaciones precarias; NoViolet Bulawayo; literatura afrodiaspórica; poscolonialismo; invisibilidad

Paul Gilroy aptly contends that the idea of diaspora offers an alternative to the fixed "primordial kinship of belonging" and the "metaphysics of 'race,' nation and bounded culture coded into the body" (2000, 123).[1] He further argues that diaspora is a concept that "problematizes the cultural and historical mechanics of belonging" (123). Even though diaspora studies provide a rich theoretical basis from which to tackle the provisional status of cultural identity, and to question essential notions of belonging, Jayne Ifekwunigwe warns us that the concept of diaspora has also become a buzzword, like globalization, with certain connotations that might be associated with a "marketable millennial cultural currency [...] which re-casts our recurrent homelessness as an asset rather than a deficit" (2003, 58). In light of this assertion, I propose to explore the social, political and economic precarity and invisibility that may accompany dislocated bodies in contemporary diasporas, particularly the three million diasporic subjects that left Zimbabwe after its independence from the United Kingdom in 1980, paradoxically called the "born free generation" (Austin 2011, 43). In so doing, I draw on studies of the African diaspora and postcoloniality that underscore the dialectics of precarity and the diasporic dilemmas of belonging within the political and socioeconomic legacies of the original systems that produced the African Atlantic diaspora: the Atlantic slave trade, slavery, colonialism and imperialism—see Gilroy (2000), Chariandi (2005), Rice (2012) and Valkeakari (2017).[2] This paper focuses specifically on the new (postcolonial) diaspora and its representation.

Thinking beyond borders of nation-states is also relevant for the construction of what Tiffany Patterson and Robin Kelley call a "diasporan consciousness" (2000, 14). Echoing Safran (1991) and Boyce-Davies (1996; 2002), they consider that the constituent elements of such a consciousness include: (1) dispersal from a homeland, often by violent forces; (2) the making of memory and a vision of that homeland; (3) marginalization in the new location; (4) a commitment to the maintenance/restoration of the homeland; (5) desire for return; and (6) a continuing relationship and identity with the homeland that shapes the consciousness and solidarity of the group. Even though such consciousness might be part of the shared experience of dislocation, I will avoid monolithic approaches and highlight instead the instability of identity formation in NoViolet Bulawayo's debut novel *We Need New Names* (2013), looking at the postcolonial and capitalist forces that lead to precarity and leave little space for political, ethnic or class belongings, either before or after dispersal. "Africa" and "America," referenced in the title of this paper, activate certain narratives that are also deconstructed in the novel as unstable fictions.

[1] The research for this article was carried out under a funding of the V Plan Propio de Investigación from the University of Seville (VPPI-US postdoctoral contract).

[2] Robin Cohen ([1997] 2008, 1-20) argues that diaspora studies have gone through four stages: (1) The Classical Stage (1960s-1970s), mainly confined to the study of the Jewish diaspora; (2) the 1980s, in which diaspora was deployed as a "metaphoric designation" (Safran 1991, 83) for various categories of people: expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities; (3) the mid 1990s, where diaspora was reordered and re-evaluated in response to the complexities of a postmodern world; and (4) the turn of the twenty-first century: the current phase of consolidation.

Visibility or the lack thereof is also relevant in diasporic studies because the lives of migrants frequently take shape on the margins of society as "shadow lives" (Král 2014, 46). Françoise Král underlines the fact that invisibility seems to have emerged as a common characteristic of our times, a paradoxical feature in a world where public exposure and media attention are narrowly focused on certain geographical areas and individuals, and for a limited span of time. Additionally, Král identifies three types of invisibility: social, political and economic. Thus, she goes beyond categories of race and ethnicity, accentuating social precariousness and the lack of recognition of civic and political status. Invisibility, according to Todd Lieber (1972), suggests the situation of a group of people stripped of their native culture and forced to adhere to alien standards and values while their own cultural qualities are ignored; socially, it reflects the conditions of a group whose basic plight has been long overlooked or pushed into the shadows. Perhaps most significantly, invisibility embodies the complex psychological dilemmas of men and women without a sense of essential group identity, whose individual human identity is often denied by the dominant society.[3] Bulawayo recalls that one of the inspirations for her novel was a haunting photograph of a child sitting in the rubble after her home had been bulldozed during the Zimbabwean government's Operation Murambatsvina, a campaign of forced relocation in 2005: "I became obsessed with where the people would go, what their stories were, and how those stories would develop—and more importantly, what would happen to the kid in the first picture I saw" (Griffiths 2015, n.p.).

Bulawayo grew up in Zimbabwe and describes herself as being from the "born free generation" of the 1980s (Smith 2013, n.p.). She moved to the United States shortly after high school and studied creative writing at Cornell University with a Truman Capote Fellowship. In 2011, she won the Caine Prize, Africa's highest literary honor, for her short story "Hitting Budapest," which would later be included as the opening chapter of *We Need New Names*. Bulawayo was the first African woman to be shortlisted, in 2013, for the British Man Booker Prize, and has been awarded a number of literary distinctions in the United States. Although writers of the new African diaspora such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Taiye Selasi, Imbolo Mbue as well as Bulawayo herself have been criticized for their privileged situations and literary success outside the continent (Fasselt 2015), their texts bear witness to postcolonial situations and diasporic identities that may as yet be unnamed. In this regard, Aretha Phiri (2016) refers to contemporary Afrodiasporic writing as a multifaceted locus that presents inclusive and ambiguous visions of Africa and African diaspora as a response to ever-shifting contexts and realities. Despite Phiri's suggestion that Afrodiasporic fiction is not explicitly politicized (2017, 145), this is a generalization that does not apply to Bulawayo, who consciously engages in

[3] Lieber's pioneering article (1972) on the metaphor of invisibility referred specifically to its representation in Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* (1952).

creating a new discourse from the problematic but hybridized space of the displaced, transnational subject who is tethered to a postcolonial and a metropolitan "home," although he or she is denied basic rights in both.

As Bulawayo explains, she is "trying to say that we need new identities, new ways of seeing things, new ways of being," especially in the wake of the "lost decade" in Zimbabwe's recent history which, as a result of Robert Mugabe's authoritarian politics, was filled with strife, cronyism, fraud and corruption (Vaye Watkins 2013, n.p.). Although Bulawayo does not mention the name of the city or country where the novel is located, there are several markers that link it to Zimbabwe. *We Need New Names* can be divided into two distinct sections; the first vividly portrays a group of children living in a shantytown, ironically called Paradise:

> Paradise is all tin and stretches out in the sun like a wet sheepskin nailed on the ground to dry; the shacks are the muddy color of dirty puddles after the rains. The shacks themselves are terrible but from up here, they seem much better, almost beautiful even, it's like I'm looking at a painting. (Bulawayo 2013, 34)

This precarious and temporal "Paradise" was constructed after the war of independence from the United Kingdom (1964-1979), which was soon followed by thirty years of Mugabe's autocratic government (1987-2017), and described through the unsentimental, poetic and skeptical voice of one of the children, ten-year-old Darling. The names of the streets in the shantytown invoke important personalities in the history of Zimbabwe, like Chimurenga Street and Mzilikazi Road. The first is a word in the Shona language used to describe the insurrection against the British South Africa Company in the 1890s (First Chimurenga); the latter refers to the founding king of the Ndebele nation (c. 1790-1868), an ethnic group that was severely repressed both during colonization and after independence. According to Belinda Moji, "these names can be read as signifiers that inscribe the novel as a certain history of the Zimbabwean nation, given the post-independence dominance of the Shona majority and the political marginalization of the Ndebele ethnic group" (2015, 182). However, the Shona and the Ndebele fought together in the First Chimurenga, joining forces against the exploitation of resources in the continent led by the South Africa Company.

Both the Ndebele and the Shona were referred to as natives in Rhodesia, although the Ndebele state was only formed four decades before the arrival of the colonialists. Nor are the majority Shona the original occupiers of the land, which is said to have been inhabited by the Khoi San before the former's existence. Khanyisela Moyo argues that the Shona and Ndebele are historically attached to the artificial space created after independence, referred to as Zimbabwe, and feel it to be their "homeland" (2011, 171). Today, the Shona and Ndebele largely view ethnic groups from neighboring countries as immigrants and foreigners; for example, laborers from Mozambique who were brought in under colonialism. In fact, after independence, "the 'foreigner' label was extended

to the Ndebele and minority white population by some sectors of the Shona people; yet these groups largely see themselves as homeland minorities" (Moyo 2011, 172). Hence, the tag of "foreign" also applies to the shantytown inhabited by the Ndebele in Bulawayo's novel, a configuration that makes their existence and subjectivities even more precarious.

To pass the time and kill their hunger, the kids go to Budapest, an affluent neighborhood mostly populated by whites right across from Paradise: "there are guavas to steal in Budapest, and right now I'd rather die for guavas. We didn't eat this morning and my stomach feels like somebody just took a shovel and dug everything out" (Bulawayo 2013, 1). Their precarious economic situation is portrayed in a humorous tone and, borrowing Jens Elze's designation, the narrative renders a "postcolonial picaresque" that uncovers relations of inequality and depicts them naturalistically, insisting on their "disenabling precarity" (2017, 40). The perversity of their poverty is a shameful reminder of the rampant economic inequality in Zimbabwe and is highlighted when the kids visit Shanghai, a construction site supervised by Chinese contractors. When asked if they are building a school, hospital or apartments, one of the Chinese supervisors boasts: "We build you big mall. All nice shops inside, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Versace and so on" (Bulawayo 2013, 46). These remarks also underscore China's expanding role on the continent, where the country's various investments in infrastructure in exchange for open access to mineral exploitation are considered by some as a new form of colonialism. Adam Tiffen (2014) adds that Chinese government-backed construction and engineering companies are doing exceptionally well in Africa; rather than infusing local African economies with cash, stimulating growth, and increasing local production, the main benefit has been to Chinese enterprises.

Asymmetrical relations with the West are also acutely exposed in the novel. A visit from well-meaning white NGO workers affords the reader the opportunity to witness the dehumanizing impact of charity:

> The man starts taking pictures with his big camera [...] They don't care that we are embarrassed by our dirt and torn clothing, that we would prefer they didn't do it; they just take the pictures anyway, take and take. We don't complain because we know that after the picture-taking comes the giving of gifts. (Bulawayo 2013, 52)

The excerpt criticizes Western superiority towards postcolonial subjects and, according to James Arnett, the taking of pictures points to how "postcolonial suffering is commodified and traded [...] in a materialist affective economy that is grounded in the production and dissemination of telegenic images of suffering" (2016, 152). This "habitus of individual aid" is a symptom of neoliberal late capitalism, which displaces the impulse to provide aid, assistance and charity to private subjects, reifying Western assumptions of privilege, and reiterating the necessity of the "performance of suffering" (153).

The passage goes on to describe the kind of gifts that the children receive: "each of us gets a toy gun, some sweets, and something to wear; I get a T-shirt with the word *Google* at the front, plus a red dress that is tight at the armpits" (Bulawayo 2013, 52). Each item symbolizes a surplus of Western capitalist society: the toy gun stands for the welfare of weapons and the commercialization of wars; the sweets identify the addictive trade of sugar; the tight red dress pinpoints the fast-growing waste of clothing and the word "Google" at the front of the T-shirt relates to the ever-present and meticulous surveillance of social habits. As for the adults, they "get small packets of beans and sugar and mealie-meal but you can see from their faces that they are not satisfied. They look at the tiny packages like they don't want them, like they are embarrassed and disappointed by them, but in the end they turn and head back to the shacks with the things" (55). Deprived of the ability to provide for themselves through pre-colonial structural means, such as a national infrastructure of manufacturing or a consolidated and efficacious agricultural industry, Zimbabweans are "structurally subjugated" (Arnett 2016, 54). Their invisibility is randomly portrayed in the novel by a group of cameramen, wearing T-Shirts from CNN and the BBC, who compare the precarious settlement with the aftermath of a natural disaster: "it's like a tsunami tore through this place, Jesus, it's like a fucking tsunami tore this up" (Bulawayo 2013, 67).

Naming is an empowering practice that both contests and evinces invisibility in the novel. Darling's friends play the "Country-Game" drawing imaginary maps on the ground, a game that sarcastically names the unfair distinctions of the piece of land where one is born. The playful geopolitical dynamics establish that first, the kids have to fight over the names, because each of them wants to be "certain countries, like everybody wants to be the USA, and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France and Italy and Sweden and Germany and Russia and Greece. These are the country-countries" (49). A second stage in the game determines that, depending on who loses the fight, "you just have to settle for counties like Dubai and South Africa and Botswana and Tanzania. These are not country-countries, but at least life is better than here" (49). Ultimately, "[n]obody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq, like Sudan, like Haiti, like Sri Lanka, and not even this we live in—who wants to be a terrible place of hunger and things falling apart?" (49). The intertextual reference to Chinua Achebe's canonical novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), through Darling's rhetorical question, discloses the political disillusionment with national and foreign meaningful action for the population.

The names of the characters are also evocative and significant: Messenger, Destiny, Godknows, Bastard, Bornfree, Mother of Bones, Forgiveness and Darling. However, the narrator acknowledges that when Zimbabweans started fleeing from their country and settled down somewhere else, like in the United States, "a country-country": "We did not know that they would think of us, what they would do about us. We did not want their wrath, we did not want their curiosity, we did not want any attention. We did not meet stares and we avoided gazes. We hid our real names, gave false ones" (242). This

excerpt from the chapter entitled "How They Lived" (237-250), succinctly describes the diaspora of three million Zimbabweans who left their country in the 1980s and how they tried to make themselves invisible in order to be accepted, even rejecting their real names and taking others that would make them belong, like "Aaron, Josh, Dana, Corey, Jack, Kathleen" (247). Interestingly enough, NoViolet Bulawayo was born Elisabeth Tshele and changed her name to NoViolet Bulawayo when she relocated to the United States; NoViolet means "with Violet" in her native Ndebele, recalling her deceased mother, and Bulawayo refers to the second largest city in Zimbabwe, where the writer spent part of her childhood. Even though she adopted an Africanized name, NoViolet causes semantic uncertainty in English, due to the use of the prefix "No." This linguistic resource underscores the necessity for the colonial English to draw on the African language for the accurate meaning (Moji 2015, 183).

Even though the names are loaded with meaning, their referentiality is arbitrary and culturally constructed. This is apparent in the chapter entitled "We Need New Names" (78-88), where the group of children try to perform an abortion on Chipo, impersonating the characters in the popular US TV series, *ER*. Sbho announces, referring to herself, the patient and Darling: "In order to do this right, we need new names. I am Dr. Bullet, she is beautiful, and you are Dr. Roz" (82). Since Darling has no point of reference for *ER* and is unaware of what her new name means in terms of role, she stays silent and does nothing. Her inaction, due to the absence of information, suggests the necessity of dialogue between cultures. The scene also reveals the porosity of local space they occupy to international influence, while at the same time mocking the TV show through caricature and the rudimentary procedure that the children employ; they intend to use a clothes hanger to perform the abortion, which is ultimately prevented by one of the adults.

Humor pervades the novel, revealing how political action is nullified and becomes devoid of actual meaning after colonial segregation. In the chapter "Blak Power" (104-130), Bulawayo deliberately misspells the name of the 1960s US political slogan, "Black Power," to describe how a gang of Zimbabweans break into several houses owned by white people in Budapest, the prosperous suburb, yelling "Africa for Africans!" (114). This event not only evinces unresolved racial and class tensions but it also reveals the lack of accessible schooling and, therefore, literacy: "we don't go to school anymore. The teachers left," they shout (109). The gang's senseless violence and their misinterpretation of political action is parodied with the final inscription that they leave, "*Blak Power*" written in feces, on the toilet mirror in one of the mansions (130; emphasis in the original). In such an abject and grotesque scenario, the possibilities for real solidarity and belonging, beyond blind nationalism, seem scarce. Bulawayo is equally critical of the stifled opportunities for change and activism under Mugabe's government. In "For Real" (131-146), the children imagine and mimic the real-life assassination of Bornfree, a young activist in the slum who promoted a campaign to make people aware of the importance of voting for political transformation. This time,

imagination is not a means to generate "a sovereign political community"—to borrow Benedict Anderson's well-known phrase for the subjective processes of nation-building ([1983] 2006, 7)—but to recreate the disarticulation of communities.

Social precarity is presented through the community's obsession with migration within and outside Africa, despite the evidence that migrant labor may lead to illness or family breakdown. Darling's immigrant father returns from Johannesburg with AIDS, while her cousin Makhosi gets lung disease from digging for diamonds in the South African Madante mines. The local healer, Vodloza, even advertises his services to help with "BAD LUCK GETTING VISAS ESPECIALLY TO USA AND BRITAIN" (Bulawayo 2013, 27; emphasis in the original). The announcement is one of the few times that the United States is named as such because Darling always refers to it as "America" or "My America." This designation leads her to fantasize about her future prosperity outside of Zimbabwe, activating the mythic narrative of the American Dream (wealth, status, assimilation into the dominant culture): "When I go to live with aunt Fostalina, that's the kind of car I'll drive [...] I just know, because of this feeling in my bones, that the car is waiting for me in America, so I yell, My Lamborgini, Lamborgini, Lamborgini Reventón!" (111). The United States is Darling's destination in the second part of the novel, which begins with a chapter named "Destroyedmichygen" (147-184), sarcastically imitating the pronunciation of the city and the state altogether.

"My America" becomes the country where an adolescent Darling works in underpaid jobs, and where undocumented African migrants are invisible, as narrated in chapter seventeen (251-273), entitled "My America." The designation "My America" brings to mind the eponymous collection composed of fictional diaries of children living through significant moments in the history of the United States (1609-1903). Immigration at the turn of the twentieth century is the motif of the last three diaries ("Sofia's Immigrant Diary Series") and they represent an immigrant child's arrival in the Promised Land. However, in Bulawayo's novel, the "America" formerly imagined becomes the locus of precarity and frustration: "When I'm not working at the store, I have to come here, even though I don't like the idea of cleaning somebody's house, of picking up after someone else, because in my head this is not what I came to America for" (Bulawayo 2013, 263). Precarity is most intensely depicted in "How They Lived" (237-250), a chapter that recounts the perils of undocumented migration and the Othering of a non-inclusive American Dream: "When they debated what to do with illegals, we stopped breathing, stopped laughing, stopped everything, and listened. We heard: exporting America, broken borders, war on the middle class, invasion, deportation, illegals, illegals, illegals" (242). Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* (2016) also explore the inaccessibility of the Dream for African migrants, whose dreams are "deferred" (Hughes [1954] 1990) or wholly cancelled. Selasi's novel *Ghana Must Go* (2013) addresses the tensions of how a family of Ghanaian and Nigerian descent cope with the consequences of achieving the Dream; they realize that it was not created with black people in mind, and that it is gender biased.

Othering and the feeling of not belonging are more acute when an imagined "America" dissolves and a distant Africa is fictionalized. To US Americans, Africa becomes the overarching signifier of violence and poverty, thus erasing the locality of place and experience. One of the sources of this blurred fiction is the mass media. One such reference is inserted when Darling attends the interracial wedding of a family friend, Dumi, in South Bend (Indiana) and one of the white guests assumes that Darling is "African," like the groom, who is actually Zimbabwean:

> Jesus, the rapes, and all those killings! […] I can't even process it. All those poor women and children. I was watching CNN last night and there was this little girl who was just—just too cute, she says. Her eyes began to mist and she looks down. I glance at the box of Kleenex at the edge of the counter and wonder if I should pick it up and hold it out to her. (Bulawayo 2013, 175-176)

The remarks pigeonhole two issues: the general reference to violence with no specific location or (postcolonial) context and the "commodification of suffering" in collective anonymity (Arnett 2016, 164). The over-simplified comments continue, even when Darling tells her (not the reader) the country where she comes from: "Africa is beautiful […] But isn't it terrible what's happening in Congo? Just awful? Now she is looking at me with this wounded face. I don't know what to do or say" (Bulawayo 2013, 175). Later, the woman mentions that her niece is going to Rwanda to help in the Peace Corps: "you know, they are doing great things for Africa, just great […] I nod, even though I don't really know what the woman is talking about. But her face is looking much, much better, like the pain from earlier is going away" (176).

Lasse Heerten notes that in the age of audiovisual mass media, the internationalization of "remote Third World countries" has become increasingly dependent on images of suffering (2017, 9). He specifically refers to how images of human suffering represented the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) as a depoliticized humanitarian crisis, which also signified a social relationship: "they denote the relationship between the global North and the global South in a postcolonial world" (9). Biafra visually encapsulated "the misery of the Third World" and the evocations of "global society children of sorrow also give a role to Western societies: that of savior" (10). Under the Western gaze, postcolonial conflicts turn into "spectacles of a suffering that the observers wish to alleviate" (10), as the block quote above reveals. The so-called "spectacle of the Other" was also theorized by Stuart Hall (1997), who paved the way for the study of representational practices and racial and ethnic difference stereotypes in visual popular culture.

Mass media further contributes to the alienation of immigrants living in the US. In chapter fourteen, Darling and her eighth grade school friends watch RedTube, a free on-line amateur pornographic site, for entertainment after class. She clarifies to the reader that Nigerian Marina and US born Kristal are her friends because they

live on the same street and go to the same school, pointing to the transitional state of their friendship (Bulawayo 2013, 199): "I click on Mute because when the real action starts we always like to be the soundtrack of the flicks. We have learnt to do the noises, so when the boy starts working the woman, we moan and we moan and we groan" (201-202). The description of this "underground" entertainment (they watch the clips in the basement of Aunt Fostalina's house) illustrates the loss of innocence of the three girls and the commodification of sex. Each time they mute the clips and impersonate the porn characters, they take on different roles, stripping off their own identities. The girls' voyeuristic gaze is focused on each film in turn, alphabetically; Darling even produces an inventory of those that they have watched (200). On one occasion the film dubbing game distracts Darling from a phone call that she receives from her mother and friends in Zimbabwe and, when she finally decides to answer, she explains that she does not identify with them anymore: "It's hard to explain, this feeling; it's like there's two of me. One part is yearning for my friends [in Zimbabwe], the other doesn't know how to connect with them anymore, as if they're people I've never met" (210). She refers to that same feeling of agony and loss several times, while not being able to name it: "I don't know whether to call it pain or anger or sadness, or whether it has a name" (197).

The other distraction the girls indulge in is driving to the mall and strolling through the stores, a spectacle of consumerism and opulence. Darling has not only learned to fake an American accent but also the trademarks of material accumulation. The same yearning that she cherished in Zimbabwe comes back in the mall parking lot: "right there, next to a black van, I see my car. I don't even hesitate, I run to it, yelling, My Lamborgini, Lamborgini, Lamborgini Reventón!" (224). When her friends point out the exorbitant price of the car, Darling complains: "I'll never own it, and if I can't own it, does it mean I'm poor, and if so, what is America for, then?" (225). America, as a functional signifier of capitalism, teases her and all those who will never achieve the Dream. On the way to the shopping center, Darling has a daydream and sees herself back in Zimbabwe, at Queen Elizabeth Primary School, wearing a uniform with a picture of a rising sun, and the words "*Knowledge is Power*" written below it in red italics (220; emphasis in the original). The irony is evident: knowledge takes on imperialistic connotations in a postcolonial setting. The fusion of reality, imagination and dream imbues the passage with a dazzling patina, and music further contributes to the effect. The girls are listening to Rihanna on their expedition to the mall, although Darling listens to a different soundtrack in her head: "I hear myself singing this song we used to sing at school back home when we were little: Who discovered the way to India? / *Vasco da Gama! Vasco da Gama!*" (219). This time, a metaphorical parallelism is established between the narrative of discovery, constructed at British funded schools in Zimbabwe—overlapping the actual imperial colonization of America—and the girls' incursion into the shopping center, which makes them complicit with the narrative of consumerism.

The closing chapter, set in Darling's present in Kalamazoo (Michigan), a year before she begins attending community college, reignites the feelings of loss and "in-betweenness" (Bhabha [1994] 2004, 2). A call from Chipo takes her back to memories of Zimbabwe and to confronting her friend, who accuses her of having "run off to America," leaving her country and people behind, and never going back. Guilt is part of Darling's new hybrid identity, although it is left unnamed in the novel. However, Chipo calls her by her full African name, for the first time: "Darling Nonkululeko Nkala" (Bulawayo 2013, 286). Ironically, the latest information which Darling has of Zimbabwe comes from the BBC and it is of suffering: "You think watching BBC means that you know what is going on? [...] it's the wound that knows the texture of the pain; it's us who stayed here feeling the real suffering, so it's us who have a right to even say anything about that" (285). Chipo's scornful tone slaps Darling in the face, leaving her without any feelings of national belonging: "It's your country, Darling? Really, it's your country, are you sure?" (286). Hence, Darling holds on to her vivid memories of place. The last one is sparked by the news of Bin Laden's death, a broadcast that Darling watches in Kalamazoo, and leads her to recall the time when she and her friends made spears out of branches in Paradise and playfully pretended to hunt for Bin Laden in order to collect the reward that "America" had offered (288). It is a symbolical fantasy of supremacy, interrupted by a sudden accident in which a truck full of Lobel's bread runs over a stray dog, named Bin Laden by the kids, killing it. This turn of events connects both "homes" with the thread of international political conflict and disarray, softened by the memory of fresh African bread. This final recollection metaphorically encapsulates the failed promise of a new beginning after killing Bin Laden, a shared enemy.

Dispossession permeates the new identity of a displaced Darling, who has no words to describe how she feels. Such nascent transnational identities need new inclusive names that tear down physical and imaginary walls. This might be the reason why Bulawayo named the last chapter "Writing on the Wall" (274-290). The wall stands for the physical separations of her room, where she writes with a red marker that "looks like blood" the words "*iBio iyirabishi*" ["Biology is rubbish"], a protest in Ndebele against her Aunt Fostalina's insistence on her studying a science career "that counts" (275). This minor gesture of rebellion illustrates her longing for change and the desire to distance herself from an already defined (but not by her) path. This direction coincides with Selasi's revolt against pre-determined African identities outlined in her influential essay "Bye-Bye, Babar (or: What is an Afropolitan?)" (2009), in which she delineates the features of emerging "Afropolitan" identities of middle-class young African descendants in post-independence Africa and abroad.

However, Bulawayo distances herself from the depiction of a cosmopolitan, privileged experience. She creates instead a bleak fictional space that conjures up a postcolonial picaresque, where precarity and vulnerability are the connecting threads capable of weaving together diasporic identities. It is a diaspora consciousness nurtured

by the colonial dispossession of the Ndebele minority, who would later be considered a "foreign" group in their own territory. Banished to shantytowns like Paradise, they are already marginalized at home, so their invisibility and precarity starts in their homeland. Ifekwunigwe (2003) asks us to reconsider the status of diasporic identities separate from ahistorical and unifying tendencies. In this study, I have prioritized an analysis of social, economic and political vulnerability in the country of birth and in a Western destination, thus configuring postcolonial "precarious passages" (Valkeakari 2017) and belongings.

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M. Rocío Cobo-Piñero has a PhD in English Language and Literature from the University of Seville and an MA in African American Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. She currently holds a postdoctoral position as a researcher and lecturer at the Department of English and North American Literature, University of Seville. Her research interests include the literatures of the African diaspora, postcoloniality and gender.

Address: Departamento de Literatura Inglesa y Norteamericana. Facultad de Filología. Universidad de Sevilla. C/ Palos de la Frontera, s/n. 41004, Seville, Spain. Tel.: +34 954551551.

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Appropriated Bodies: Trauma, Biopower and the Posthuman in Octavia Butler's "Bloodchild" and James Tiptree, Jr.'s "The Girl Who Was Plugged In"

María Ferrández San Miguel
Centro Universitario de la Defensa (AGM) ~ Universidad de Zaragoza
mfsm@unizar.es

This article approaches science fiction using the strategically powerful perspectives of Trauma Studies and the posthuman in conjunction with Foucault's notion of biopower, paying special attention to the deep investment of these discourses in notions of embodiment and agency. In order to do so, I will consider Octavia Butler's 1984 short story "Bloodchild" (Hugo and Nebula Awards) and James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon)'s 1973 novella "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (Hugo Award). Both stories explore dystopian futures—in their focus on coercive extraterrestrials and life on an inhospitable planet, on the one hand, and on oppressive consumer culture and corporate technoscience, on the other—and point back to our posthuman present through metaphoric characters that illustrate and invite comment upon the articulation of power and the construction of the embodied posthuman. The main issue at play in the two stories, I will contend, is the identification of biopower with the traumatic appropriation of the human body and the articulation of posthuman forms of resistance to it.

Keywords: trauma; the posthuman; biopower; science fiction; James Tiptree, Jr.; Octavia Butler

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Cuerpos apropriados: trauma, biopoder y poshumanidad en "Hijo de sangre," de Octavia Butler y "La chica enchufada," de James Tiptree, Jr.

Este artículo se centra en el género de la ciencia ficción, recurriendo a las perspectivas críticas que proporcionan los estudios de trauma y las teorías de posthumanidad, así como el concepto

de biopoder de Michel Foucault. Se presta especial atención a cómo se articulan en dichos marcos teóricos los conceptos de "fisicalidad" y agencia. Con este fin, el artículo analiza dos relatos breves: "Hijo de sangre" (1984), de Octavia Butler, ganadora de los premios Hugo y Nebula, y "La chica enchufada" (1973), de James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon), galardonada con el premio Hugo. Ambos textos exploran futuros distópicos: el primero mediante la representación de la vida en un planeta inhóspito habitado por extraterrestres hostiles, y el segundo a través de su visión de la cultura de consumo y de la tecnociencia corporativa. Ambas historias, además, apuntan a nuestro presente estatus posthumano mediante personajes metafóricos que ilustran e invitan a comentar la articulación del poder y la construcción del ser posthumano encarnado. La cuestión principal en ambos textos es la identificación del biopoder con la apropriación traumática del cuerpo humano y la articulación de formas posthumanas de resistencia.

Palabras clave: trauma; posthumanidad; biopoder; ciencia ficción; James Tiptree, Jr.; Octavia Butler

1. Introduction

Some of the terms of critical currency for the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, such as biopower, trauma and posthumanism, as well as their objects of analysis—the body, subjectivity, freedom and agency, the cyborg, hybridization, technoscience—have a familiar resonance for science fiction (SF) readers and writers. Indeed, in the last few years, many critics have pointed out the dialogic relationship between SF and contemporary critical thought. After all, both conceptualize issues of technoscience, power and embodied subjectivity, and both are concerned with definitions of the human and its Others. In addition, as Stefan Herbrechter argues, SF's reliance on the principle of extrapolation and its amalgamation of fiction and reality, present and future time, justify viewing it as the quintessential posthumanist genre (2013, 113; see also Hayles 1999, 247). As Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. pertinently put it, "SF has ceased to be a genre of fiction per se, becoming instead a mode of awareness about the world" (1991, 308).

This article approaches SF using the strategically powerful perspectives of Trauma Studies and the posthuman in conjunction with Michael Foucault's concept of biopower, paying special attention to the deep investment of these discourses in notions of embodiment and agency. In order to do so, I will consider first Octavia Butler's 1984 short story "Bloodchild" (Hugo and Nebula Awards), which allows for a comprehensive introduction of some of the key critical notions that will be relevant for my discussion. Section four will build on those concepts to explore James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon)'s 1973 novella "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (Hugo Award). The combination of conceptual complexity and emotional power that characterizes both texts makes the two stories excellent examples of literature that bridges the gap between "high" and popular culture in a complex and unique manner. Furthermore, both stories explore dystopian futures—in their focus on coercive extraterrestrials and life on an inhospitable planet, on the one hand, and on oppressive consumer culture and corporate technoscience, on the other—and point back to our posthuman present—see Hayles (1999, 6)—through metaphoric characters that illustrate and invite comment upon the articulation of power and the construction of the embodied posthuman.

The main issue at play in the two stories, I contend, is the identification of biopower with the traumatic appropriation of the human body and the articulation of forms of resistance to it.[1] Like those movies that Kelly Hurley classifies as "body horror,"

[1] It is important to point out at this early stage that the two human bodies that are appropriated in the short stories happen to be subjected to appropriation as a result of their gender. While I am fully aware that the term "human" runs the risk, as it often has, of acting as a blanket concept erasing difference, a careful review of the literature dealing with the two stories confirms that the significance of the two protagonists' gender for the stories' ideological and political implications has been widely discussed and convincingly established by previous scholarship—see Helford (1994), Hicks (1996), Hollinger (1999), Melzer (2006), Stevenson (2007), Thibodeau (2012) and Lillvis (2014). These critics have focused on Butler's reversal of traditional gender roles and criticism of patriarchal oppression in "Bloodchild," and on Tiptree, Jr.'s critical attitude towards gendered power structures and the performance of femininity in "The Girl Who Was Plugged In." This comes as no

Butler's and Tiptree, Jr.'s texts confront readers with a "human subject dismantled and demolished: a human body whose integrity is violated, a human identity whose boundaries are breached" (1995, 205). Yet the stories leave some room for hope in these traumatic violations, in the evolution towards a posthuman subjectivity, a posthuman understanding of embodiment and a posthuman form of agency. Indeed, as my analysis will attempt to prove, the two texts explore the dystopian dangers of the discourses of biopower and trauma, and the hopeful potential of the imbrication of notions of embodied subjectivity, agency and the posthuman.

2. Trauma, Biopower and the Posthuman

Although it is still a rather new critical pursuit, a number of critics have, in the last few years, cogently pointed to an imbrication of the paradigms of trauma and posthumanity and begun to explore their influence on present understandings of human existence as represented by contemporary (science) fiction—see Collado-Rodríguez (2016, 229) and Luckhurst (2014, 159). SF literature has long used the figure of the posthuman being to represent consciousness beyond the constraints of humanism and its reliance on the concept of an autonomous self. As a result, SF has been the genre of choice for most critics who contributed with their theories to the discourse of posthumanity—see, for example, Haraway ([1985] 1991), Hayles (1999), Badmington (2000), Graham (2002) and Herbrechter (2013). On the contrary, trauma theory has tended to completely ignore SF, probably because, as Roger Luckhurst explains, SF texts do not rely on "what is considered to be an appropriate aesthetics for the representation of trauma" (2014, 159). Furthermore, the discourse of trauma has often been "suspicious of the investment in narrative pleasure often equated with mass cultural forms like SF" (159).

The object of prominent philosophical and critical attention in the last decades of the twentieth century, the theories of trauma and the posthuman have become key frameworks to approaching contemporary culture and its artifacts. The discourse of posthumanity, characterized by its opposition to, and transcendence of, humanism (Herbrechter 2013, 41), foregrounds questions regarding what constitutes the human, exploring the boundaries of subjectivity and the body. As for trauma theory, in its exploration of what Kirby Farrell and Mark Seltzer have suitably termed, respectively, "posttraumatic culture" (1998, 3) and "wound culture" (1997, 3), it focuses on how psychological trauma affects human consciousness and is inscribed in the body, leading to diverse interpretations and redefinitions of being.

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surprise given the fact that both Butler and Tiptree, Jr. are renowned New Wave SF writers with an openly feminist agenda—see Hollinger (2003, 131) and Melzer (2006, 7). More specifically, Elyce Helford (1994) and Veronica Hollinger (1999) have successfully discussed and clearly proved the connection between the two protagonists' gender and their subjection to gender exploitation. As a result, and to avoid unnecessary overlaps with previous scholarship, this paper focuses more generally on the effects of trauma and biopower on the human and on the articulation of forms of resistance to it in the two short stories.

The relationship between human and Other dominates the discourses on both trauma and the posthuman. For the former, the Other represents a threat to the subject's internal equilibrium, potentially generating traumatic stress—one of the very few psychopathologies to result from an external stimulus. From a neurobiological perspective, it is believed that while "all experiences change the brain […], traumatic events disrupt homeostasis" (Perry and Pollard 1998, 45). From a philosophical perspective, following Levinas, Derrida claims that "being affected by the other is always a trauma, which is not simply wounding in the bad sense—which it is as well. It is something which affects me in my body, in my integrity" (Derrida 1997, 15; quoted in Winstone 2004, 149). Interestingly, Winstone further defines trauma as an event that suspends the terms "self" and "other" (27). From the perspective of posthumanity, human subjectivity and identity are transformed as a result of the encounter with the Other, of the assimilation of the Other within the self, leading to hybridization and the dismantling of the concept of the human, which, let it be said, may potentially be a traumatizing prospect for some—see Luckhurst (2014, 160). Indeed, as the quotation from Kelly Hurley mentioned earlier suggests, the discourses of trauma and the posthuman are congruent in that both focus on shatterings of existing structures of self, on the fragmentation of the self.

A similar shattering results from the subjection of the self to biopolitical regulations. In his seminal work *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault documents the shift of sovereign power towards biopower, a "technology of power centered on life" ([1976] 1978, 144) whereby the system exerts its control over all the biological processes with the purpose of achieving "the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (140). Biopower focuses on "the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life […] effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls*" (139; emphasis in the original) which aim at fostering the health and well-being of certain citizens so that they may live and be useful to the system—i.e., as human resources to produce, consume and reproduce—for longer. Meanwhile, those who are deemed superfluous are left to die through neglect or intention. Biopower, therefore, operates at the level of the body, which is constructed and inscribed by its exercise.

The body is also the locus of trauma and a key element for a certain branch within posthuman theory inaugurated by Katherine Hayles's shocked reaction to the celebration of disembodiment that characterizes much modern cybernetics (1999, 1). These three discourses speak, thus, of the critical importance of the physicality and materiality of bodies. Key cultural manifestations of the connection of trauma, biopower and the posthuman are the figures of the cyborg, the zombie and the surrogate, which undermine key dualisms of the Western philosophical tradition. In her seminal essay "A Cyborg Manifesto," Haraway famously introduces the concept of the cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" ([1985] 1991, 149) whose existence derives from the dissolution of three traditional boundaries: human vs. animal, organism vs. machine

and physical vs. non-physical (151-153). As for the zombie, this figure of fascination and horror represents the liminality between life and death; it is the epitome of the deprivation of freedom and agency and evokes our culture's deepest fears—see Lauro and Christie (2011). The figure of the surrogate, on its part, foregrounds reproductive technologies, recalling the appropriation of the (female) body and posthuman reproduction—see Squier (1995). Additionally, these posthuman tropes symbolically point to the ills of globalization, consumerism and late capitalism; they evoke the new conditions of traumatic enslavement under technoscience, offering some hope for ironic reformulation.

Where these theories diverge is precisely at the consequences that the aforementioned shatterings of the self are understood to have for the individual subject. In that sense, as cultural discourses, they may be read as the two sides of the same coin, as opposed but complementary: both trauma and posthuman theory attempt to conceptualize the fragmentation of the subject and of culture which began in the times of postmodernism; yet the fracture that trauma provokes is usually read as negative, and hence the self seeks re-integration, while the fragmentation and hybridization that result from the assimilation of the posthuman is potentially liberating, and the discourse of posthumanity rejoices at the opportunities that this shattering of structures may afford the individual subject. As I will contend, both "Bloodchild" and "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" foreground this tension: in both stories, posthuman embodiment entails an empowering act of boundary transgression that allows bodies to resist, if feebly, unequal power relations, and to overcome the shatterings that traumatic living conditions under a biopolitical regime produce.

3. The Alien Within: "Bloodchild"

Octavia Butler's short story, "Bloodchild," opens with the first-person narrator's foreboding reference to his "last night of childhood" ([1984] 2005, 3), as Gan awakes to the traumatic reality of his species' submission within the biopolitical regime of the so-called Preserve. The story is set in the near future, in a distant extrasolar planet where a group of human Terrans, who have escaped the threat of enslavement and death on Earth, have sought to take refuge. As the narrative progresses, we learn that after their early attempts to subdue the natives and colonize, the planet had been permanently thwarted by the host species—the intelligent but monstrous and physically superior Tlic—the Terrans were enslaved and exploited because they had something that the Tlic desperately needed: these giant insect-like beings depend upon warm-bloodied animals to survive as a species, and so, use male Terrans as surrogate "mothers" for the implantation of their eggs, which constitutes a serious threat to their lives.[2]

[2] As Patricia Melzer has aptly noticed, the figures of the pregnant male and the impregnating female create a reversal of familial sexual difference and prove the "natural" construction of gender categories to be a chimera. It is her contention that the short story invites readers to reconsider their understanding of the construction of

A few generations later, within the narrator's lifetime, the situation seems to have improved for some of the humans, who are allowed to lead a relatively peaceful, safe and independent life within the Preserve in exchange for their unresisting availability to act as incubators. Hence, in contrast to classical SF narratives of space conquest, humans in "Bloodchild" have had to make certain accommodations with the host species, thereby dramatically changing them not only as individuals and as a community but also, as I will attempt to prove, as a species.

To begin with, as this brief summary already suggests, life for the Terrans in "Bloodchild" is portrayed as extremely traumatic. On the one hand, although neither the implantation of the eggs nor the extraction of the grubs is supposed to be painful in optimal conditions, the procedure is extremely dangerous for the Terrans and can easily lead to a horrible death. Knowledge of this has deeply affected Qui (Gan's brother), who is traumatized by having witnessed as a child a man being eaten from the inside ([1984] 2005, 20). The night on which the story takes place, Gan is forced to assist T'Gatoi—the Tlic government official in charge of the Preserve and a family friend—during her in-vivo emergency intervention on the Terran Lomas to remove the grubs that have started to poison him, and will soon begin to eat him. The experience of witnessing what presumably awaits as T'Gatoi's chosen partner for implantation is extremely traumatic for the protagonist who, despite being convinced that "this was a good and necessary thing Tlic and Terran did together" (16), is profoundly shocked by the savagery of the visceral procedure (15-17): "Finally, I stood shaking, tears streaming down my face. I did not know why I was crying, but I could not stop. […] Every time I closed my eyes I saw red worms crawling over redder human flesh" (17). The experience is so utterly traumatic that he even considers taking his own life with his father's clandestine gun (24).

If the sacrifices Terrans have had to make in exchange for living at the Preserve appear excessive, they are assumed to be justified by the danger that lurks outside. As Gan explains, "I had lived outside with her [T'Gatoi], I had seen the desperate eagerness in the way some people looked at me. It was a little frightening to know that only she stood between us and that desperation that could so easily swallow us" (5). This makes reference to the fact that T'Gatoi and her political faction are the only ones that can protect the Terrans from "the hordes who did not understand why there was a Preserve—why any Terran could not be […] in some way made available to them" (5). A great number of desperate Tlic, it is implied, wished to return to earlier practices that included breaking up Terran families (5), "penning" a male and a female so that they reproduce and thus provide another generation of "big, warm-blooded animals" to act as incubators (9), and forced implantation of Tlic eggs, which led some Terrans to commit suicide or to kill N'Tlic—implanted Terrans—(12). Terrans thus live in a

gender and its interconnection with issues of power. As Melzer puts it, "Butler reminds us that the reproductive function of women does not produce 'natural' social structures, but that these structures are constructed by power configurations under patriarchy" (2006, 85).

climate of ongoing threat, a situation now widely recognized by medical professionals as potentially traumatizing. Proof of that is the publication in 2013 of a special issue of the APA affiliated journal *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* that focuses on so-called "Continuous Traumatic Stress" (CTS). The concept was originally developed in the 1980s by a group of mental health professionals working in apartheid-era South Africa (Stevens, Eagle, Kaminer and Higson-Smith 2013, 75). CTS constitutes a diagnostic tool to describe the psychological impact of living in conditions in which there is a realistic pervasive threat of danger (75).

To make life more bearable, Terrans have not only been placed under the supposed protection of a powerful political faction within the Preserve. They are also regularly fed sterile eggs, which have therapeutic properties, extend their lives and provide psychotropic pleasure. The relationship is, indeed, presented as symbiotic: "'The animals we once used began killing most of our eggs after implantation long before your ancestors arrived,' [T'Gatoi] said softly. 'You know these things, Gan. Because your people arrived, we are relearning what it means to be a healthy, thriving people. And your ancestors, fleeing from their homeland, from their own kind who would have killed or enslaved them—they survived because of us'" (Butler [1984] 2005, 25). Butler herself has made the point in an interview to Larry McCaffery that what she was writing about in the short story was, among other things, symbiosis (2010, 12). While this may well have been the writer's intention, there is undoubtedly a more sinister side to Tlic-Terran relations. This is precisely the point that was made by a number of early critics who found parallelisms with the practices of slavery in the US—see Kenan (2010, 30) and McCaffery (2010, 12). A decade after the publication of the short story, Elyce Helford, for instance, read the power relationship between the two species as a re-encoding of master-slave and human-animal relations (1994, 269). While there is evidence in the text to support such an analysis, it is my contention that the political regime that governs the lives of the Terrans within the Preserve may be more profitably understood as biopolitical.

At the Preserve, human life is shaped and determined by technologies of power that control the population and subjugate the body through their designation of ways of living and dying. The sovereign's right to "*foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death" (Foucault [1976] 1978, 138; emphasis in the original) that according to Foucault shapes the modern era of biopower is unequivocally evoked by the Tlics' attitude towards Terran families. Their power is exerted at the level of Terran life, since they too endeavor to "administer, optimize, and multiply [life], subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations" (137). Firearms, for instance, are strictly forbidden. In addition, the sterile eggs that the humans are regularly given, and which improve their health, in effect ensure their suitability as incubators and their ability to carry the eggs until they hatch, as T'Gatoi's concerned probing of Gan's flesh suggests (Butler [1984] 2005, 2). In the same way, the extension of life that the eggs provide also increases the likelihood that a human may be implanted more than once, as in the case of Gan's father (22). Finally, there is the policy of avoiding the use

of women for implantation as far as possible, so that they are left free to "bear their own young" (21). In contrast, those who refuse to accept the rules of the Preserve or attempt to rebel would presumably be expelled and left to the mercy of "impatient" or "desperate" Tlic (5)—that is, left to die.

The health of the Terran population within the Preserve is, therefore, the object of good Tlic governance, and their subjection to technologies of biopower maximizes the availability of their Terran bodies as breeding resources. Tlic biopolitical practices, therefore, inscribe and mark the human body and consciousness. Yet, importantly, in so doing these technologies dramatically alter the Terrans, who, to borrow the writer's own words, "survive as a species but not unchanged" (McCaffery 2010, 20). This alteration is both figurative and literal. From a humanist perspective, the Terrans' very humanity appears to have been somehow diminished: for one thing, they are no longer rationally self-determining and autonomously self-defining beings endowed with agency and freedom. To this I will return presently. On the other hand, after years of Tlic-Terran relations, Gan is the product of the inevitable contamination of the human by its inhuman Other—in this case, the alien—providing us with an image of the human being's posthuman condition. In other words, the distinctions between the human and the alien have started to become blurred as a result of the accommodation of the posthuman. This is not just a physical transformation—characterized by life extension and elimination of disease—but also, and more importantly, it is a transformation at the level of consciousness. After all, the story is in very specific ways about the effects of alien physical appropriation and invasion of human bodies.

This is not a new theme for Butler; as Gregory J. Hampton aptly puts it, "the central fact of Octavia Butler's fiction is an ambiguous and elaborate configuration and reconfiguration of the body, human and otherwise" (2010, xi). Indeed, Donna Haraway, who in her seminal essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" acknowledges her indebtedness to Octavia Butler (among other writers) as a "theorist for cyborgs" ([1985] 1991, 173), argues that "Butler has been consumed with an interrogation into the boundaries of what counts as human and into the limits of the concept" (226). In "Bloodchild," this preoccupation is negotiated through the evolution of Gan's attitude towards the idea of acting as surrogate "mother" for T'Gatoi's eggs—see footnote one. As mentioned above, his initial response after witnessing the gory process of grub removal is sheer horror. Interestingly, he refers initially to the procedure as "alien" (Butler [1984] 2005, 17). Yet, during an intense and emotionally-charged exchange with T'Gatoi, Gan finally willingly consents to bear her eggs, thus indicating that his subjectivity is increasingly distanced from the human as he overcomes the horror of bodily invasion and hybridization by the alien. Indeed, the figures of the parasite, the host and the symbiont, which as Maria Ferreira explains are present in much of Butler's fiction (2010, 401), constitute in "Bloodchild" a literal representation of the understanding and assimilation of otherness and the incorporation and negotiation of hybridity as decisive for the survival that Haraway's cyborg speaks of.

Importantly, by embracing the Other within, Gan also embraces the disruptive potential of posthumanity. First, his posthuman condition constitutes a further threat to the unified and independent humanist subject who is defined in opposition to the Other that he is not (the masculine pronoun is used advisedly here). Indeed, Haraway has claimed that Butler carries out in her fiction an interrogation of the "practices of claiming 'property in the self' as the ground of 'human' individuality and selfhood" ([1985] 1991), 226). On the other hand, by embracing the posthuman, Gan also succeeds in breaching to a certain extent the power of the Tlic, opening up cracks in T'Gatoi's seemingly superior position. For one thing, he gains a degree of control over his future: he can choose to shoot himself with his father's gun, shoot T'Gatoi, send her to implant her egg in his sister Xuan Hoa, or agree to bear her young. In addition, as Raffaela Baccolini has put it, "the intense exchange between Gan and T'Gatoi, shows negotiation as the first step of resistance" (2008, 302). First of all, he demands from the Tlic that she formally ask for his consent (Butler [1984] 2005, 24). Secondly, he convinces her to let him keep the forbidden firearm saying: "If we're not your animals, if these are adult things, accept the risk. There is risk, Gatoi, in dealing with a partner" (26), that is, dealing with an equal. Thus, by accommodating the posthuman, Gan proves that he is more than simply a victim, and in so doing he recovers a form of agency for himself and his species that allows him to overcome his earlier traumatic shock and to influence, to a certain extent, future Tlic-Terran interaction.

4. The Cyborg Without: "The Girl Who Was Plugged In"

James Tiptree, Jr.'s novella, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (1973), envisages a similarly dystopian and traumatic world—though in a more pessimistic manner—characterized by a biopolitical, late-capitalist regime. In it, despite a ban on advertising, aggressive megacorporations manipulate, and are in control of, every single aspect of human existence. This proto-cyberpunk story takes place ten minutes into the future of technoscientific innovation, where it is possible for a human mind to operate a flesh-and-bone, but brainless, body through "eccentric projection or sensory reference" (Tiptree, Jr. [1973] 2002, 551). The main protagonist is Philadelphia Burke, a grotesquely deformed girl of seventeen who, after a suicide attempt, is resuscitated by the megacorporation GTX and taught to remotely power and control a perfect genetically-engineered body named Delphi. Her assignment appears simple and exciting enough—to attend parties, go to fashionable places and meet other celebrities while consuming products in front of the cameras of the pervasive holographic broadcast and, thus, inspire the public to buy certain goods. In return, P. Burke is given Delphi's body, and with it access to a previously banned realm of experience and human contact. Against her corporate owners' interests and, conspicuously, against the design of her circuits, P. Burke's reincarnation also affords her

the opportunity to experience genuine love, which rather unsurprisingly leads to her death and to the recycling of the Delphi body to be remotely controlled by a new mind.

To begin with, as was the case with the Terrans in Butler's short story, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" suggests that life for P. Burke has been rather traumatic. On the one hand, the story's commercialized technoscientific society of the near future is characterized by a disproportionate cult of the body within the context of the ubiquitous, consumer-driven culture of the spectacle. The story opens with a crowd of people who are mooning over three young "gods" (546-547). Although neither we nor P. Burke know at this point, these dreamy, beautiful figures that the protagonist blindly adores and idolizes are not what we might call "normal" humans, but presumably custom-made, brainless "waldos," "grown" (551) to appear in certain places and within the field of vision of a "holocam" while using certain products. These products, corporate strategy presumes, will be bought by their zombie-like fans in the hope of being like their idols, becoming them, because "what gods have, mortals desire" (557). Attaining this ideal is, nevertheless, always one product away, since new necessities are constantly being created: "Years, the industry sweated years to achieve an almost invisible enzymatic filter. So one day a couple of pop-gods show up wearing nose-filters like big purple bats. By the end of the week the world market is screaming for purple bats [...] Multiply that by a million consumer industries and you can see why it's economic to have a few controllable goods" (557). At the same time, the system sustains itself by making people painfully aware of the unbridgeable gap that exists between themselves and these godlike beings, between their own mortal and worthless bodies and the sheer perfection of the disguised "waldos." Awareness of this distance, while painful for most, is deeply traumatic for those who stand at the margins of society, such as the deformed P. Burke, who is described by the narrator as "the ugly of the world" (547), with "body-parts you'd pay not to see" (548).

As a result of her monstrousness, the protagonist has always been barred from the social network; because of her grotesque form, she is excluded from the realm of the human, shunned and despised by others.[3] The only response that her body elicits is disgust, which the narrator seizes every opportunity to emphasize. In short, P. Burke is the monstrous abject body relegated to beyond what generally constitutes the human, the epitome of which in Tiptree, Jr.'s vision is ironically represented by the godlike but "inhuman" beings that everyone loves and admires (546). It is precisely after watching them as they walk out of a shop—significantly called "Body East" (546)—that P. Burke decides to commit suicide, an act which incidentally generates only a "tepid" response from bystanders (548). It is worth adding that before her re-embodiment in Delphi, the only form of physical contact that P. Burke has known was an extremely violent and

[3] Veronica Hollinger was the first to draw attention to the fact that P. Burke's exclusion from the realm of the human is closely connected to the fact that she fails to fulfill the requirements of what conventionally constitutes the feminine, being as she is "about as far as you can get from the concept *girl*" (1999, 31; emphasis in the original).

traumatizing gang rape: "[F]or her, sex is a four-letter word spelled P-A-I-N. She isn't quite a virgin. You don't want the details; she'd been about twelve and the freak-lovers were bombed blind. When they came down they threw her out with a small hole in her anatomy and a mortal one elsewhere" (556).

Interest in P. Burke only arises after her suicide attempt: it turns out that the GTX computers have determined that she meets certain criteria, so she receives a visit from an executive who offers her the aforementioned arrangement (548). From then on, her life is to be determined by biopolitical technologies of power that are market-oriented and seek to conserve life through its regulating in order to guarantee that the individual follows patterns of consumption that, beyond affecting him/her individually, impact society as a whole. First of all, biopower, in conjunction with technology, is inscribed onto P. Burke's body by disposing of it and replacing it with a new one—the flawless shell that is Delphi. As the locus of her brain, however, P. Burke's body needs to be kept alive at all cost. A crisis soon arises when he, blissfully engrossed in the joy of "finding herself a [...] star girl" (559), stops eating or sleeping, and "they can't keep her out of the body-cabinet to get her blood moving, there are necroses under her grisly sit-down" (558). Therefore, guarded by an army of doctors, nurses and engineers, she gets periodic medical and technical exams and eventually ends up wired to life-supporting medical equipment, the better to fulfill the economic aspirations of her corporate owners.

It is worth adding that, once again, the deal offered to P. Burke, which she willingly accepts, might appear on the surface to be beneficial for both parties, that is, symbiotic. This is partly the contention of Melisa Stevenson, who cogently argues that, embodied in Delphi, P. Burke has the chance to connect with other people in a way that she could never have had through her own body (2007, 95-100). Yet, as was the case with the Terrans and the Tlic in "Bloodchild," the relationship between P. Burke and the megacorporation GTX is undoubtedly unequal in terms of power within the biopolitical regime of late capitalism that the story depicts, and all the risks are assumed by only one of the parties. Proof of this is the fact that the executives at GTX do not hesitate to punish her physically when she starts acting against the economic interests of her corporate owners, who could easily turn her (Delphi) off and let her (P. Burke) die (Tiptree, Jr. [1973] 2002, 569-572), but restrain themselves to avoid the risk of accidentally killing the Delphi body. In addition, it is made clear in the text that P. Burke had not understood when she consented to work as a "remote" that "the bargain she made was forever" (565), and that there are several veiled threats to what could happen to P. Burke if she stops being profitable or docile (557). In short, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" is to a great extent about corporate use of biopower in conjunction with technology as a form of appropriation and subjugation of the body for economic gain, which in Tiptree, Jr.'s vision is literal rather than symbolic.

The most evident result of the entanglement between biopower and technology in P. Burke's body is that humanity seems to be drained out of her. One aspect of this is that it leads to the shattering of the subject, which is literally split into two separate

and separated entities, body and mind. This fragmentation and hierarchization affords several readings: on the one hand, the story is critical of the traditional humanist emphasis on reason being superior to matter whereby the body is decentered and understood as subjugated to the preeminence of the mind. In the same vein, P. Burke's fragmentation seems to critically evoke the strand of posthumanism which, as Hayles explains, expands the prerogatives of humanism in that it views the body as disposable, and which is epitomized by Hans Moravec's dream of downloading human consciousness into a computer and reaching immortality (Hayles 1999, 287).[4] On the other hand, the P. Burke-Delphi "being" may be more profitably read through Haraway's metaphor of the cyborg. Tiptree, Jr., let it be said, was another "theorist for cyborgs" that inspired Haraway's theory ([1985] 1991, 173).

Indeed, as a creature of science fiction, P. Burke-Delphi is shown to be literally a hybrid of organism and machine that disrupts the traditional boundary between the physical and the non-physical: "eighty-nine pounds of tender girl flesh and blood with a few metallic components" that has "her brain in an unusual place. A simple real-time on-line system with plenty of bit-rate" (Tiptree, Jr. [1973] 2002, 555).[5] More importantly, however, in contrast to the techno-powerful, hyper-masculine traditional cyborgs of classic SF, Tiptree, Jr.'s representation of the cyborg—like Butler's depiction of the incorporation of the alien Other—is potentially liberating in its subversion of existing binary hierarchies: P. Burke-Delphi—a being both organic and machinic, both physical and non-physical—embodies a state of consciousness that undermines and blurs the boundaries of the human, threatening the self-containment of the humanist subject and disrupting an understanding of the body as the receptacle and necessary limit of human essence. In other words, the cyborg in "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" upsets what Elaine Graham calls humanity's "ontological hygiene" (2002, 20). Melisa Stevenson has remarked that P. Burke-Delphi is the necessary splice of which Katherine Hayles speaks, "the interaction between flesh and technology that renders each more than they were before" (Stevenson 2007, 98-99).

The liberating potential of the liminal nature of P. Burke-Delphi is, nevertheless, undermined by her incontestably limited agency, which renders the figure of the cyborg in the novella as neither utopian nor celebratory, as Haraway would have it. After all, the protagonist's freedom is curtailed by GTX's ownership of Delphi and the company's

[4] As Hayles explains, the roboticist Hans Moravec argued that human identity is essentially an information pattern which, in his view, can be demonstrated by downloading human consciousness into a computer (199, xii). This is also the kind of fantasy found in classical cyberpunk projects.

[5] It is worth acknowledging that, as a number of critics have rightly emphasized, the P. Burke-Delphi being is not merely a cyborg, but a *gendered* cyborg. In this light, both her disempowerment in the context of a late capitalist biopolitical regime and her exploitation as a marketing tool whose effectiveness relies on her sexual appeal acquire even darker undertones. It might well have been the intention of the author to write an anti-utopian cautionary account of the effects of technoscience on the bodies of women. Indeed, Tiptree, Jr.'s writing is generally characterized by a pessimistic approach to gender and sexuality. As Hollinger aptly notes, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" constitutes a "politicization of gender" (1999, 32) in that it "examines the pressures on women to replicate the ideal of femininity" (29), which is nothing but a "performance" (32).

contractual biopolitical rule over P. Burke. P. Burke-Delphi is now a "controllable good" (Tiptree, Jr. [1973] 2002, 557), a "corporate asset" (568), compelled to do as she is told. Critics such as Scott Bukatman (1993, 316) and Heather J. Hicks (1996, 75) have similarly foregrounded the degree to which P. Burke renounces agency in exchange for the Delphi body, rendering herself a "pathetic and even stupid" figure (Bukatman 1993, 319). However, her re-embodiment in Delphi reshapes P. Burke's consciousness, her identity, and it endows her with a new sense of power that inspires her to defy GTX. First, she refuses to use products that she considers unsafe and, despite much anger and outrage from GTX executives, "the offending products vanish" (Tiptree, Jr. [1973] 2002, 562). Secondly, disregarding her corporate owners' forceful insistence (568), she resolutely refuses to break off with her beloved Paul and tries to run away with him to escape her guardians and marketing duties (571). Most notably, in defiance of the cybernetic rules that make possible and govern her re-embodiment, she succeeds in merging with Delphi, so strong is her desire and determination to "fuse with Delphi […] *To become Delphi*" (566; emphasis in the original). Proof of this is the fact that she manages to utter words while the connection between P. Burke's brain and the Delphi body is turned off ([1973] 2002, 560) and, like an undead zombie, her consciousness lives on in Delphi for a few hours after the death of P. Burke's body (575-576). Thus, despite the tragic ending, P. Burke-Delphi succeeds in pushing the megacorporation into a corner and regaining a degree of agency thanks to her newly-acquired cyborg identity.

5. Conclusion: Towards a Posthuman Agency

As I hope my analysis has proved, "Bloodchild" and "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" both feature posthuman embodiment—in, respectively, the figures of the surrogate and the cyborg/zombie—as a form of boundary shattering that gives the two protagonists the chance, albeit a slim one, to resist bodily appropriation, undermine unequal power relations and prevail over traumatic living conditions that emerge from biopolitical technologies of self. Both Gan and P. Burke-Delphi are complex and contradictory characters whose resulting identities and bodies are inseparable from their encounters with trauma, biopower and the posthuman. Furthermore, despite their seemingly restricted agency, both manage to find a space to direct their efforts towards their own goals: on the one hand, while the Tlic in "Bloodchild" are, no doubt, going to continue to hold a position of dominance, Gan has succeeded in forcing T'Gatoi to acknowledge the subordinated position of the Terrans and the traumatic and exploitative nature of the biopolitical arrangement in the Preserve. On a more pessimistic note, in "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" P. Burke's reward for standing up for herself is her own death and the recycling of the Delphi body, and yet, through the sheer force of her willpower, she succeeds in fusing with Delphi for a few hours, in defiance not only of GTX policy but also of cybernetic laws, thereby becoming "the greatest cybersystem" to have ever existed (Tiptree, Jr. [1973] 2002, 576).

Naomi Jacobs makes the valid point that much of the fascinating and repelling force of classic dystopia results from its depiction of a world where there is no agency (2003, 92). By representing the individual as totally deprived of the right to choose and act upon his or her choices, classic dystopian fictions are set against, and thus reinforce, the humanist premise that self-determination, individuality and freedom are essential features of a truly human life and essence (92-93; see also Hayles 1999, 286). Yet, such a premise is nothing but a utopian, though fatal, fantasy that whitewashes over the fact that if those are indeed the features that separate the human from his inhuman Others, this would exclude all marginalized collectives—in terms of gender, race, sexuality, class, religion, etc.—from humanity, as was in fact literally the case for a long time and may still be in a certain sense.

Perhaps sensing this—Octavia Butler being an African-American, and both she and James Tiptree, Jr. being women writers in the traditionally masculine world of SF—it comes as no surprise that the two might have felt an impulse to create protagonists who, against all odds, succeed in finding gaps in the system within which to exert their will. However, this is not the kind of individual agency within which the autonomous, unified humanist subject has traditionally been defined. Rather, it is a posthuman form of agency that is based on resistance, on indirection, on relativity and multiplicity, and which emerges from the embracing of hybridity, of the trace of the inhuman within the self. In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault famously claimed that "where there is power, there is resistance" ([1976] 1978, 95). In his view, the world is not divided into those who have the power and those who lack it, but he rather proposes that "points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network" (95), and everyone attempts to affect others while everyone resists the effects of these others to the best of their ability. In a similar vein, "Bloodchild" and "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" show both the humanist association of humanity and freedom and the unidirectional nature of the dystopic understanding of power and agency to be chimeras. The traumatizing forces that shape life in times of biopower challenge the notion of the self-determining and autonomous self, while the posthuman and the technology of living that it endows raise hopes of resistance.

To conclude, the two stories can be said to evoke the current globalized and potentially traumatizing biopolitical regime of western neoliberal capitalism, whereby individuals, just like the protagonists, are valuable to the system only as long as we are able to produce, consume and reproduce (physically and culturally speaking), and where we have a limited agency. Our only hope seems to be to strive for a posthuman form of agency. Such a reading confirms the relatively recent premise that SF is a tool not only to speculate about the future but also to explain the present. Furthermore, as the New Wave in general, and the two stories analyzed here in particular, demonstrate, SF is a mode of cultural production that has the potential to resist Western power structures and traditional representations of identity and subjectivity. These dystopic but hopeful posthuman futures point to our dystopic but hopeful posthuman present under the sign of trauma and biopower.

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María Ferrández San Miguel is a lecturer at the Centro Universitario de la Defensa (AGM) ~ University of Zaragoza. She has also been an academic visitor at the University of Northampton (2014) and Michigan State University (2016). María's main research interests lie in contemporary US fiction, feminist criticism and ethics, with a special focus on issues of trauma, gender and posthumanity in speculative fiction by women writers.

Address: Área de Inglés, Centro Universitario de la Defensa (AGM) ~ Universidad de Zaragoza. Carretera de Huesca, s/n. 50090, Zaragoza, Spain. Tel.: +34 976739638; ext. 6738.

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Nostalgia and the Sublime in Cormac McCarthy's *The Border Trilogy*

Mahshid Younesi and Hossein Pirnajmuddin
University of Isfahan, Iran
Mahshid.younesi@fgn.ui.ac.ir, pirnajmuddin@fgn.ui.ac.ir

This article discusses the way Cormac McCarthy (1933-) represents the "natural sublime" in *The Border Trilogy* (1992-1998), where the notion is by and large distinguished as a kind of nostalgic experience on the part of characters insofar as the writer foregrounds the unattainable "natural sublimity" of the Wild West as well as its charming pastoral scenes. Drawing on theories of the sublime, particularly those of Edmund Burke (1757), an attempt is made to shed light on the modality of the merging of the sublime with an inconsolable sense of pastoral loss. Foregrounding the characters' desire to live a bucolic life, McCarthy dramatizes the very process of experiencing the sublime on their part. The modality of the protagonists' response to this experience, it is argued, becomes an index of character. The essay also reveals the importance of style in representing the "natural sublime" in these novels, arguing that stylistically their rendering of the "natural sublime" approaches what could be called the "artistic sublime." In this sense, the artistic representation of the object is no longer distinguished from the nature of the object in one's sensation. The sublime, therefore, grounds consciousness in the subject, making that subject believe that sublimity is concerned with the way one apprehends the world or, simply put, the quality of a person's experience. In *The Border Trilogy*, the writer foregrounds the "artistic sublime" by focusing on the loss of the pastoral vision. In this way, McCarthy presents wilderness as the ideal pastoral space of nature.

Keywords: Cormac McCarthy; *The Border Trilogy*; pastoral nostalgia; the "natural sublime"; the frontier; the Wild West

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Nostalgia y sublimidad en *The Border Trilogy* ["*Trilogía de la Frontera*"], de Cormac McCarthy

En este trabajo se estudia la manera en la que Cormac McCarthy (1933-) representa la "sublimidad natural" en *The Border Trilogy* ["Trilogía de la Frontera"] [(1992-1998), donde esta noción se establece a partir de la experiencia nostálgica de los personajes, en tanto en cuanto el autor sitúa en primer plano la inalcanzable "sublimidad natural" del salvaje Oeste, así como sus fascinantes escenas pastoriles. La revisión de algunas teorías de lo sublime, en particular las de Edmund Burke (1757), permitirá entender cómo la sublimidad se combina con un sentido inconsolable de pérdida de lo pastoril. McCarthy recrea en primer plano el deseo de los personajes de una vida bucólica y, de este modo, escenifica su propio proceso de experimentación de lo sublime. El modo en que los protagonistas de estos relatos responden a esta experiencia es entendido en el artículo como un índice de caracterización. El artículo desvela también la importancia del estilo en la representación de la "sublimidad natural" y propone que la proyección estilística de esta deviene en "sublimidad artística." Así, la representación artística del objeto no es percibida sensorialmente de forma distinta a su naturaleza. Lo sublime instala la consciencia en el sujeto hasta el punto de hacerle creer que la sublimidad es un modo de aprehender el mundo o, de manera más sencilla, es una cualidad experiencial de la persona. En *The Border Trilogy*, McCarthy ha llevado al primer plano la "sublimidad artística" centrándose en la pérdida de lo pastoril; de este modo, el autor representa la naturaleza salvaje como el espacio natural ideal.

Palabras clave: Cormac McCarthy; *The Border Trilogy* ["*Trilogía de la Frontera*"]; nostalgia de lo pastoril; "sublimidad natural"; la frontera; el salvaje Oeste

1. Introduction

As an American novelist, Cormac McCarthy (1933-) creates fictional characters emblematic of American life in the latter half of the twentieth century. As Harold Bloom notes, if there is "a pragmatic tradition of the American sublime," then, "Cormac McCarthy's fictions are its culmination" (2009, 7). McCarthy, as Willard P. Greenwood points out, is interested in "the mythology of the American West" (2009, 8) or, in simpler terms, "the idea of the west as it exists in American culture" (8) for he believes that a writer should underscore "the soul of the culture" (11). More importantly, McCarthy's "sublime prose style" echoes that of Faulkner" (Bloom 2009, 16) and he might be perceived as "a distinctly regionalist writer" (Hage 2010, 3).

Structurally, McCarthy's *The Border Trilogy—All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994) and *Cities of the Plain* (1998)—offers "conventional patterns of opposition" that endanger the "stability" of its protagonists' world to the extent that they all seem like "a thing wholly alien in that landscape. Something from an older time" (Lagayette 2013, 81-82). In this sense, rather than placating the desire for homecoming or embodiment on the part of the protagonists, the landscape only intensifies the desire for an imaginary American homeland (Dorson 2016, 130). In other words, Dorson maintains, the idea of an American homeland conveys an ordered and safe space that could be compared to the memory of a childhood home which is both fleeting and irretrievable. To be more precise, this is the "loss of the pastoral vision of harmony between man and nature" that constitutes the subject of the narrator's allegories that double back on themselves hinting at the mystic, sublime and uncanny (Guillemin 2001, 95). As such, melancholia and allegory "work in sync" in *The Border Trilogy* because both are concerned with what is "absent, lost, or part of the past" that can be described indirectly to the reader in the form of reports, tales or personal recollections (25).

The sublime is often described as something great, infinite, void and beyond representation. What is more, the sublime is associated with experiencing the overwhelming magnitudes of space and time that result in infinite abstraction or "moments of mute encounter with all that exceeds our comprehension" (Morely 2010, 12). According to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the sublime is defined as an unbridgeable gulf between an idea and its representation ([1790] 1952, 234). However, Edmund Burke (1729-1797), as an advocate of the "natural sublime," holds the view that the ideas of pain, danger and terror are all conducive to the sublime experience insofar as they create a strong impression of horror on the mind of the perceiver ([1757] 1990, 20). As Umberto Eco avers, the Burkean sublime concerns pain, terror and privation; that is, the sublime "comes into being with the unleashing of passions like terror, [...] flourishes in obscurity, [...] calls up ideas of power, and of that form of privation exemplified by emptiness, solitude and silence" (2004, 290). What is more, the sublime, Burke maintains, is associated with "obscurity, power, vastness, magnificence, difficulty, suddenness, and privation" (Irlan 2006, 521). In this sense, Burke's argument concerning the sublime is for the most part secular,

maintaining that "our knowledge of the world is derived entirely from the evidence of the senses" (Shaw 2006, 49); hence, what we conceive of is inspired by what we see, taste, touch and smell.

The "natural sublime" became important in the eighteenth century when it was applied to descriptions of those aspects of nature that "instill awe and wonder such as mountains, avalanches, waterfalls, stormy seas or the infinite vault of the starry sky" (Morely 2010, 12). Human mind, as Joseph Addison puts it, experiences a "feeling of bafflement," at the view of "a vast, uncultivated desert, of huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanse of waters," for it "naturally hates everything that looks like a restraint upon it and is apt to fancy itself under a sort of confinement, when the sight is pent up in a narrow compass" ([1712] 1965, 142).

The "natural sublime," as Shaw states, "regards sublimity as a quality inherent in the external world" (2006, 28). Thus, according to the first-century Greek treatise *On the Sublime*, attributed to Dionysius Longinus, it is nature that "seeds the idea of greatness in man, and that inclines us to admire the grandeur of the natural environment" (quoted by Shaw 2006, 28). Drawing on Lockean terminology, while "the rhetorical sublime entails a relation between words and ideas," the "natural sublime" "involves the relation between sensations and ideas" (Shaw 2006, 11). John Dennis asserts in *The Advancement and Reformation of Poetry*, however, that "nature itself could not be perceived as sublime without the operation of mental processes"; in other words, you have to "take the cause and the effects together" and, in so doing, "you have the sublime" (Dennis [1701] 2005, 46; quoted in Shaw 2006, 31). The "natural sublime," as conceived by John Dennis and Joseph Addison, therefore "offers ironic testimony to the triumph of the rational over the real" (Shaw 2006, 38). What is more, Burke argues that the "natural sublime" is associated with "the passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*" ([1757] 1990, 53; emphasis in the original). He further adds that there follows "[*a*]*stonishment*; and astonishment is the state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror" (53; emphasis in the original). As Kant observes, we cannot present to ourselves "an account of an experience that is in any way coherent" or we cannot encompass it by thinking, so it remains "indiscernible or unnamable, undecidable, indeterminate and unrepresentable" (Kant [1790] 2002, 16; quoted in Morely 2010, 160). Considering the point that nature, for Kant, is "the source of effect," the sublime, then, is both interpreted and expressed in "human experience" (Kant [1790] 2002, 129; quoted in Morgan 2014, 7).

In other words, the sublime "may be sure to appear in its form to be contrapurposive for our power of judgment, unsuitable for our faculty of presentation, and as it were doing violence to our imagination, but is nevertheless judged all the more sublime for that," Kant asserts ([1790] 1952, 5:245; quoted in Shaw 2006, 129). Sublimity, as Kant himself points out, is not inherent in such natural phenomena as "volcanoes," "hurricanes," "the boundless ocean set into a rage" or "a lofty waterfall on a mighty

river"; rather, we "call" them sublime "because they elevate the strength of our soul above its usual level, and allow us to discover within ourselves a capacity for resistance of quite another kind, which gives us the courage to measure ourselves against the apparent all-powerfulness of nature" ([1790] 1952, 5:261; quoted in Culler 2005, 144).

When astonished "at the vastness of a natural object," in experiencing the "natural sublime" the perceiving subject experiences "a consciousness of the vastness of the soul" (Christensen 1978, 11) that might be tantamount to taking part in both the vastness and boundlessness of the natural environs. Given that we cannot fully understand "what is communicated in the sublime," feeling it "confirms in us the unlimited ability in our own nature." Put differently, the subject's own inability, according to Kant, "uncovers in him the consciousness of an unlimited ability which is also his, and that the mind can judge this ability aesthetically only by that inability" ([1790] 1952, 5:259; quoted in Hurh 2015, 14-15). As such, sublimity, for Kant, can only be found in the mind because "what is properly sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form, but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though no presentation adequate to them is possible, are provoked and called to mind precisely by this inadequacy, which does allow of sensible presentation" (5:245). It is important to note that the delight in our supersensible faculties can be promoted both by the magnitude and power of the object which Kant describes separately under such headings as the "mathematical sublime" and the "dynamical sublime" (Hoffmann 2011, 6).

In experiencing the "mathematical sublime," Kant considers the imagination to be "overwhelmed by spatial or temporal magnitude"; in other words, "when faced […] with a seemingly endless sequence of sensible intuitions," the imagination, is eventually, "overcome by the impossibility of ever accounting for the sequence in its entirety" (Shaw 2006, 81). The "dynamical sublime," on the other hand, is characterized by "astonishment that borders upon terror" or by a kind of "holy awe" coupled with "dread" or "fear" in the face of natural forces of any kind (Kant [1790] 1952, 5:269). But Kantian sublimity, according to Ngai, limits the concept of the sublime to "rude nature and explicitly bars it from being applied to products of art" (2005, 265). As Ngai further asserts, sublimity, for Kant, applies only to "a quality or state of the subject's mind, and not to the object that excites that state of mind" (265). In Kant's theory, therefore, the sublime is not concerned with "the object of great magnitude or power that awes the self," but rather the self's "inspiring feeling of being able to transcend the deficiencies of its own imagination through the faculty of reason" (Ngai 2005, 266).

The novels constituting McCarthy's *The Border Trilogy—All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994) and *Cities of the Plain* (1998)—abound in representations of nature, and, generally speaking, McCarthy has a penchant for describing the sublime sceneries of the Wild West. In Nicholas Monk's view, McCarthy's protagonists tend to cross and re-cross "a highly porous boundary which fails to form a meaningful interruption to the contiguous grandeur of the landscape of the southwest" in that McCarthy's south

is both a mythic and a symbolic south (2013, 122). The result, in *The Border Trilogy*, is a "third space" or a zone between the United States and Mexico that is not clearly delimited. The uncanniness or sublimity, therefore, is marked when protagonists seek understanding but more often they are left in a kind of "moral and intellectual swamp, unable to comprehend or to adequately articulate the nature of their condition or circumstance" (Link 2013, 158). What follows in this paper aims to shed light on the very notion of the sublime so that we can elaborate on what is termed "the natural sublime" in these novels.

2. The "Natural Sublime" in *The Border Trilogy*

In the frontier myth, the American wilderness is known as a "place designated to be always wild" (Ross 2006, 2). Notably, Americans tend to tout the wild aspects of nature because, as Charles Sanford writes, "the special grandeur of America is expressed by the awesome aspects of nature: by tempests, towering mountains, craggy precipices, thundering waterfalls" (Sanford 1957, 436; quoted in Doak 2002, 13). American landscape, then, foregrounds "the purity of the wilderness uncorrupted by man's artificial constructions" (Nash 1963, 4).

The Southwest is thus a land that affects the mind far beyond the perspectives of individual life (Kirk 1973, 4). As Gail Caldwell points out, McCarthy's *Trilogy* contains "a near-mystical regard for the natural world" (Caldwell 2005, D6; quoted in Hage 2010, 117). Put differently, one finds that there is a tension between the seemingly materialistic view of nature informing the novels, and "the mystical shimmer that radiates through McCarthy's natural world in ways reminiscent of Edmund Burke's sublime" (Link 2013, 154). In Malcolm Jones's view, McCarthy gives priority to "the natural world" insofar as "the fatalistic harshness of the desert fits his temperament like handmade boots" (Jones 1992, 68; quoted in Hage 2010, 117). In other words, the idea of the Wild West is almost always present in *The Border Trilogy* for it might be regarded as an ideal that McCarthy clings to at all costs. Tim Poland asserts that McCarthy employs this wild landscape as "an ancillary character" for

> [i]n much western literature, the usual relationship between character and landscape is inverted. Rather than a landscape that exists as setting for human action and is imprinted with human qualities, the landscape in much western writing functions more like a character in itself and imprints on the human characters its own qualities. (Poland 1996, 197; quoted in O'Sullivan 2014, 159)

On closer inspection, nature in McCarthy's *Trilogy* might be regarded as "an invasive force itself" (Hage 2010, 117). As a driving force, nature, for McCarthy, acts like both "an omniscient" and a "lurking" character that is always "resistant to order" (124-125) and implicitly foregrounds nature's might. Moreover, animals often have an elevated

position in McCarthy's fiction. As an example of the "natural sublime," animals in McCarthy's *Trilogy* represent "a link to an older, natural order and a vanishing—or vanished—way of life" (Hage 2010, 36). Therefore, wilderness, Patricia Ross suggests, is a place where the wild animal is "aware of what a man will do to him" (2006, 35). In this respect, McCarthy's "overarching tendency is to elevate animals to positions of great significance," to a sublime status (Hage 2010, 36). Interestingly, Burke discussed the description of certain animals with regard to the notion of the sublime. This is what he says of the horse:

> In the light of a useful beast, fit for the plough, the road, the draft, in every social useful light the Horse has nothing of the sublime; but is it thus that we are affected with him, *whose neck is Cloathed with thunder, the glory of whose nostrils is terrible, who swalloweth the ground with Fierceness and rage* [...] In this description the useful character of the horse entirely disappears, and the terrible and sublime blaze out together. ([1757] 1990, 83; emphasis in the original)

Horses, of course, figure frequently in McCarthy's fiction, especially in *The Border Trilogy*. The following dialogue between Cole and the old man might be regarded as a case in point:

> You'll see things on the desert at night that you can't understand. Your horse will see things. He'll see things that will spook him of course but then he'll see things that don't spook him but still you know he seen something.
>
> What sort of things?
>
> I don't know
>
> You mean like ghosts or somethin?
>
> No. I don't know what. You just know he sees em. They're out there.
>
> Not just some class of varmint?
>
> No.
>
> Not something that will booger him?
>
> No. it's more like somethin he knows about but you don't.
>
> But you don't! Yes. (McCarthy 1998, 97)

As Robert Clewis asserts, "certain animals, insofar as they are viewed in light of the function of their parts or their place in the ecosystem, can elicit only a mixed judgement of the sublime" (2009, 120); while it does not mean that "these same animals, viewed in another way, could not elicit a free judgment of the sublime as well" (120). In *The Crossing*, for instance, McCarthy elevates the position of a pregnant she-wolf as a being of "great order" because "it knows what men do not" (McCarthy 1994, 35).

McCarthy employs the "natural sublime" in *The Border Trilogy* by juxtaposing the sublime state, dedicated to both animals and the Wild West, with the protagonists'

limited ability to comprehend this external grandeur despite their persistent nostalgia for the Old West. Thus, the novels' protagonists tend to "reconcile their desire for an idealistic pastoral lifestyle with the reality that naturalistic forces are arrayed against them, making that dream unattainable" (Cameron 2011, 6). In other words, McCarthy's fiction marks "the datedness of the traditional pastoral cosmology at the same time as it keeps invoking it" (Guillemin 2001, 108). Considering the restorative nostalgia that this virgin land fosters, there is always a desire for the authentic experience of nature that gives the virgin land myth its emotional force (Dorson 2016, 136). Nevertheless, feelings of inauthenticity in McCarthy's protagonists tend to deepen, not because the myth offers them only symbolic experiences, but because it always leaves them gasping for more.

All the Pretty Horses (1992), the first novel in the trilogy, is set in west Texas in 1948. The novel tells of John Grady Cole, a sixteen-year-old cowboy, who tries to adapt himself to the changing social circumstances of the American West. Cole grows up on his grandfather's ranch. Soon after the death of his grandfather the family ranch is sold and, as a result, he is left bereft of his future. So, Cole and his best friend, Lacey Rawlins, decide to steal away from their hometown to Mexico on horseback.

All the Pretty Horses, Hage maintains, wraps the reader up in "Cole's journey from innocence to experience," while all the time intimating that "there is no moral, lesson, or even redemption" (2010, 23) in that it tells the reader nothing about "the way the world was or was becoming" (McCarthy 1992, 17). Here, the sublime finds its most evident manifestations in the spectacle of a gray, "darkening landscape" where there is "no sun nor any paler place to the sky where sun might be" (175), for, as Burke puts it, "darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light" ([1757] 1990, 63). In this desolate, dark desert, Cole watches how "stars trace the arc of the hemisphere and die in the darkness at the edge of the world" (McCarthy 1992, 214). This ever-present darkness is associated with "pain" or "terror" insofar as the blackness of the desert makes it difficult, for both Cole and Rawlins, to know where they are going. Cole and Rawlins' relationship with nature would seem to be the strongest and, at the same time, the most important to the novel; they are always coming up "out of the river breaks riding slowly side by side along the dusty road and onto a high plateau where they could see out over the country to the south, rolling country covered with grass and wild daisies" (31). In this connection, it is important to note, however, that McCarthy seems to develop a great interest towards the highest degree of the sublime because many scenes in the novel are actually set at night. The terrific "natural sublime" therefore is experienced by both Cole and Rawlins at night when they lay out on their blankets and look out:

> [W]here the quartermoon lay cocked over the heel of the mountains. In that false blue dawn the Pleiades seemed to be rising up into the darkness above the world dragging all the stars away, the great Cassiopeia all rising up through the phosphorous dark like a sea-net. (50)

This "total darkness" is considered a cause of the sublime for characters who, to use Burke's description, do not know in what degree of safety they stand (Burke [1757] 1990, 130) for they look "as wild and strange as the country they were in" (McCarthy 1992, 52). While staying in this wilderness as a last resort, nightfall finds Cole and Rawlins and at that moment they hear what they had not heard before, "three long howls to the southwest and all afterwards a silence" (50). As Burke maintains, the "power in sounds," produces "a sort of surprise" or tension that can be brought "to the verge of pain" because when "the cause has ceased, the organs of hearing […] continue to vibrate in that manner for some time longer; this is an additional help to the greatness of the effect" ([1757] 1990, 126). Aptly, hearing in this novel figures significantly; as Barbara Claire Freeman observes, "hearing may entail entanglement in a way that seeing does not" (1995, 30). The image of night, thus, for McCarthy is considered a source of the sublime in that it is, in effect, the combination of "all general privations," enumerated by Burke, "Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude and Silence" ([1757] 1990, 65). In other words, Cole and Rawlins experience nothing but the horror and amazement that serve as the ruling principles of the sublime feeling. And of course, this silence, as a sign of "a higher meaning," is "inaccessible to ordinary minds, and beyond the reach of words" (Cole and Swartz 1994, 151).

Although this wilderness, Mario Praz ([1930] 1966, 18) and Andrea Battistini (1981, 198) claim, presents itself as unusual, wild and desolate, it appears to the observer as a "lonely," "melancholic" land (quoted in Scaramellini 1996, 51). The following passage from the novel illustrates the point. It describes the way Cole

> dreamt of horses in a field on a high plain where the spring rains had brought up the grass and the wild-flowers out of the ground and the flowers ran all blue and yellow far as the eye could see and […] in the dream he was among the horses running and in the dream he himself could run with the horses and they coursed the young mares and fillies over the plain where their rich bay and their rich chestnut colors shone in the sun and the young colts ran with their dams and trampled down the flowers in a haze of pollen that hung in the sun like powdered gold and they ran he and the horses out along the high mesas where the ground resounded under their running hooves and they flowed and changed and ran and their manes and tails blew off of them like spume and there was nothing else at all in that high world and they moved all of them in a resonance that was like a music among them and they were none of them afraid horse nor colt nor mare and they ran in that resonance which is the world itself and which cannot be spoken but only praised. (McCarthy 1992, 135)

In this magnificent sentence, McCarthy reminds us of the natural uniqueness of the Southwest. He emphasizes that, although the old wilderness no longer exists as it used to, it still evokes sublime feelings. Further, wilderness, for McCarthy, is a place where the wild animal has an elevated position because "the souls of horses mirror the souls of men more closely than men suppose" (93). McCarthy's narrator tells the reader to what

extent Cole's thoughts "were of horses" and "of the open country and of horses. Horses still wild on the mesa who'd never seen a man afoot and who knew nothing of him or his life yet in whose souls he would come to reside forever" (99). Stylistically, the long, non-stop, breathtaking sentence imparts the sense of the uniqueness of the world and the uniqueness of experiencing it, of its sublimity "which cannot be spoken but only praised" (135). The very rhythm of the sentence, its incantatory quality, betokens the sense of adoration involved in this experience.

Likewise, what is most remarkable about Cole is his relationship to horses and the way their grandeur affects him because, to him, "horses" are always "the right thing to think about" (172); thus, "he did not stop talking to the horse at all, speaking in a low steady voice and telling it all that he intended to do" (88). In his view, "among men there was no such communion as among horses and the notion that men can be understood at all was probably an illusion" (94). At this point, he is found to be at one with nature based on what he is obviously experiencing on the mesa, which is a kind of transcendent experience or, simply put, the sublime feeling in that he is completely preoccupied with this wilderness.

The Crossing (1994), like its predecessor *All the Pretty Horses*, is considered a bildungsroman set in the border between the US Southwest and Mexico in 1938. The plot focuses on the life of Billy Parham, a teenage cowboy, and his three trips out of New Mexico into Mexico. In the first trip, Billy tries to repatriate a she-wolf; in the second, Billy and his younger brother Boyd set out to recover horses stolen from their father's ranch; and in his final trip, Billy is alone and desolate, attempting to discover the whereabouts of his lost brother, Boyd. Billy Parham also encounters nature. In much the same way as Cole in *All the Pretty Horses*, Billy encounters nature where "other than the sound of the horses blowing and stamping all was silence" (McCarthy 1994, 153). This "silence" thus evokes the sublime feeling because "anything that becomes accessible to narrative understanding, loses its sublimity" (Bromwich 2014, 79). In this "spooky kind of place" (McCarthy 1994, 198), the "plains" are "blue and devoid of life" (187) and Billy can see nothing: "there aint nothing to see. It's just dark on dark and then more of it" (184).

To refer to Burke again, the "ill effects" of darkness or blackness "seem rather mental than corporeal" ([1757] 1990, 133). Burke further maintains that total darkness has "a greater effect on the passions" and hence is consistent with the idea of the sublime (66). The images of darkness enhance the sense of the "natural sublime" in this novel, manifested in descriptions of "the broad dryland barrial and the river and the road and the mountains," over characters "as entertainments to keep the world at bay" (McCarthy 1994, 210). As an old man warns Billy, "the light of the world" is in "men's eyes only" and the world itself moves in "eternal darkness and darkness was its true nature and true condition and that in this darkness" it turns with "perfect cohesion in all its parts" but that there is "naught there to see" (210). As such, this world, the old man further explains, is "sentient to its core and secret and black beyond men's imagining" and its

nature does not "reside in what could be seen or not seen" (210). As McCarthy would have it, "the world cannot lose darkness"; nothing "has power to cut and shape and hollow out the dark form of the world surely if wind can, if rain can. But which cannot be held never be held and is no flower but is swift and a huntress" to the extent that "the wind itself is in terror of it" (91).

Another source of the sublime, in this howling wilderness, comes upon Billy in the form of a she-wolf. Billy is enthralled with this wolf and dismisses all his father's efforts to ensnare it. In McCarthy's rendering, the she-wolf, like the wild horses, is a sublime creature as it is "a being of great order that knows what men do not; the wolf is made the way the world is made. You cannot touch the world" (35). Edmund Burke, in his *Philosophical Enquiry*…, offers similar views regarding wolves, asserting that "on account of their unmanageable fierceness," they are not excluded from "grand descriptions and similitudes"; hence, we are affected by their strength, their "natural power." This "natural power," Burke explains, is commonly concerned with "an awe which takes away the free use of [one's faculties]" ([1757] 1990, 50). Indeed, this "natural power" is associated with "terror" and "terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime" (40). According to Hage, Billy's intimacy with the pregnant she-wolf is, in part, as already mentioned, reminiscent of Cole's relationship with the wild horses (2010, 37). The following description clearly indicates the point: "[when] he touched her skin ran and quivered under his hand like a horse's. He talked to her about his life but it didn't seem to rest her fears. After a while he sang to her" (McCarthy 1994, 67). Alongside the road to San Diego, Billy is sitting in empty desert crossroads, trying to speak to God about his brother and after a while he sleeps. Soon, he wakes up from a "troubling dream."

> He'd trudged in his dream through a deep snow along a ridge toward a darkened house the wolves had followed him as far as the fence. They ran their lean mouths against each other's flanks and they flowed about his knees and furrowed the snow with their noses and tossed their heads and in the cold their pooled breath made a cauldron about him and the snow lay so blue in the moonlight and those eyes were palest topaz where they crouched and whined and tucked their tails and they fawned and shuddered as they drew close to the house and their teeth shone that were so white and their red tongues lolled. At the gate they would go no further. They looked back toward the dark shapes of the mountains. He knelt in the snow and reached out his arms to them and they touched his face with their wild muzzles and drew away again and their breath was warm and it smelled of the earth and the hearth and the heart of the earth. (218)

At this point, Billy's intimate relationship with the pregnant she-wolf intimates that he is at one with nature; he "tried to see the world the wolf saw," we are told (39). Put differently, wilderness offers the opportunity to "talk and think as a natural, and not an artificial man" because characters tend to live in harmony with nature (Nash 1963,

5). Worthy of note here is that this wilderness with its dark and gloomy mountainscapes never fails to excite a sense of grandeur in Billy. Here is a description of its vastness or greatness of dimension when Billy is standing in an "inexplicable darkness."

> [T]here was no sound anywhere save only the wind. After a while he sat in the road. […] he bowed his head and held his face in his hands and wept. He sat there for a long time and after a while the east did gray and after a while the right and godmade sun did rise, once again, for all and without distinction. (McCarthy 1994, 313)

In the face of such natural forces, Billy becomes aware of his "causal insignificance," to borrow Schopenhauer's words, since these forces seem to reduce one to "nought" (Young 2005, 116). The "darkening shapes of the mountains" (McCarthy 1994, 81) are both grand and impressive in that, as Burke puts it, "the effects of a rugged […] surface seem stronger than where it is smooth and polished. It would carry us out of our way to enter in this place into the cause of these appearances; but certain it is they afford a large and fruitful field of speculation" ([1757] 1990, 56). In this respect, Billy is found to retreat deeper and deeper into nature:

> [H]e looked out down the road and he looked toward the fading light. Darkening shapes of cloud all along the northern rim. It had ceased raining in the night and a broken rainbow or water gall stood out on the desert in a dim neon bow and he looked again at the road which lay as before yet more dark and darkening still where it ran on to the east and where there was no sun and there was no dawn and when he looked again toward the north the light was drawing away faster and that noon in which he'd woke was now become an alien dusk and now an alien dark and the birds that flew had lighted and all had housed once again in the bracken by the road. (McCarthy 1994, 313)

This landscape excites the ideas of the sublime time and again and Billy's solitude makes him more amenable to them because, "in solitude even the most beautiful surroundings have […] a desolate, dark, strange, and hostile appearance" (Schopenhauer [1818/1819] 1958, 198; quoted in Young 2005, 117). In other words, natural forces and the sublime, in *The Crossing*, give birth to each other. Style-wise, the verb-laden, flowing, relentless prose of this novel seems to uncannily capture the restlessness involved in the encounter with the sublime.

Cities of the Plain (1998), the final novel of *The Border Trilogy*, set in 1952, brings together the individual heroes of the previous two novels, John Grady Cole and Billy Parham. They work together on a cattle ranch in New Mexico. In this novel, McCarthy once again offers a sublime depiction of nature in its wildest aspects. To be sure, "the dark shapes of the mountains of Mexico standing against the starlit sky" (McCarthy 1998, 4) as well as "the surrounding dark" that forms "the outskirts of the city," or

"the desert plains beyond" (50-51) can provoke the sublime ambiguity insofar as "they fill and overbear the mind with their excess" or "infinity" (Hope Nicolson 1959, 210). What is more, the very title *Cities of the Plain* is biblical in origin, referring to "Sodom and Gomorrah" (Genesis 19:29), thus underscoring corruption and decadence in contrast to both the purity and unattainability of the Old West.

While passing through the mountains Cole and Billy Parham seem to contemplate their surroundings, the rocks, the mountains and the stars which are "belied above them against the eternal blackness of the world's nativity" in that there is something "august and stately in the Air of these things, that inspires the mind with great Thoughts and Passions" (McCarthy 1998, 214, 217). In other renditions of the "natural sublime" in this novel, as is the case with the previous two of the trilogy, characters are dwarfed by the immensity of this wilderness. Here is an example:

> [A] pass in the mountains. A bloodstained stone. The marks of steel upon it. Names carved in the corrosible lime among stone fishes and ancient shells. Things dim and dimming. The dry sea floor. The tools of migrant hunters. The dreams enchased upon the blades of them. The peregrine bones of a prophet. The silence. The gradual extinction of rain. The coming of night. (223)

Considering the above passage, it might be safe to claim that the sublime is concerned with speaking merely of "things in themselves," to borrow Schopenhauer's words, "no longer of phenomena" ([1818/1819] 1958, 185; quoted in Young 2005, 96). In *Cities of the Plain*, however, unlike the two preceding novels, McCarthy sometimes attributes the "natural sublime" to the unnatural so that his protagonists often find themselves in "a wilderness of spiritual trial and transformation" (Frye 2013, 8). For instance, there are descriptions like "the lights of the cities burning on the plain like stars pooled in a lake" (McCarthy 1998, 174) or when city lights "lay shimmering in their girds with the dark serpentine of the river dividing them" (123).

Elsewhere, the writer draws our attention to the south where "the distant lights of the city lay strewn across the desert floor like a tiara laid out upon a jeweler's blackcloth" (66). The encroaching of the cities (civilization) on the wilderness is stressed time and again as this means the loss of the "natural sublime." For instance, in a passage describing the wolves, in the story recounted to Cole by an old seer, this is lamented:

> The day after my fiftieth birthday in March of nineteen and seventeen I rode into the old headquarters at the Wide well and there was six dead wolves hanging on the fence. I rode along the fence and ran my head along em. I looked at their eyes. A government trapper had brought em in the night before. They'd been killed with poison baits. Strychnine. Whatever. Up in Sacramentos. A week later he brought in four more I aint heard a wolf in this country since. I suppose that's a good thing. They can be hell on stock. But I guess I was always what you

> might call superstitious. I know I damn sure wasn't religious. And it had always seemed to me that something can live and die but that the kind of the thing that they were was always there. I didn't know you could poison that. I aint heard a wolf howl in thirty odd years. I don't know where you'd go to hear one. There may not be any such a place. (99)

Given that wild wolves no longer exist in this dark wilderness, McCarthy directs our attention to the threatening presence of feral dogs, instead. Their loud barking could thus evoke the sublime feeling on the part of characters when "their cries trailed off down the side of the mountain and sounded again more faintly and then faded away where they coursed out along some rocky draw in the dark" (66).

Further, the wild horses in this novel, like in *All the Pretty Horses*, serve as another source of the sublime; they are, to reiterate, elevated to "positions of great significance; they inhabit a space that, while often overlapping with the human realm, is distinctive and important" (Hage 2010, 36). More importantly, the wild horses in *Cities of the Plain* occupy "a high moral and ethical ground" (Hage 2010, 36) on account of both Cole and Billy believing that "a horse knows what's in your heart" (McCarthy 1998, 64). In this sense, these cowboys are, in turn, "accustomed to the ways and the needs" (142) of the wild horses. A good horse, Cole believes, "has justice in his heart, can understand what you mean, he likes to be able to hear you, and you can see what's in his heart" (40). In attributing this moral greatness to horses, as discussed above, McCarthy tends to mark this simple sublime spark between them and the characters and the way in which the characters "instill confidence" (143) in these animals. Put differently, as George Guillemin points out, Cole's "continuity with the horse cannot be named. The continuity thus allegorized invokes the lost harmony between man and nature" (2001, 122).

Something remarkable about McCarthy's protagonists is that they have developed "not in American pastoralism in general but in *western* American pastoralism" which involves "virtually unattainable wilderness as nature's last stronghold against man" (118; emphasis in the original). In a sense, McCarthy implies that the extent to which Cole and Billy are affected by both animals and natural forces is solely related to the protagonists' ideas and the way in which they experience such unmentionable grandeur.

3. Conclusion

Arguably, the Wild West, for Cormac McCarthy, serves as a model for the United States in that it underscores both the original values of America and the unique circumstances that could not have been duplicated elsewhere. The wilderness therefore is recognized as the dominant sign of the sublime mode in McCarthy's *The Border Trilogy* insofar as it marks the characters' wonder and terror when they happen to encounter nature's infinitude.

It is important to note, however, that the way in which McCarthy attributes natural grandeur to this wilderness calls to mind memories of the Old West, foregrounding a sense of pastoral nostalgia on the part of the characters. Emphasized is the point that the natural boundlessness of the Wild West is beyond any attempt to make it understandable and that nature is the primary source of the sublime experience. What is more, the writer implies that the extent to which characters are affected by the natural forces and the wild animals depends on their own ideas as well as the way in which they experience such ineffable grandeur. That is, at issue here is the subjective nature of sublimity.

In McCarthy's *Trilogy*, the desolate wilderness is, in effect, capable of overwhelming the observer by virtue of its unfathomable grandeur. What is most remarkable about this wild setting is McCarthy's rendering of the sublime and the horrible through such notions as infinity, natural grandeur, silence, terror and darkness; the wilderness is represented as instilling sublime feelings into the characters through its awe-inspiring vistas. Intriguingly represented is how characters come to realize that they are too insignificant to conceive the grandeur of this wilderness. That is, the writer dramatizes the very process of experiencing the sublime on the part of the characters. Moreover, arguably the modality of the response to this experience becomes an index of character. Cognitively this applies to the reader too. McCarthy manipulates his reader's perception in that their imagination is moved to awe based on his description of the sublime sceneries in the Wild West; the readers are to vicariously experience what his characters see out there in the wild.

Representations of nature as sublime in American literature are numerous, indeed. What marks McCarthy's rendering, however, is the uncanny quality of the style deployed. The depiction of the "natural sublime" in these novels is arguably artistically sublime too. That is, the length and complexity of the passages literally constrain the reader from finding meaning. McCarthy's "artistic sublime," in other words, slows down the readers' processing of thought which, ultimately, results in their bafflement.

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Hossein Pirnajmuddin is an Associate Professor of English literature at the University of Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include Renaissance literature, literary theory, contemporary fiction and translation studies.

Mahshid Younesi has recently received her MA in English Literature from the University of Isfahan, Iran. She is particularly interested in the figurations of sublimity in postmodern fiction.

Address: Department of Foreign Languages. University of Isfahan. Azadi Square. 8174673441, Isfahan, Iran. Tel.: +98 3137932137.

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"Partly American!": Sarah Bernhardt's Transnational Disability in the American Press (1915-1918)

Ignacio Ramos-Gay
Universitat de València
Ignacio.Ramos@uv.es

The aim of this paper is to analyze the representation of Sarah Bernhardt's physical disability in the American press prior to and during her last tour in the United States (1915-1918), and how the amputation of her right leg ignited a series of allegories associating the actress with both French and American national identities. Bernhardt's maimed physicality was rapidly construed as a metaphor of the mutilated French soldiers of the Great War and of a devastated France itself. However, as I will show, one of the prosthetic devices crafted by American manufacturers symbolically turned the tragedienne into "partly an American citizen" as well as into a token of modern western technology. Bernhardt's artificial leg encapsulated a number of cultural, economic and national attributes linking therapy with American industrial capitalism, and her conceptualization as an American icon thanks to prosthetics reflects the use of non-normative bodily metaphors to encourage national belonging in the press.

Keywords: American press; Transatlantic Studies; Sarah Bernhardt; disability; prosthetics

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"Partly American!": la discapacidad transnacional de Sarah Bernhardt en la prensa norteamericana (1915-1918)

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar la plasmación de la discapacidad física de Sarah Bernhardt en la prensa americana durante los años de su última gira estadounidense (1915-1918), y cómo la amputación de su pierna derecha desencadenó una serie de alegorías que vincularon a la actriz tanto a la identidad nacional francesa como a la norteamericana. La merma física de Bernhardt fue rápidamente objeto de una construcción metafórica representativa de los soldados franceses mutilados durante la Gran Guerra así como de Francia misma.

Sin embargo, el uso de una prótesis fabricada por una compañía estadounidense convirtió simbólicamente a la actriz en una "ciudadana americana en parte," así como en un ejemplo de la tecnología occidental moderna. La pierna artificial de Bernhardt vehiculó un número de atributos culturales, económicos y nacionales que asociaron la terapia con el capitalismo industrial norteamericano, y la conceptualización de la actriz en tanto que icono gracias a la prótesis reflejó el uso de metáforas corporales no normativas por parte de la prensa para la promoción del sentimiento de pertenencia nacional.

Palabras clave: prensa americana; estudios transatlánticos; Sarah Bernhardt; discapacidad; prótesis

When on August 12, 1891, *Los Angeles Times* published a parodic article asserting that "the great Sarah Bernhardt" was of American origin, the news came as no surprise for an audience well-familiarized with the rumors surrounding the actress's private life (4).[1] According to the reporter, the French tragedienne was "a plain Iowan by birth" whose manners and essence were so American that she showed no "foreign frills" (4). Moreover, Bernhardt was said to have a sister in the country who stood, it was revealed, as the authority for the claim. Although her name was not disclosed to the reader, subtle hints about her place of residence (she was said to live in California) attempted to provide proximity and authenticity to the statement. Such legitimizing strategies were nevertheless virtually debilitated when the reporter finally added that Bernhardt's sister was believed to be the original "Maid of Tulare," in reference to the Californian Lady of Fatima sanctity. The godliness of the "divine Sarah" seemed to spread easily to her siblings, and her alleged sister's sanctity ironically consecrated Bernhardt's reputation, in Jean Cocteau's words, as a "monstre sacré" (Broussky 2001, 19).

Indeed, fabrications of this sort relating to Bernhardt's private life in theatre gazettes and leading newspapers were not rare in either Europe or America at a time of intensive media coverage of the actress. Anecdotes surrounding her well-known eccentricities were constantly recounted in the press and acted as an impetus, propelling further far-fetched legends about her life. Indeed, Bernhardt was the first modern celebrity in the current sense of the term, not only due to her popularity but also to her thorough knowledge and mastery of publicity mechanisms, through which she constantly negotiated fact and fiction. Her outrageous scandals were duly transcribed in the media, sweeping audiences into a terrain of volatile, often contradictory, information. In her analysis of modern celebrity culture, Hazel Hahn observes that the real Bernhardt was "as elusive as smoke" (2009, 175)—so crammed was her life with vaporous stories and legends. Bernhardt herself seemed to ignite them by deliberately blurring a number of significant, objective facts about her most personal background. Her birthdate, for instance, was a mystery that the actress actively contributed to obscuring, the records of her birth having been destroyed in the Commune of Paris. As Robert Gottlieb puts it, "Sarah Bernhardt was born in July or September or October of 1844. Or was it 1843? Or even 1841? [...] She was a complete realist when dealing with her life but a relentless fabulist when recounting it" (2010, i).

Bernhardt's desire to engrave her public image within a myriad of modern, fixable artistic forms in the era of technological reproducibility (Musser 2013) contrasts with the perplexing provenance that so mystified her relationship with a particular nation. During her last visit to America, local and national newspapers repeatedly claimed that the actress was "partly American" in virtue of the prosthetic leg that she had attached to her body. Bernhardt had her right leg amputated in February 1915 in France due to

[1] This research was supported by the MECD/Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program for Senior Researchers and Professors between March 1 and May 31, 2015.

a bone condition that prevented her from continuing with her career on the stage. A number of artificial limbs were specially manufactured for her, and on her farewell tour of the United States, the "divine Sarah" sported a model designed by an American company.

To date, research on Bernhardt's trips to America has mainly focused on her first visit to the United States and Canada in 1880 (Hathorn 1996; Marks 2003). How Bernhardt, aged 73 and "minus one leg" (*The Republic* [Waterbury, CT], 13 March 1915, 1), was perceived by audiences during her last American tour has never been the object of study, let alone, as this article aims, how her physicality shaped a particular conceptualization of her national belonging.

Robert Bud, Bernard Finn and Helmuth Trischler have contended that prosthetic limbs are an intrinsic part of the construction of the cultural identity of the disabled subject. Technological artifacts, they claim, are "material expressions of human culture" (1999, xi) that cannot be scrutinized in an isolated manner. Following Patricia Hill Collins's notion of "intersectionality" (1999), their representation of the artificial limb as a heterogeneous appliance embeds modern notions of the individual's process of creating his or her public self that are at a crossroads between science, culture and history. Carolyn de la Pena expands this idea when defending the need to redefine political and cultural systems by scrutinizing the impact of technology "as both substance and ideology in American cultural life" (2006, 915). Bernhardt's corporeal fragmentation and the prosthetic device that she used to compensate for this during her last American tour encapsulated a number of cultural attributes which framed and reshaped her national identity for American playgoers. Her metaphoric incarnation of French amputees from the Great War, as well as the brandishing of her artificial limb as a commodity that had been made in America, projected an image of the actress as the embodiment of a mobile community, as a symbol of national belonging. Hers was a reflection of a sort of "flexible citizenship" (Ong 1999); one based on her bodily incorporation of products originating in divergent countries. Through her artificial leg she integrated a material, technological Americanness within the organic Frenchness of her anatomy. As such not only did she exhibit a symbiotic reunion of the organic and the artificial, but also a corporeal hybridity consisting in competing, if not colliding, nationalities.

I have based this study on several hundreds of American newspaper clippings and articles recounting Bernhardt's last visit to the United States, which took place between 10 October 1916 and 23 October 1918. For two years, the French actress toured more than sixty American cities, her repertoire including one-act plays and scenes from Alexandre Dumas *fils*'s *La dame aux camellias*, Émile Moreau's *Jeanne d'Arc*, Edmond Rostand's *L'aiglon*, Henri Cain and Maurice Bernhardt's *La mort de Cléopâtre*, and her own *Du théâtre au champ d'honneur*. During that time, Bernhardt's loss of her leg and the various prosthetic limbs that were used to replace it became iconic tools that linked the diva to a divergence of nationalities, namely French and American. In her study of how disability contributes to the symbolic construction of an imagined

political community, Julie Avril Minich argues that "corporeal images used to depict national belonging have important consequences for how the rights and obligations of citizenship are distributed" (2014, 2). Although Bernhardt made no claim of specific citizenship rights, her reception in America shows how non-normative bodily metaphors may be used to describe and ignite specific political belonging. More importantly, I will argue that Bernhardt's "American-ness" went against the grain at a time when the nation was conceptualized "as a whole, nondisabled body whose health must be protected from external pollutants" (Minich 2014, 2). At a time when disabled foreign immigrants were socially marginalized in America, Bernhardt's dissident anatomy was not construed as a challenge to the "image of the health national body" or to the "imperial national unity" (3). Rather, her corporeal fragmentation, together with the artificial device that she integrated into her body, was rapidly and proudly redefined as partially American by the press.

1. "A Glorious Mutilation"

Bernhardt's worldwide reputation garnered her enough fame to interest American newspapers in the amputation of her leg on 23 February 1915. News of the surgical procedure reached US soil approximately one year prior to Bernhardt's last American tour, and reviewers immediately began to inoculate readers with various images of the actress's physicality. The loss of her leg came at a time when amputees were gaining public visibility as thousands of men faced death and mutilation in the trenches in Europe. For the American imagination, her amputation thus evoked the ravages of the Great War, and the actress took pride in encouraging her identification with her fellow countrymen. Newspaper articles stated that the diva energized such connections "because of an almost frenzied desire to share in the sufferings and mutilations endured by the brave soldier defenders of her country" (*Omaha Daily Bee* [NE] 16 May 1915, n.p.). The day before the operation, local and national newspapers transcribed Bernhardt's telegram to French writer and Academy member Maurice Barrès, who was at the time working on a campaign to aid war cripples in his position as a deputy of Paris. "Your last article," Bernhardt wrote, "an appeal for the invalids of the war, touched me deeply, perhaps because I am going to have my leg cut off Sunday and thus join the great army of the mutilated" (*The New York Times*, 21 February 1915, 3). The diva asserted that the amputation had been her own decision and Catulle Mendes's widow wrote an open letter to the actress published by *The New York Times*, praising her heroic sacrifice: "like the soldiers at the front, she has fought for an ideal. Like them, she will suffer a glorious mutilation" (22 February 1915, 1). Bernhardt had once again assumed, in a way, a theatrical role in front of her audiences. Fully aware of her exemplary iconicity, the great actress's patriotic desire to stand shoulder to shoulder with the crippled soldiers of France concocted a public image that was to become a symbol of her country's fortitude and sacrifice during dramatic and tumultuous times.

An entire epic narrative of Bernhardt as an inspiration for French soldiers was constructed in America. "In all embattled France," pronounced *The New York Times*, "there is not a more malignant, determined desperate warrior than Sarah Bernhardt" (23 May 1915, 19). Her determination emblematized the martial courage of the soldier. On February 23, the day after the surgery, the *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR) declared the tragedienne had lost her leg, "but not an atom of her courage" (23 February 1915, 6). As if performing a new character, she stood as a role model for society, not only French but American too. The actress's undaunted sacrifice was "a blessing to herself and an inspiration to us all," the newspaper noted (6).

For American readers, Bernhardt's body was regarded as an anatomic "cultural text" (Mobley 2014). Metonymically inscribed in it were not only the mutilation of French men and women but also that of their country itself. The American playgoer could read in her "wounded and weakened" anatomy the "incarnation of the invincible spirit of her beloved France" (*The New York Times*, 10 September 1916, 6). Carved into her physicality were remembrances of the carnage of war, and her body became a metaphor of the battlefield, where ex-combatants, physically and psychologically traumatized, found themselves reflected. Her first performance in Paris following her surgery attracted throngs of damaged veterans in their uniforms. *The Cincinnati Enquirer* described a scene of "legless, armless, men with crutches, men leaning on canes" amongst a multitude of disabled men that patiently waited between acts to pass by her loge "to salute, to kiss her hand" or "to present children for the ever gracious Sarah to embrace" (23 December 1915, 4). Indeed, Bernhardt's sacrifice soon enough became an emblem of a devastated France and her strength mirrored the spirit of a nation in the process of healing its wounds. As the reporter of the *Evening World-Herald* (Omaha, NE) would have it, Bernhardt was "more than a human being […] a symbol […] [S]he seemed France incarnate" (6 January 1917, 6).

2. "Make Sarah a Leg"

From the very beginning, the combination of Bernhardt's persona and her amputation attracted American artificial limb companies because of the possibilities that it afforded to lure clientele. The same week that she was discharged from the Bordeaux hospital where the surgery had been performed and traveled to Andernos, near Arcachon, for recovery, American prosthetic companies sent representatives with samples to her home in order to try and secure an order for their product. Three weeks later, on March 14, 1915, the *New York Tribune* reported that the actress had already "closed negotiations" for her artificial limb (10). Bernhardt, however, was not content with a single prosthetic leg: the actress was said to have collected at least two dozens of them in her wardrobe, each one specifically tailored to a particular gown and part she played and each endowed with a specific nickname.

This leg "hoarding" ignited a frantic rush amongst American firms to manufacture the ultimate, state-of-the-art leg for Bernhardt. On March 29 *The Topeka State Journal*

(KS) published an article under the title "Make Sarah a Leg," calling for bids for what it called "the privilege of supplying Sarah Bernhardt with an artificial limb" (6). The tragedienne's announcement of her comeback to the stage fueled fierce competition between suppliers, as two rival companies, one based in Washington D.C. and the other in Baltimore, fought to secure the prize of landing the order. The firm in the capital had traditionally monopolized the production of artificial legs, but the new contender fought to snatch the trophy. Anecdotal narratives of the "leg rush" appeared in local newspapers across the country, often parodying the tone of early twentieth-century colonial travel writing. For instance, an article published in the *Akron Beacon Journal* (OH) on April 3, 1915 ridiculed, in its hyperbolically grandiose style, the frantic rush of the American salesmen involved:

> Who says there is no romance in business? Two salesmen, leaders in their lines, are racing across the ocean for the purpose of giving a leg to Sarah Bernhardt. Artificial, of course. Madame lost the original, a perfect specimen of its kind, upon the operating table. Now these bold commercial men brave the terrors of submarines and the inconveniences of life in a warring nation in order to hang a limb on the divine Sarah. With the irrepressible enthusiasm which endears the American drummer to all of us, each is no doubt coaxing the captain of his respective liner to speed up and beat his opponent to port. To her that hath shall be given (4).

It was not simply a matter of competing companies; the pride of the cities where they were based was also at stake. In his analysis of Pittsburgh's involvement in the prosthetics industry at the turn of the century, Edward Slavishak argues that such business bore cultural and social implications that affected the public image of the city itself. The burgeoning industry revealed itself as "the key to success or failure after traumatic amputation" and therefore a city's capacity to secure the manufacture of a proficient artificial limb acted as a proxy of its concern with "the fate of the industrial worker in the Steel City" (2003, 365). At a time when Pittsburgh epitomized the inequities, damages and ruins of industrial society, triumphant prostheses companies were devised as an answer to this industrial devastation. In Slavishak's words, artificial limbs "represented a series of potential solutions for the industrial worker and the city as a whole. Just as a prosthesis might restore the working body to work, so, too, might it restore the image of Pittsburgh as a vibrant and working city" (366).

Similar notions apply to the two cities competing to "re-complete" Bernhardt. No sooner had the company in Washington D.C. revealed that it was sending agents to Paris than the business in Baltimore made the same claim. The name of neither company was disclosed in the papers; instead, they were referred to by the names of the cities where they were located, thus establishing a sound connection between the urban administrative nucleus and its industrial emblems. *The Boston Daily Globe* (MA) declared on 30 March 1915 that such an "exciting contest" rested upon which particular

city would have the "honor" of furnishing the actress with an artificial leg (16). The *Washington Herald* published an article the same day under the title of "Maybe Sarah's Leg Will Make this City Famous," hence connecting the fate of the town's industry and popularity with Bernhardt's prosthetic limb (2).

Slavishak remarks that although amputation was not necessarily the principal type of injury in the modern American city, "it was the most glaring and eloquent evidence of industry's hazards" (2003, 369-370). In this sense, the manufacturing of artificial limbs stood as a metaphor of modern industrial capitalism. As the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (VA) stated on 1 April 1915, the Oriole City's "latest venture"—the manufacturing of Bernhardt's prosthetic limb—proved "Baltimore's ambition and enterprise" (6). Moreover, the newspaper observed that although Baltimore was not "a city of Federal Reserve Bank calibre," it had to be admitted "that it is an ambitious and enterprising business center" (6). In the reporter's opinion, it deserved "some compensation for not getting the bank. And what consolation could be pleasanter than that of putting Sarah Bernhardt once more on her feet!" (6). The business of Bernhardt's leg not only evinced the economic rivalry between American firms; it also revealed how smaller but prospering cities ventured bravely into the terrain of modernity at a time when prosthetics stood, in Erin O'Connor's words, "as the quintessential triumph of industrial culture" (1997, 767).

The production of artificial limbs was propagandistic of the modern industrialized America and raised the expectation of increased production and sales for local companies. It was an indicator of progress, an igniter of contemporary capitalist dynamics, and it reflected a city's productive efficiency, ranging from company benefits to urban prosperity on a larger scale. The prosthetics industry was stimulated by European hostilities, and it stood at the crossroads of science, medicine and commerce. As stated earlier, mass production of artificial body parts was a buoyant activity during the second part of the 1910s, as hundreds of thousands of artificial legs were required for cripples of the Great War. Seth Koven (1994, 1186) states that the conflict resulted in an estimated ten million crippled combatants in the warring nations, as well as millions of crippled civilians who were the collateral damage of the war. Technological therapy and productivity going hand in hand, *The Baltimore Sun* (MD) announced that the agent sent from Washington to France had instructions to obtain, if possible, an "order from the French government to outfit soldiers maimed in the war" (30 March 1915, 16). Since an order from the actress would "begin the boom in this American industry" (*Washington Herald*, 30 March 1915, 2), American companies saw in Bernhardt a source of endless revenue, transforming her disabled anatomy into a token of modern capitalistic production.

Indeed, landing a deal with Bernhardt implied financial and symbolic growth in many aspects. Firstly, from a socio-clinical perspective, the limb signified physical rehabilitation, economic compensation and reintegration of the patient/client into society. Secondly, the artificial limb industry used state-of-the-art technology, machinery

and methods, embodying Promethean modernity. In O'Connor's words, "the prosthetic man became a symbol of all that was possible in the modern world of manufacture, a walking advertisement for the personal and social benefits to be had from a full-scale embrace of machine culture" (1997, 767). As such, the business was publicized as "the culmination of decades of scientific and mechanical effort" so that "wearing an artificial limb made the injured worker a walking advertisement for American engineers' lofty achievements, a billboard for mechanized production" (Slavishak 2003, 377). No wonder that *The Boston Daily Globe* assured its readers that the Washington company was going to do "everything in its power to land the 'Divine Sarah' first and foremost," as it would mean "big things" for the company "to set Madame Bernhardt on her feet once more" (30 March 1915, 16). As press reports put it, "the firm which secures the post of leg enterer to Madame Bernhardt and presents the fact to the leg-consuming public has a fortune in its grasp" (*Akron Beacon Journal*, 3 April 1915, 4). In this way, Bernhardt's leg actively contributed to the development of a larger, more diversified structure of American consumer identity. It represented the nation's emergent capitalistic impulse. In this way, Berhardt's image contributed to the creation of a prospective market of prostheses that would bring success to the manufacturers.

For American manufacturers, a sales agreement with a celebrity such a Bernhardt meant winning "the great international prize" (*Washington Herald*, 30 March 1915, 2). Needless to say, the competition was just as fierce across the Atlantic since European manufacturers were also imagining the promising results of doing business with the actress. "In spite of the travail of war," the *Akron Beacon Journal* claimed, Europe was not going to "yield such a rich prize to America without struggle" (3 April 1915, 4). As expected, British and French companies also dove into the competition, mirroring the competition between American cities at a transnational level. Within the American press, narratives of the struggle and rivalry between companies translated, this time, into duels between nations. If newspapers displayed a penchant towards substituting company names for those of cities, allegorizing the competition with entire nations as players proved just as captivating, particularly when the countries' images were so attached to industrial efficacy. All the other legs in Bernhardt's wardrobe, *The New York Times* declared, were originally French, and "in that fair land of France the making of wooden limbs is not yet an art" (14 November 1915, 19). The diva also reportedly sported a new 1915 model made with American cork that was claimed to be "the best of the 25 that she has" (*Boston Daily Globe*, 15 November 1915, 6). At a time when America had not yet become an ally of France, the race to land a deal with the actress fittingly symbolized a transcontinental war. Newspapers stated that "if American dash and inventiveness triumph there will be deeper gloom in certain European offices than if the allies lost a battle" (*Akron Beacon Journal*, 3 April 1915, 4). Beyond, therefore, the associations between Bernhardt and wounded soldiers, there lay the connotations of the contrasting economic forces: the emerging American industry confronting the old, decaying world of Europe. American corporations were well aware of the fact that

winning Bernhardt's body symbolically implied an economic victory of worldwide consequence. As the reporter for the *Akron Beacon Journal* claimed, "after the war is over there will be a bigger market than ever in history for artificial legs and the firm which can go before the public with Sarah Bernhardt's official o.k. in fac simile and with photographs as in the tobacco advertisements holds crippledom by the heel" (3 April 1915, 4). Provisioning the actress's artificial leg guaranteed a company a prominent place in the fledgling but growing prosthesis market as it fortified the new leading economies of the western world.

Moreover, such tensions between national economies transformed Bernhardt's prospective prosthetic leg into an industrial battlefield that further mirrored the European conflict. "Making a wooden leg for Sarah Bernhardt seems to be the event of world-wide interest that is second in importance only to the ending of the European war," stated *The Topeka State Journal* on April 1, 1915 (4). Reference to Bernhardt's leg at the same textual level as allusions to the Great War in newspaper headings was meant to associate the limb with a specific nationality as well as with old transnational rivalries. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* declared that although no news had been received of the actress's final purchase, one thing was certain, "and that is that Sarah will never tread the stage on a limb labeled 'made in Germany'" (1 April 1915, 6). Since Teuton manufacturers were ruled out, and since industry and nationality went hand in hand, the actress's apparent refusal to wear a wooden leg of German origin revealed her self-awareness as a French national icon and her anatomic and political involvement with her country through the ideology conveyed by modern instrumentality.

3. "A Work of Art in Itself"

The whole process of manufacturing and selling the prosthetic leg was rife with connotations; from American industrial modernity and artistic proficiency, to national pride. David E. Nye argues that for Americans, technology was primarily a means through which community bonding could be forged, thus consolidating the "belief in national greatness" (1994, 43). Similarly, Joel Dinerstein asserts that technology "structures the American sense of power and revenge, the nation's abstract sense of well-being, its arrogant sense of superiority, and its righteous justification for global dominance" (2006, 569). Because of its cultural undertones, a leg manufactured in America embodied a technologically imperialistic device which superseded the more rudimentary items developed in Europe. Bernhardt's leg needed to be not only produced to a high quality but also to be artistic enough for the most eminent tragedienne in the world to wear: for a product sourced and produced on American soil to be integrated with the body of this classical icon, there needed to be an acceptance of the notion that the new world had excellent esthetic taste with which to complement its technological prowess. Designing her leg, in other words, meant creating an artistic object, one that would be deserving of the "divine Sarah's" dramatic talent. Drawing inspiration from

the muse herself, the manufacturer bore the responsibility of crafting an item that had to be as unique, instinctive, genuine and glamorous as Bernhardt's idiosyncratic acting itself, while ensuring the best in practical precision and mechanical functioning. In so doing, the artificial limb would reconcile the divide between object, technology and the esthetic grandeur of the nation that had produced it.

During the manufacturing process, the actress had rejected more than half a dozen models and had participated in the development to some extent by giving the makers some indications of what she was envisioning. The product was never meant to be an exact replica of the actual leg, but rather an idealized version of it. The foot was, for instance, smaller at the request of Bernhardt, who apparently had always had "a passion for little feet" (*Kansas City Star* [KS], 31 May 1915, n.p.). In order for the actress to re-emerge as a *perfected* version of herself, a high degree of expertise with respect to both technical and artistic issues was essential, and these traits were exemplified by a certain American manufacturer by the name of Mr. John R. Clarke. A one-legged man himself, Clarke had recently returned from Paris, where he had an atelier which produced artificial limbs. His manual craft skills made him, according to *The Kansas City Star*, an "architect" (13 May 1915, n.p.). *The New York Times* similarly described him as an "artist" (14 November 1915, 19), and so magnificent and technical were his skills that his product was labelled by Bernhardt "a work of art in itself" (*Grand Rapids Press* [MI], 12 September 1915, 4).

The leg's "American-ness" transcended its having been produced by an American craftsman. The circumstances surrounding the design process and the various fittings and trials that the actress had to undergo were also reflective of a certain American idiosyncrasy which the manufacturer took pride in informing the media of. Clarke apparently visited his client on several occasions for a number of fittings and found himself having to deal with the actress's whimsical nature. "For the first measurement" he declared to *The New York Times*,

> I had to rise at night and go out of Paris, for she insisted that I be at her home at 7 o'clock in the morning. That was too much [...] The next time she asked for an early appointment, I explained that if she wanted an American leg she must have it fitted in the shop just as other persons did. (14 November 1915, 19)

Clarke's statement reveals a democratic conceptualization of the customer based upon a notion of essential equality that is reminiscent of Tocqueville's legendary "general equality of conditions" ([1835] 2004, 3). His impeccable work ethic could be characterized as democratic insofar as he was impervious to the capriciousness of celebrities or other popular individuals, thus conceptualizing all paying or potential customers as equals, regardless of social hierarchies. As Clarke reasoned with ease, "one cannot take tools and workers all over the country. She said she could not and she would not go to the shop. The other makers had attended her at her home, why not I? But I was firm" (*New York*

Times, 14 November 1915, 19). Clarke's vision denied any aristocratic prioritization of the customer over his work principles and routine. All purchasers were treated equally and impartially, a clear sign of the times' belief in the democratizing and leveling powers brought by a person's commitment to his/her work. The business's integrity had to be protected, regardless of the identity of the potential patron. In this sense, Clarke was no mere manufacturer; his enterprise also embodied the foundations of a new world order untainted by class privileges. If there was something that made his product even more truly American, it was his attitude as a professional.

The final product was believed to be the most technologically advanced prosthetic leg on the market. Clarke asserted that "no finer leg was ever produced than that" (*New York Times*, 14 November 1915, 19), and both the materials and the machinery employed in its confection were considered state-of-the-art by American newspapers. The leg was made of wood, catgut and a little rubber webbing. The materials were light—the leg weighed only 1.8 kilos. Its most intriguing feature was its capacity to adapt itself to the human body, its serenity in "adjusting the delicate fabric to the moods of dramatic art" (19). It was reported that "the American creation supplies a deficiency easily, flexibly and rhythmically" (19). As such, Clarke succeeded in infusing his product with the qualities of Bernhardt's acting that had made her so unique. He prided himself on designing a limb that blended with the personality of the person who wore it. With sufficient practice, Clarke further declared that Bernhardt would revive her natural talent and appear onstage "with the ease and grace of other years" (19). The leg was therefore a token of what Carl Elliott terms "enhancing" technology (2003, 20), a grail that rejuvenated the amputee, allowing her to retrieve her former, authentic self and to showcase it before her audience. Beyond the mere functional properties, the prosthetic limb was also regarded as an improvement on Bernhardt's original limb. This upgrading signified the communion between essence and artifice, to the extent that the concept of "techné" (i.e., technical perfection) can be applicable to the actress's body. Indeed, her corporeality may be regarded as a space that organically linked nature, art and technology, thus stressing the fundamental protagonism of the latter. Such communion of apparently contradictory ontologies reflects the type of historical shift that Leo Marx describes in his classic *The Machine in the Garden* when analyzing how "technology as an agent of change" became a hallmark of American cultural identity in periods of industrial expansion ([1964] 2000, 150).

The leg's high-tech properties revealed perfection in its mechanism as well as its materialization as "a living thing" (*Kansas City Star*, 31 May 1915, n.p.). David Wills contends that prostheses operate upon "two heterogeneities" (1995, 30)—the animate and the inanimate—that reconcile mechanic and organic attributes. Emulation of an actual leg was essential to evaluate the quality of the prosthesis, and newspapers stated that every joint and movement of Bernhardt's new limb was like that of a real leg. Slavishak states that during the first decades of the twentieth century, the pinnacle of prosthetic engineering consisted of those devices that "recreated the walk, the balance, and the complete repertoire of common motions that made the uninjured body perform

easily and without conscious thought" (2003, 374). Accordingly, the functionality of Bernhardt's leg was an illusion of a genuine leg, an apparatus so cutting-edge that hardly any difference could be perceived between the artificial and the natural. Its external appearance was, of course, of prime importance when it came to simulation of realness. At the time, prosthetics tended to prioritize practical efficiency over the realistic visible look of a piece. "It almost goes alone," exclaimed the diva when interviewed in Bordeaux (*Pittsburgh Press* [PA], 12 September 1915, 38). The actress personified her leg as a living, dissociated and yet integral part of her body, and so perfect was its organic nature that she considered her new leg "a substantial thing, my best friend" (*Salt Lake Telegram* [UT], 12 September 1915, 38).

The industrial efficacy of the product had amalgamated the natural and the synthetic in its Frankenstein-like impulse to instill life into dead matter. "Thanks to the miracles of surgery and mechanics," the *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) stated, the actress's disability was practically imperceptible (2 September 1915, 1). Those amongst Bernhardt's friends who saw it defied anyone "to tell unless they knew that it was not real" (*Kansas City Star*, 31 May 1915, n.p.). Indeed, Bernhardt trained and disciplined herself in the use of the artificial device so as to have absolute control over it on the stage. Although most of her performances required very little mobility (the diva would usually sit on a chair throughout the whole play, a rug over her knees, and only stand up during dramatic climactic scenes) reviewers argued that the freshness and vigor of her art persisted. As a sort of modern Venus de Milo, the actress's corporeal fragmentation even seemed to embellish her acting in the mind of the playgoer. In the Philadelphia (PA) *Evening Ledger*'s words, "Bernhardt's leg may be wooden, but her Art! Ah, that is alive!" (17 August 1915, 8).

Bernhardt's virtuosity seemed to bring the inanimate to life, and it instigated an entire mythology based on the symbiotic relationship between the leg and her persona. The resilience and beauty of the American wooden leg, so worthy of admiration, strengthened the actress who, in turn, demiurgically *resurrected* the limb through the might of her performance. In such a manner did Bernhardt burst onto the stage after her surgery and recuperation, thanks to American industrial power. As Clarke professed, "now that she is partly American [...] she will again reveal the very goddess in her gait" (*New York Times*, 14 November 1915, 19).

4. "Partly American!"

Bernhardt's new leg was portrayed in America as the birth of a new nationality. Newspapers across the country carried headlines celebrating the Americanness of the actress, something that a few months earlier, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* had anticipated when stating that she would become "by partial adoption a Baltimorean" (1 April 1915, 6) should the company triumph over its competitors in Washington D.C. On November 14, 1915, the *Sunday Herald* (Boston, MA) applauded the closing of the transaction with the words "Artificial Leg Makes Bernhardt Partly American!"

(2) and on the same day *The New York Times* published a similar headline with a follow-up on how the actress had taken "unto herself an artificial leg created by our craftsmen" (19). As the strategic use of the pronoun suggested, the *colonizing* of Bernhardt's body was regarded as an American deed, for it implied a distinction between *us* (Americans) and *them* (Europeans). Furthermore, it remained consistent with the presentation of Bernhardt's identity as mobile and fluctuating. Although she already possessed twenty-four other legs of different origin, the new American leg was believed to be responsible for rescuing her dramatic glory from eclipse. The triumphant tone of the article invited readers to identify themselves with the victors, with our group.

In her study of the connection between technology and imperialism, de la Pena argues that "machines and tools often constituted the 'front line' in imperial efforts" (2006, 923). As such, the leg can be construed as a colonizing device reflecting the invasion of European markets by American products. Incorporating within her body a resource from another country turned the actress into a symbolic citizen of that nation. In this sense, Clarke's words anticipated David Serlin's cultural analysis of prosthetic technology as a means to enhance the individual's belonging to a specific social group. In his work *Replaceable You: Engineering the Body in Postwar America* (2004), Serlin claims that an artificial body part could socially rehabilitate the individual in such a way that the exclusion he/she previously felt on the grounds of his/her dissident body was totally annihilated. Thanks to groundbreaking technology, prostheses could make the subject "more tangibly and visibly American than ever before" (2004, 14).

In line with Serlin's argument, the homogenizing powers of prosthetic devices meant that the individual could acquire the authenticity necessary to integrate the self within a potentially divergent political community. In Bernhardt's case, such a process of transnationalization and social assimilation must be read under the parameters of what work in itself represented at the time within the American context. It was, indeed, the possibility of a new leg that made Bernhardt's theatrical comeback viable—it was, in other words, her passport to return to social activity as a working person. "With the member created from fabrics brought from the country and modeled by American craftsmen, the distinguished actress will be able to walk easily through *Camille*," stated Clarke in reference to the American version of Alexandre Dumas *fils*'s immortal play (*New York Times*, 14 November 1915, 19). Nation and profession went hand in hand, and this was of particular significance given the fact that Bernhardt had, after all, *chosen* to have her leg amputated precisely because she could not endure a future of professional dormancy. "I give my consent to being mutilated because I cannot bear to remain idle" (*Evening Ledger*, 22 February 1915, 2), she declared strongly. Suggestions regarding the postponing of the operation were immediately dismissed, for her career was her one priority: "Work is my life. So soon as I can be fitted with an artificial leg I shall resume the stage and all my good spirits will be restored" (2). Her fighting spirit reverberated throughout the words she wrote to a charity leader from the hospital on the eve of her operation, and which made headlines: "I would rather be mutilated

than powerless" (*Salt Lake Telegram*, 20 February 1915, 4). Statements such as this not only added to the propaganda surrounding the celebrity but they also encrypted some semblance of a work manifesto. Bernhardt represented courage and bravery in the face of medical adversity as much as when confronting professional difficulties and unexpected challenges. Her resilience and commitment to her career, despite her advanced age, were not lost on her American audience.

Bernhardt's iconicity of hard work matched the American consecration of work ethics. Her demeanor as a professional was the key to this association, as she chose to regard her amputation not as a painful impediment, but as a means that would release her from the physical bondage that was damaging the quality of her acting and her productivity as a working person. The actress was well aware that although the leg provided her with corporeal completion, what was of fundamental importance was that it rendered the circumstances under which she could exercise her craft possible. The rhetoric of work as a liberating force for the individual was constantly alluded to in articles transcribing the diva's body as a relentless means of production. Her repeated demands to work as soon as she recovered proved she could be just as functional and durable as the leg itself: "As soon as I have recovered completely I shall resume my classes at the conservatory and then move heaven and earth to realize my dream—create Rostand's Princess Lointaine" (*Princeton* [NJ] *Union*, 4 March 1915, 2). Her "body-made-whole by machine intervention" (Dodman 2006, 56) epitomized her devotion to the theatre, where perseverance was a key factor to professional success. As a report in the *Gulfport Daily Herald* (MS) stated, the name of Bernhardt brilliantly shone "in the dramatic firmament" because it "teaches a lesson: that fame, achievement, success, are inseparably entwined with that plain, commonplace function—work!" (15 March 1915, 4).

To conclude, Bernhardt could not dissociate herself from her identity as an active, independent woman, and her approach to her new situation exemplifies the theoretical distinction that disability scholars (Oliver 1996) and civil rights activists would make decades later between impaired and disabled individuals—that is, between the subject that suffers a defect or the absence of a body part and the social and cultural consequences of such affliction. Moreover, the environment where she worked, the stage, was anything but a space of marginal visibility, and therefore minimized the idea of the disabled self as "unsightly and unemployable" (Slavishak 2003, 372). To the contrary, Bernhardt's physicality showed that the amputation did not turn her into a "helpless member of society"—as many amputees would traditionally regard themselves—but, on the contrary, into a "useful one" (Marks 1914, 378; quoted by Slavishak 2003, 378). She was an example to the hordes of mutilated soldiers who struggled to reincorporate themselves back into the system. Beth Linker notes that in America the ethics of rehabilitation consisted in reinterpreting "war's waste" (2011, 2), in recycling the torn, damaged victims that the conflict had left behind and integrating them back into the standards of normalcy. Similarly, Koven argues that for the First World War veteran, work "was the

means by which the dismembered could become full citizens again" and evade the image of "mere derelicts" (1994, 1188). Thus, a disabled soldier's recovered body represented a "repository of the nation's identity, its past, present, and future" (1188).

The American press's interpretation of the amputee actress's place within geopolitical and social contexts challenges theoretical trends established by disability scholars that connect corporeal deformity to social marginalization, or what Mae M. Ngai terms "alien citizenship," that is, "citizens by virtue of their birth [...] but who are presumed to be foreign" due to anatomic variation (2004, 2). Ever the artistic impersonator, Bernhardt embraced, thanks to her unorthodox physicality, divergent national and political communities regardless of her actual birthplace. Through a revision of her later years and the impact that her amputation had in the United States, this study has attempted to illustrate a historical instance of how non-normative bodies have functioned as symbolic extensions of national identities. Ironically enough, rather than a healthy, vibrant young body, what best absorbed the American ideals of capitalism, democracy and work ethics was the fragmented and aging anatomy of the French tragedienne.

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Ignacio Ramos-Gay is Associate Professor in French at the University of Valencia, in Spain. His research focuses on contemporary European drama and popular culture. A Fulbright visiting scholar at the Martin E. Seagal Theatre Centre at the City University of New York, he has co-edited a number of volumes on the cultural cross-currents between Britain, the United States and France.

Address: Facultad de Filología, Traducción y Comunicación. Universidad de Valencia. Avenida Blasco Ibáñez, 32. 46010, Valencia, Spain. Tel.: +34 963864100.

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Writing the Self: Philip Freneau's Homeostatic Poetic Production

Álvaro Albarrán Gutiérrez
alvalbgut@alum.us.es
Universidad de Sevilla

Traditional research has focused on the figure of Philip Freneau (1752-1832) as the champion of the late-eighteenth-century North American colonies' idiosyncrasy rather than on the reasons why Romantic and Neoclassical fashions coexist in his poetry. The present study aims to broaden current critical horizons by exploring the presence of a systematic pattern within Freneau's poetic production wherein the Neoclassical and Romantic literary traditions lie in complementary distribution—a distribution conditioned by the public and private nature of the texts and explainable in terms of an underlying principle of literary homeostasis. The major features of a representative selection of Freneau's poetic writings are thoroughly examined and correlated with the process whereby the author's private and public identities are constructed. Ultimately, the analysis evinces Philip Freneau's deliberate use of poetry as an esthetic conduit meant for individual and communal self-representation and elaboration.

Keywords: Philip Freneau; Neoclassicism; Romanticism; self-expression; self-construction; homeostasis

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Escritura e identidad: la poesía homeostática de Philip Freneau

La crítica literaria tradicional se ha centrado en la figura de Philip Freneau (1752-1832) como el campeón de la idiosincrasia propia de las colonias norteamericanas de finales del siglo XVIII en lugar de en las razones por las que en su poesía coexisten rasgos del Romanticismo y del Neoclasicismo. El presente estudio tiene como objeto ampliar los horizontes críticos actuales explorando la presencia de un patrón sistemático que se da en la producción poética de Freneau según el cual las tradiciones literarias neoclásica y romántica se hallan en distribución complementaria: una distribución condicionada por la naturaleza pública y privada de los textos y explicable en términos de un principio subyacente de

homeostasis literaria. Se analizan en detalle las principales características de una selección representativa de los escritos poéticos de Freneau, correlacionándolas con el proceso por el que el autor construye sus identidades privada y pública. En última instancia, el análisis evidencia cómo Philip Freneau empleó la poesía como un conducto estético que sirviera para la representación y elaboración de una identidad individual y comunal.

Palabras clave: Philip Freneau; Neoclasicismo; Romanticismo; expresión de la identidad; construcción de la identidad; homeostasis

1. Introduction

The co-existence of the Neoclassical and Romantic traditions is perhaps one of the defining features of the poetry produced by Philip Morin Freneau (1752-1832), as already pointed out by some early critics such as Lowell Coolidge (1928, 68) and Harry Clark (1925, 32), or, more recently, Robert Arner (1974, 54) and Lewis Leary (1976, 157). Also known as the "Poet of the American Revolution," Freneau was one of the major heralds of the Revolutionary ideals of the 1770s and 1780s. Due to his historically determinant role as an ardent adherent to the anti-British attitude that prevailed in those who fought for the Revolution, traditional research has tended to focus on Freneau's figure as the champion of the late-eighteenth-century North American colonies' idiosyncrasy rather than on the reasons why the Romantic and Neoclassical trends coexist in his poetry. In order to contribute to a more accurate critical appraisal of the poet, the aim of this essay is to shed light on the presence of a thus far overlooked systematic pattern within Freneau's poetic production wherein the two traditions lie in complementary distribution. The objective of the present study is threefold. First, the essay aims to evince Freneau's deliberate use of distinct esthetic devices in the elaboration of his public and private writings, and, hence, in the construction of his public and private personae. Second, the essay attempts to expound the differences between Freneau's public and private poetic production in terms of an underlying principle of literary homeostasis, following the use of the term proposed by Timothy Clark (2011, 18-19). Third, the essay endeavors to elucidate the complex dynamics that govern the poet's resort to both conservative and avant-garde fashions, a dynamics defined by Freneau's attempt to deploy his writings as an esthetic vehicle meant to satisfy his needs for communal and individual self-expression, elaboration and assertion.

2. An Enlightened Revolution: Neoclassicism and Romanticism in Late-Eighteenth-Century North America

In a letter to Hezekiah Niles (February 13, 1818), John Adams observed that "[t]he Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations" ([1818] 1856, 282). Adams's remark reads as a fit beginning to this study for three main reasons. First, because it displays an obvious yet commonly overlooked fact about the American Revolution, namely that the Revolution was the product of a process of transition initiated, developed and concluded not on a physical battlefield but in a spiritual, ideological and private arena. Second, because of its writer, one of the major agents in the articulation and elaboration of the ideological foundations that propelled the process of identity transition of "the North American colonists" into "the American people." Third, because of its addressee, a personal friend to the former president who was also a publisher and editor, a position that operated as the central vehicle for the transmission of the Revolutionary ideas propounded by the intellectual elites among the North American population, to which, along with other important figures, Philip Freneau belonged.

The American Revolution, that is, the colonial revolt that granted independence to thirteen colonies formerly under the rule of Britain, bloomed from a prolific volume of philosophical, cultural and literary discourses that cohered around a complex sociopolitical dialectics based on the North American population's demands for the resignification of their national identity. As George Coutris argues, in the aftermath of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), "congeniality between England and her colonies began to disintegrate" (1987, 1), fostering the distressed colonists' examination of their (so-deemed) precarious socioeconomic and political condition. This process of self-scrutiny triggered a growing need to reformulate their status as a community, which resulted, as D.H. Meyer explains, in the increasing use of the label the *American* people within Revolutionary rhetorics as a self-asserting statement that the North American population was now a nascent and altogether distinct community (1976, 172). What exactly was meant by "being American," however, remained a question to be settled, as Jeffrey Pasley concludes, "by force of documents, texts, and clashing forms of rhetorics" ([2009] 2012, 101). Arguably, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the delineation of the defining features that comprised the essence of Americanness became the prime focus of discussion in the dominant discourses produced and consumed by the colonists. Robert Ferguson suggests, indeed, that the ultimate triumph of the Revolution depended on the sort of "consensual literature" that developed during this period with the aim of establishing the ideological foundations upon which the American identity was to be based: "To read the works of the early Republic as they were written is to recognize that the tone, scope, meaning, and shape of those writings were forged decisively in the difficulty of bringing millions to agree" (1997, 6-7). In other words, the multifarious periodicals and pieces of literature that circulated through the colonies sprang from the newborn Americans' collective efforts to articulate a communal identity independent of the British self with which they had so far identified (Meyer 1976, 178). Paradoxically, in their endeavor to outline the specifics of their identity, the American people appropriated the ideological and sociopolitical proposals of an originally European intellectual movement, which was gradually elaborated into what came to be known as the American Enlightenment.

In discussing the influence that the Enlightened proposals had on the process of self-elaboration that the North American people was experiencing, Coutris claims that "the enlightenment ideals exerted a considerable impact in weaving moral values and a national self-image" (1987, 3). The spread of the Enlightened ideals provided the colonists with a new critical spirit that drove them to question the metropolitan government that had allegedly broken the Lockean "social contract" that bound them together. Eventually, the underlying rage at the basis of this questioning incited a growing desire for independence, which Revolutionary rhetorics justified by analogizing the Revolutionary claims to the Enlightened proposals (Blair, Horbenger and Stewart [1964] 1974, 52). It should be noted that, as opposed to its European equivalents, the American Enlightenment did not develop in the philosophical discussions conducted by an elitist sphere. On the contrary, as Meyer asserts, "[t]he Enlightenment was nowhere

a more public event than in America" (1976, 171), whose population "adopted the principles of the Enlightenment and of the age of democratic revolution and exalted them in public documents, national monuments, and, presumably, in their own hearts and minds" (180). The American Enlightenment's prominently public nature today remains an area under intense scrutiny. Yet, the male population's remarkably high rates of literacy and, most significantly, the political deployment of the several periodicals that were sprouting through the colonies appear to have considerably contributed to the rapid diffusion of its key proposals (Himmelfarb 2005, 218). Arguably, the role played by publishers, editors and writers was pivotal for the ultimate triumph of the Revolutionary cause, which explains the substantial amount of literature once devoted to exploring Philip Freneau's production. Poet, polemicist and editor, Philip Morin Freneau (1752-1832) acted as one of the major heralds of the Revolutionary claims during the 1770s and 1780s, a period when he strove to "unite and hold in line a Revolutionary party [by] appeal[ing] to the interests and the prejudices of as many different groups as [he] could" (Blair, Horbenger and Stewart [1964] 1974, 52). His pieces of criticism against the British malady and supporters, together with the poems where he glorified the values and heroes of the Revolution, brought Freneau to great public recognition and, further, urged the American people to join in the fight for both political and sociocultural independence.

Much has been said and written about the role that Freneau and other Revolutionary artists played in the process of identity transition that the colonists were undergoing—see Blair, Horbenger and Stewart ([1964] 1974), Andrews (1987) and Winterer (2005), among others. The literature, architecture and pictorial art produced during the Revolution may be argued to be further manifestations of the Americans' desire to construct a distinctive communal identity through the establishment of a culture and art of their own (Blair, Horbenger and Stewart [1964] 1974, 48). For this purpose, the different North American artistic circles began to grow interested in the appropriation not only of the Enlightened proposals but also of the artistic trend to which these gave way in Europe: Neoclassicism. Caroline Winterer explains how, just as the Enlightened propositions were used to justify the legitimacy of the Revolutionary claims, the type of art produced in North America in the late eighteenth century attempted to deploy "the familiar medium of the Classical world to articulate a critical and complex transition in national mythology" and "us[e] the moral authority of Greek and Roman antiquity to convey new meanings" (2005, 1268). In some ways, a translation of the Enlightened rationalist proposals into the realm of the arts, Neoclassicism resorted to ancient Greek and Roman culture as a guide for creation and criticism, promoting the conception of art as a craft or technique, a product resulting from the imitation of established patterns meant to fulfill a social and didactic purpose (Abrams [1953] 1971, 15, 17). It follows that the literary manifestations produced in North America during the Revolution were expected to collaborate in the process of self-construction that the American people was experiencing, spreading the Enlightened proposals and ascribing the prestige and power associated with the Classical tradition to the newborn American people and culture.

However, it should be remembered that the end of the eighteenth century stands as a major period of transition not only in America but also in Europe. As a reaction against the highly normative Neoclassical trend, a new artistic sensibility began to spread among the European avant-garde, eventually giving rise to Romanticism. As Rafey Habib notes, Romanticism emerged in literature as an alternative mode of writing that centered on the exploration of the subject's inner experience of reality, advocated for the use of the individual's unique creative capacities and vindicated the notion that poetry was meant to fulfill an expressive rather than pragmatic function (2004, 332-333). The relevance of the rise of Romanticism, however, lies in the fact that, as Meyer Howard Abrams expounds, it marked the transition from the perception of the individual as necessarily subordinated to a group to the promotion of the subject as an entity above community itself: "[T]he stress was shifted more and more to the poet's natural genius, creative imagination, and emotional spontaneity [...]. As a result the audience gradually receded into the background, giving place to the poet himself, and his own mental powers and emotional needs, as the predominant cause and even the end and test of art" ([1953] 1971, 21). The literature produced in North America in the mid and late eighteenth century was seemingly articulated as a similar exercise of self-development as the one propounded by the Romantic tradition. Yet, rather than targeted at individual self-construction, it actually impelled the sublimation of the subject into the communal self that was, at that time, still in the making; as Coutris suggests: "The Founding Fathers envisioned the emergence of an American nation based on the traditions of classical republicanism. This view stressed a civic humanism anchored by reason, virtue, duty, and social responsibility. Individualism would be subordinated to the collective good" (1987, 4). This might explain the poor reception that Romanticism had in North America by the end of the eighteenth century in comparison with the great attention it obtained within the continental avant-garde: for the benefit of articulating and diffusing Revolutionary ideals and, hence, the elaboration of the American identity, Neoclassicism remained the preferred mode of writing.

Notwithstanding the above, the writings of various late-eighteenth-century North American authors such as Washington Irving (1753-1859), Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) and Philip Freneau evince some early Romantic influences, which traditional research has tended to analyze in terms of a superficial or anecdotal resort to the avant-garde tradition's esthetics and imagery. As Walter Blair, Theodore Horbenger and Randall Stewart claim, for instance, these authors "use many of the themes which preoccupied their successors—nature and the picturesque, the common man, the legendary past—but they lack the underlying philosophy [...] This is why they are commonly called pre-romantics" ([1964] 1974, 65). To date, the general critical consensus concerning Freneau and his contemporaries' seemingly desultory resort to Romantic fashions remains unquestioned. In the case of Freneau, this is partly due to the fact that, although his poetic production was a major object of study among the critics of the early twentieth century, from the 1960s onwards interest in him and his poetry gradually dwindled,

resulting in a marked shortage of contemporary academic material. Nevertheless, the fact that the poetry of such a canonical public writer as Philip Freneau displays major traces of both Neoclassicism and Romanticism deserves further examination.

For this purpose, the present study sets out to broaden current critical horizons by elucidating the presence of a thus far overlooked systematic pattern within Freneau's production wherein the Neoclassical and Romantic traditions appear to lie in complementary distribution—a distribution conditioned by the public and private nature of the texts, and explainable in terms of an underlying principle of "literary homeostasis," following Timothy Clark's use of the term (2011). In discussing the reactionary spirit controlling the production of late-eighteenth-century British writers, Clark claims that the main aim of these authors was to elaborate "a psychic and ethical counterbalance" (18) to the previous overly restricted, anti-individualistic and rationalist mode of writing, thence attempting to elaborate a less "artificial" style that might privilege a subjective perception and expression of reality. Stemming from Clark's proposals, what follows endeavors to prove how the differences between Freneau's private and public writings may be argued to respond to a similar principle of literary homeostasis, that is, to the author's attempt to construct his public and private personae upon a deliberately discriminative resort to two distinct literary modes: a style adapted to the sociopolitical needs and tastes of his audience versus a style centered on the exploration and elaboration of his individual identity.

3. Neoclassicism and the Public Self

Freneau's public production attests to the author's remarkably percipient poetic sensitivity. Aware of the role that writers were expected to perform in the configuration of the American communal identity, Freneau set out to exert the function of spokesman for the Revolutionary cause when addressing his readers, contributing to the delineation of the American people's specifics by setting out the ideological foundations upon which the American identity was to stand and instructing his audience thereon. Hence, as a manifestation of the "consensual" mode of literature that typifies the writings of the Revolution (Ferguson 1997, 20), Freneau's public verse may be readily defined by its "tendency toward direct statement, moralizing illustration, and frank didacticism" (Brooks, Lewis and Penn Warren 1973, 206), or, rather, for the pragmatic and didactic function it aims to fulfill—the conceptualization and diffusion of a totalizing view of the thirteen colonies' population as a distinctive community homogenized under a unique identity.

"Prefatory Lines to a Periodical Publication" (1815) may exemplify what has been mentioned above. The text is an edition of "Poetical Address" (1797), a salutatory poem with which the writer opened his period of editorship. In the text, Freneau greets his readers and promises to offer good-quality and varied pieces of news and literature: "Here are dishes by dozens; whoever will eat / Will have no just cause to complain of the treat" ([1815] 1976, lines 3-4). Yet, in what appears to be merely an advertising poem, the author

comments on several issues of sociopolitical and literary interest, adopting a markedly patriotic stand and an assumption that his audience demands the commitment of writers and editors to the defense of Enlightened or, rather, American ideals. Throughout the poem, the author argues that his editorial choices, though questioned by some (lines 13-16), will be based on his desire to work "in the service of freedom" (line 17), that is, America and its people. Freneau justifies his position by arguing that "[i]n a country like this […] [t]he trade of an author importance may claim" (lines 21-22). The writer, he asserts, is able to enlighten his readers into reason and virtue, providing them with the tools to protect themselves from those "[w]hose views are to chain and be-darken the mind" (line 24). Freneau goes on to identify good-quality writing with pro-American writing, stating that the job of the writer is essential so that tyranny and ignorance, associated with Europe (lines 19-20), do not triumph over freedom and reason. In other words, for Freneau, the writer acts as the herald and protector of freedom, virtue, reason and, by metonymic association, North America: "[To virtue and freedom] all attracting, all views should submit / All labors of learning, all essays of wit" (lines 51-52).

Freneau closes the poem with a series of stanzas wherein he discusses how America is not the first country in history which can boast "of [its] liberty" (line 30). The author appeals to two ancient republican regimes, Athens and Rome, and comments they were once the seat of "virtue and wisdom" (line 31), much as America, according to him, is in his times. And yet, these formerly splendorous republics, the bastions of freedom and reason, were eventually degraded into enslaving and tyrannical states (lines 43-44). As usual in his public poetry, Freneau associates America with the Classical world. In this text, he proposes an equation between the two milieux to encourage his readers to "learn a sad lesson" (line 46) from the Classical tradition: never to fail to defend freedom, virtue and reason. By never yielding to moral, political or intellectual corruption, the system would be maintained and serve as an example, as Freneau puts it, "for the honor of man" (line 56), obliterating tyranny once and for all.

Although edited in 1815, the text offers a good overview of the literary stance that Freneau adopted throughout his career as a public writer. The author states that his major concern when addressing his audience will be the production of a type of poetry where a didactic, pragmatic function and a patriotic, pro-American content will predominate. Not coincidentally, the virtues that Freneau presents as intrinsically American—freedom and reason—and the vices that he associates with Europe—tyranny and ignorance—are the attributes and flaws which the Enlightenment respectively privileged and combatted. The poet presents the Enlightened ideals as being at the core of the American identity and suggests their obliteration would lead not only to a new tyrannical government but also to the loss of Americanness itself. Significantly, the idealization of America and its people as the physical manifestation of the Enlightened proposals is a recurrent motif of Freneau's public poetry. "American Liberty," published in John Holt's *New York Journal* in 1775, for instance, also discusses the Enlightened ideals as fundamental traits of the American self. In the text, Freneau examines a number of parallelisms between the current state of affairs

in the colonies and their early history, praising the American people and identifying the British as their malady. Hence, the poet justifies the Revolution as a necessary vindication of reason and virtue, exhorting the American population to join in a legitimate fight for independence while elaborating the American identity upon the construction of an Other.

The poem begins by offering a brief account of the early history of North America. Freneau alludes to the first settlers as an example of a subjugated people who refused to tolerate the tyranny of a British king and sought freedom in the New World (Freneau [1775] 1963, lines 31-38). After this account, Freneau addresses his fellow colonists and urges them not to "submit to what [their] fathers shunn'd before" (line 90), tyranny, but to "fight and in [the Revolutionary] cause be slain" (line 94) if necessary. Freneau justifies the fight by implicitly appealing to the Lockean social contract which bound the colonies and the British metropolis, but which the latter had broken. According to the text, no "oath [bound the British] to act below the worth of man" (lines 108-109), to "enslave their brethren in a foreign land" (line 106) or advocate for "vile despotic sway" (line 110). By alluding to the mid-eighteenth-century British colonial policies, Freneau dismisses any potential anti-Revolutionary claim, whether based on fear or treason to America (lines 125-138). As he asserts, nothing "[c]ould draw the virtuous man from virtue's way" (line 163) for "Virtue disdains to own tyrannic laws, / Takes part with freedom and assumes its cause" (lines 165-166).

It should be noted that the poet consistently constructs the American and British communities as inherently antonymous throughout the text. While the Americans are depicted as a "virtu[ous]" (line 300), "honor[able]" (line 215) and "brave" (line 263) people, led by reason and "by heaven inspir'd" (line 141) to protect freedom (lines 7-10), the British are depicted as a "cruel" (line 133), "fiend[ish]" (line 188), brutish (lines 116-118) and "alien" (line 303) people. This pattern of antonymic correspondences is rendered even clearer in descriptions of General George Washington (1732-1799) and King George III (1738-1820). According to the author, only liberty should rule in America; George III was, thus, nothing but a foreign oppressor. Freneau attempts to justify his claims by appealing to reason, legitimizing the Revolution by claiming that the British king had broken oaths "that th'Arch-Devil would blush to violate" (line 184). The representative of the British cause is depicted as a "foe to truth" (line 185), a "devilish" (line 186) and abusive ruler "[w]hose lengthen'd reign no deed of worth should grace" (line 177). The poet suggests the king's supporters are just as brutish and insidious, asserting the British have been "[b]less'd with as little sense as God e'er gave" (line 192) and are hence led by ambition and lies. This is why, Freneau explains, the British army, "[w]ho fights to take [the Americans'] liberty away, / Dead-hearted fights and falls an easy prey" (lines 99-100). This description of King George III clearly intentionally opposes that of General Washington, the representative of the American cause, whom the poet portrays as a mighty figure who could have "aw'd / A Roman Hero, or a Grecian God" (lines 221-222), being a "bold" (line 221) and "undaunted" (line 224) leader responsible for the protection of "New Albion's freedom" (line 219).

As expected of a wartime poem, the author presents his enemy with a series of negative features while praising the virtues of his faction. Yet, Freneau's aim is not to criticize the British per se, but to justify the Revolutionary claims by evincing his enemy's wickedness. Hence, he exemplifies in thorough detail and in a sorrowful tone how the British, referred to as "strangers" at several points in the text (lines 106, 207, 303), first abused and then attacked the Americans: "Ah, see with grief fair Massachusetts' plains, / The seat of war, and death's terrific scenes" (lines 21-22). Through this depiction, Freneau encourages his readers to join in a war portrayed not as a causeless insurgence against their own kin, but as a legitimate fight against foreign tyrants and brutes. Still, as suggested above, the portrayal of the British and American peoples as inherently antonymic is not accidental; rather, the terms that the poet deploys in the text are deliberately meant to fulfill a markedly sociopolitical function. The poem can be seen as an exercise of "Othering," following the use of the term proposed by Lajos Brons (2015). The author defines "Othering" as "the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks" (2015, 70). In his public writings, Freneau renders the British with a series of vices that systematically oppose the virtues ascribed to the Americans. The poet finds an Other in the British and, thereby, constructs the American self through binary opposition: the British self functions, therefore, as the foil to American identity.

To a certain extent, the text follows the proposals which Freneau articulates in "Prefatory Lines to a Periodical Publication." "American Liberty" has a clearly patriotic message, meant to carry out a didactic and propagandistic function by legitimizing the Revolution through the praise of America and criticism of the British. The poet provides the reader with several arguments to assert the rightfulness of the American cause at a political, social and even moral level. In both texts, Freneau analyzes his people's enemy, elaborating on the antonymic correspondences between his Self (the American people) and its Other (the British). Ultimately, the author attempts to outline the American self by means of the appropriation of the Enlightened proposals and its opposition with a non-Enlightened enemy—a technique of self-construction based on the Othering that the poet also deploys in several other poems such as "On General Washington's Arrival in Philadelphia" (1786b). Originally published in 1783 in the *Freeman's Journal*, the text is an edition of a laudatory poem addressed to General Washington as he returned to Virginia after the end of the war. The poet accumulates a series of compliments celebrating Washington's figure and deeds, further praising the oft-portrayed representative of Americanness through the appropriation of the esthetics, imagery and sociocultural prestige associated with the Classical tradition.

After setting the poem in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, Freneau starts by claiming the world "hail[s] the Hero of [America]" ([1786b] 1975, line 12), that is, General Washington, whose feats have granted him immortality in his renown (lines

14-16) and "due rewards" (line 20). As the poet notes, Washington was a source both of inspiration for his troops (line 41) and of fear for his enemies. Freneau comments that, without him, the Revolution could have never been victorious (lines 47-48) and insists that his praise is not to be taken as "swelling verse" (line 49), since, he asserts, Washington does not need such vain compliment: "[W]ithout such aid [the general's] triumphs spread" (line 51). Freneau further praises his attainments by suggesting writers are not able to faithfully reproduce his figure and acts of grandeur (lines 93-95). Yet, as the poet underlines, Fame, the goddess, and her "thousand tongues" (line 14) will herald the general's glory, ensuring that his persona, actions and victory are known worldwide. To a certain extent, the representation of the American self, embodied in the figure of Washington, follows the same pattern of antonymic correspondences discussed above and, hence, serves a similar sociopolitical function. The general is portrayed as an "honorable" (line 29) and "virtu[ous]" (line 23) "hero" (line 12) and "patriot" (line 72) who fought not for fame or material rewards, but for America and freedom (lines 21-24), whereas the British are depicted as tyrannical (line 38) and monster-like (line 39) figures. Freneau extends his criticism of the British to "the Old World" (line 56), a land presumably controlled by "barbarous laws" (line 57) and "proud" (line 60) despots. Nevertheless, the poet explains, the "sun" (line 85) that the Americans have ignited will light "on other worlds" (line 88), so that tyranny will melt away in other states following the example of America: "Cold climes beneath his influence glow, / And frozen rivers learn to flow" (lines 89-90). Thus, Freneau asserts that the European people, once acquainted with Washington's fame and the Revolution's triumph, will "learn instruction from the New [World]" (line 58) and fight against tyranny in the name of freedom, virtue and reason.

The imagery used to praise the figure of Washington is most noteworthy. The general is equated to a military leader from the early Roman republic, Cincinnatus (lines 77-78). The poet refers to Washington as America's "hero" (lines 12, 34, 47) and calls upon Classical literary motifs to magnify his persona: Washington is portrayed as a slayer of beasts (lines 37-40), a man "[grown] immortal by distress" (line 16) who stands as the protective entity or "Genius" (line 13) that guards America. Still, Freneau's depiction does not simply equate Washington with the Classical world; it further presents him as excelling in terms of its models of heroism. Favored by the goddess of Virtue (lines 23-24), Washington's feats have granted him unparalleled glory: "What Muse can boast of equal lays" (line 92). His deeds are far "brighter" (line 35) than those of Classical heroes for, as Freneau claims, "[f]or ravag'd realms and conquer'd seas / Rome gave the great imperial prize" (lines 31-32). The general, however, has "gain[ed] those heights a different way" (line 36). Freneau's praise is thus based upon the establishment of a number of correspondences between the Classical world and the figure of Washington. Yet, the superiority of the latter is always underlined.

In discussing the use of Classical imagery in the Revolutionary and early Republican periods, Stuart Andrews notes that "the symbols, slogans, political ideas and architectural forms of the American Revolution are an impressive tribute to the power of Classical literature in moulding the minds of men of action" (1987, 42). Late-eighteenth-century

North American art, politics and architecture are doubtless inheritors of the Classical tradition. Still, rather than a "tribute," the use of Classical imagery may be seen as yet another device for communal self-construction based on an exercise of appropriation and opposition. In his public writings, Freneau set out to channel the American self through the appropriation of Classical literary patterns. As Winterer claims, the colonists regarded the Classical world as a symbol of power and prestige (2005, 1268). By reading America, its people and its representatives in terms of the Classical world, Freneau aims to ascribe the positive values associated with this tradition to the American identity. But the relationship that the poet establishes between the American and the Classical milieux often steps beyond mere parallelism. The Americans are not only equated to the Classical world; they are rendered superior. Somehow, Freneau appears to find in the Classical world not a debased contrary, but an illustrious and respectable Other, which, though a most laudable foil, is ultimately excelled by its better—the American self.

"On General Washington's Arrival in Philadelphia" (1786b) proves how Freneau delineated the American identity through opposition to an Other, through the appropriation of the Enlightened ideals and through the filter of the Classical tradition. In the text, the author is most concerned with the portrayal of the triumph of the Revolutionary claims, embodied in the figure of General Washington, as self-asserting attainment. For Freneau, the success of the Revolution confirmed the political and sociocultural independence of the American people for which he had so fervently advocated during the war. Godfrey Hodgson argues that the aftermath of the Revolution brought a number of socioeconomic and political developments to the newborn nation that contributed to spreading the view of the North American people as a community that was both respectable and somewhat special, indeed: "[A] new and dynamic republic was coming into existence under the banner of a political ideology that was [deemed] genuinely new [...]. This was seen by Americans as an ideology of liberty" (2009, 60). The Americans should now rejoice, but also serve as an example for the rest of the world. Encouraged by the triumph of the Revolution, therefore, Freneau and his contemporaries started to portray the American self as both Enlighten*ed* and Enlighten*ing*—a common post-Revolutionary depiction that, developed from ideas already cherished by the early colonists, lay the foundations of what came to be known as the myth of "American Exceptionalism" (Madsen 1998, 38).

4. Romanticism and the Private Self

As the analysis provided illustrates, Freneau's public production portrays the utter submission of the poet to the audience that his work addresses. The poet's "I" rarely occurs in his public verses, for Freneau therein resolved to blend his individual self into the totalizing communal identity or "We" that the American people so fervently needed and that he so earnestly set to define. As discussed above, Freneau's public persona was inherently defined in pluralistic terms, which explains why, as he states in "Prefatory Lines to a Periodical Publication," his public verse was always "adapt[ed] to the taste

of the day" (Freneau [1815] 1976, line 10). In parallel to his public writings, however, Freneau penned a number of poems where, as Richard Vitzthum argues, he adopted a less political stance and focused on the exploration of a set of topics intimately related to his private sphere, privileging his artistic sensitivity and his subjective perception of reality over the non-private concerns and modes of self-representation that typify his public production (1978, 12). To evince this, this section centers on the analysis of a selection of texts where the poet primarily addresses his individual experiences, reflections and concerns, and where he therefore departs from the literary and esthetic conventions that define his public verse in order to resort to the mode of writing which the continental avant-garde was starting to formulate.

"The Power of Fancy" (1786a) may serve as an insightful introduction to the commitment of Freneau's private poetry to the need to give literary preeminence to the poet's subjective experience of reality. Written in 1770, the text portrays imagination as a superior creative power that enables the poet to transcend the barriers of the physical world and, hence, incorporate supranatural experiences into his writings. It begins by personifying fancy as the "regent of the mind" (Freneau [1786a] 1975, line 4), a powerful entity engaged in swift and constant wandering, whose "restless" (line 1) nature is exemplified by the accumulation of a set of images where, transported by this winged creature, the poet engages in a world journey, traveling to far-off places such as Norway (line 64), India (line 113) and Tahiti (line 120). Fancy does not, however, only transport the poet through space: it also grants him the ability to travel to the past and visit the "faded scenes" (line 101) of lands that, although consumed by time, are rendered into "livelier colours" (line 108) by the power of imagination.

The speaker's description of fancy's power to traverse time and space implies that fancy is not limited by physical constraints, which is further emphasized by the fact that it allows the speaker to transcend into supranatural dimensions: Fancy leads the poet to the skies, where they listen to "the song of angels" (line 33), after which they descend into hell, "the prison of the fiends" (line 42), only to reemerge in the utopian land of Arcadia (line 47). It should be noted that neither of the experiences that the text describes is mediated by the poet's senses: they are all filtered by the creative potency of fancy since, as the poet underlines, "[s]ense [could] never follow [Fancy]" (line 82) for she is even "[s]wifter than […] instantaneous rays of light" (lines 61-62). Significantly, as Vitzthum suggests, the poem depicts fancy "as the activity of mind celebrated by the mid-[eighteenth]-century British poets—memory cut loose from its sense-experience moorings, splicing together previously unrelated data stored in the brain and creating images not found in nature" (1978, 72). As portrayed in the text, fancy is indeed not an imitative faculty, unavoidably reliant on memories or physical experiences. On the contrary, fancy is able to engender experiences not dependent on sensible stimuli. This is the reason why the poem opens and closes by referring not to reason, but to fancy as the quality that truly proves humans' "[r]esemblance to the immortal race" (Freneau [1786a] 1975, line 10). The poet equates the creative power of human fancy

to God's by claiming that the whole creation is but the product of divine imagination: "Ah! what is all this mighty whole [...] But Fancies of the Power Divine" (lines 12-14). Granted by divinity, the power of fancy offers humans a similar opportunity to create "[e]ndless images of things" (line 143), one that cannot be found in the physical world—"In thy painted realms reside [...] Ideal objects, such a store, / The universe could hold no more" (lines 142-146). A claim that the poet strives to prove by using his own imagination to travel across and beyond nature in the text.

The poem portrays Freneau's rejection of the Lockean view of the human mind as a passive receptor, dependent on external experiences and sensory input. As Rafey Habib suggests in discussing late-eighteenth-century European philosophy, "in the wake of the philosophical systems of [Fichte, Schelling and Hegel] human perception [was seen as] playing an active role rather than merely receiving impressions passively from the outside world" (2004, 332). Freneau follows his European contemporaries and advocates a view of the human mind as an active principle, ruled by fancy rather than reason. The poem celebrates the creative potency of the human mind and, implicitly, the author's ability to create impressions not based on sensible experiences but on the transient nature of his imagination, privileging the use of the individual's subjective skills as a legitimate source of artistic inspiration. In effecting the power of fancy to transcend the limitations of the senses, the poet manages to exert the faculty that, as he states, proves his resemblance to the divinity. "The Power of Fancy" provides a good overview of the literary principles at the core of Freneau's private production. Following Abrams, Freneau's private texts can be argued to fulfill a markedly "expressive" function, for these poems are not meant to be "an end, an instrument for getting something done" ([1953] 1971, 15), but are rather "defined in terms of the imaginative process which modifies and synthesizes the images, thoughts, and feelings of the poet" (22). Hence, as opposed to the didactic and propagandistic function that Freneau's public poetry fulfills, his private texts, as the poem claims, are based on the exercise of imagination to externalize, explore and understand his inner, private self.

As suggested above, Freneau is primarily concerned with the projection of his individual voice onto his private writings. In order to do so, the poet often resorts to nature, whose presence is, it must be acknowledged, highlighted in his public texts as well. Indeed, Freneau recurrently resorts to nature in his public writings to depict America as the physical manifestation of the Enlightened ideals, reading New England as an idealized Arcadia. Freneau's private poetry, however, particularly displays a more complex depiction and understanding of the natural world. Nature becomes the medium whereby the author channels his reflections, feelings and apprehensions. In some cases, as in "The Beauties of Santa Cruz" (1779), nature stands as a vast source of spiritual renewal. In others, such as "The Vernal Ague" (1786), nature becomes a gloomy and unsympathetic setting to which the poet helplessly turns for shelter. The representation of nature in Freneau's private poetry, then, varies in accordance with the poet's mood and state of mind. Yet, despite its multifarious manifestations, nature

always channels Freneau's observations toward the bonds that connect fauna, flora and humans, his reflections upon transience, life and death, and, in essence, his attempt to project his inner self into his private poetic writings.

"The Wild Honey Suckle" (1795) may help to illustrate the author's attempt to appeal to nature as a means to channel his individual identity. First published in the *Columbian Herald* (Charleston, SC), the text is one of Freneau's most frequently anthologized poems. In the text, the poet addresses a wild honeysuckle, praising the flower, whose beauty, though simple, induces his lament on the brevity of life. The poem is structured in four sestets that follow the speaker's observation of the wild honeysuckle and the consequent development of his understanding of the flower, its surroundings, and the very essence of natural and human existence. The poet begins by addressing the honeysuckle as a "fair flower" (Freneau [1795] 1976, line 1) "[h]id in [a] silent, dull retreat" (line 2), a shelter in the midst of the wilderness. Nature itself, depicted as a protective entity that counsels and guards the flower (lines 7-8), is claimed to have "planted here the guardian shade / And sent soft waters murmuring by" (lines 9-10). Protected by Nature from external agents, the honeysuckle has been able to "grow" (line 1) "[u]ntouch'd" (line 3) and "[u]nseen" (line 4). The speaker praises the honeysuckle's beauty throughout the text, for, although simple and "little" (line 4), he deems it superior even to paradisiacal flowers (line 15-16). However, the honeysuckle's "charms" (line 13) are not only naively described as a source of sensuous pleasure; they also induce the poet's lament on the flower's eventual and inevitable decay and death: "I grieve to see your future doom" (line 14). In the last stanza, the speaker melancholically reflects on the brevity of the flower's existence. The poet notes that the honeysuckle's "little being" (line 20) emerged from "the morning suns and evening dews" (line 19). Before its birth, the flower was "nothing" (line 21), for it did not exist but in a vacuum of non-existence. For this reason, the speaker argues that, after death, the honeysuckle will be "the same" (line 22), ceasing its existence and returning to naught. In the end, as the poet muses, the flower's life spans a "space between" (line 23) pre-existence and post-existence—a brief hour, indeed, "[t]he frail duration of a flower" (line 24).

In discussing the poem, Brooks, Lewis and Penn Warren claim that "one has to regard the poem as sentimental; it exhibits superficial reaction rather than presenting a profound insight" (1973, 207). The text may be described as a sentimental poem. The speaker's melancholy pervades the description of the wild honeysuckle, as well as his final lament on its unavoidable death and the fragility and brevity of its existence. Yet, the speaker's attitude toward the honeysuckle is not only melancholic, it is also sympathetic, to the extent that he even refers to the flower in human terms at several points: the honeysuckle is "fair" and "comely" (Freneau [1795] 1976, line 1), its branches "greet" (line 4), if abused, it may cry (line 6), etc. Hence, though sentimental, the poem is also profoundly introspective: the author is using the flower as a vehicle to reflect on human existence. The personification of the honeysuckle is likely meant to equate the human and the natural experience: just as the flower is allowed a brief span of time to live, only to eventually perish, so too are humans. In this reading, the text is not a superficial description of the

flower or the speaker's feelings, but a somewhat nihilistic reflection on the brevity and fragility of human and nature's existence, and on death, obliterating and unavoidable.

"The Deserted Farm-House" (1809) is yet another poem that illustrates the features discussed above. Originally published in 1785 in the *Freeman's Journal* (Philadelphia, PA), the text is an edition of a lyric poem where the speaker's observation of the ruins of an abandoned farmhouse induces his melancholic reflections on the merciless and unavoidable passing of time. Although centered on the description of the farmhouse's ruins and potential past, the poem ultimately celebrates the poet's unique talent and sensitivity, which allow him to generate impressions not found in nature and to find in the seemingly unpleasant a source of artistic inspiration. The text begins with the speaker's reference to the ruins of a farmhouse that has been almost utterly consumed by "the insatiate tooth of time" (Freneau [1809] 1976, line 1). Before the rest of the structure crumbles down, the speaker sets out to record the farmhouse in his writing: "I seize my humble theme / From these low ruins" (lines 3-4). The poet addresses the reader by means of imperatives—"Behold" (line 5), "See!" (line 7)—as he proceeds to melancholically describe the building, emphasizing its physical decay and its loneliness (lines 5-6). The farmhouse's present "dismal" (line 40) state is further emphasized by the fact that the speaker does not merely describe the ruins: inspired by its remains, he also fancies on its potential past (lines 28-29), which, as he stresses, is now forever gone: "Time has reduced the fabrick to a shed" (line 38). Whatever its past might have been, the farmhouse's ruins induce the poet's meditation on time and decay, which centers on the connection between the ruins and two major ancient cities, Rome and Joppa. Both cities, though once powerful and "of splendour [...] divine" (line 25), were eventually consumed by Time and, as Freneau puts puts it, lie "in tears" (line 24). In his public writings, the poet often appeals to Classical and, sometimes, Biblical references to emphasize the grandeur of America and its people. In this passage, however, he resorts to these references to equate the farmhouse and these cities' experiences, suggesting that splendor and power are not eternal, but subjected to the same devouring force that has led an ordinary farmhouse to ruins: time.

The text evinces several points of divergence from the literary proposals Freneau articulates and follows in his public poetry. First, the poem fulfills a markedly expressive function, rather than a didactic and propagandistic one, its main concern being with the speaker's description of the dismal ruins of a farmhouse and his melancholic reflections thereupon. Second, in relation to "The Power of Fancy" (1786a), the poet is not merely describing the ruins; he is recreating their past by means of the power of his imagination, proving fancy is not just an imitative faculty, for it can create impressions not found in nature. The text is particularly revealing, however, because of the terms the poet uses to portray himself as a unique being, gifted not only with the creative power of fancy but also with a special sensitivity. The poem concludes with the speaker's lament upon the ruins' decay; yet, in his words, there is implicit self-praise, for, in essence, he asserts he is the only person who can be moved enough by a bleak and forlorn farmhouse's fate to write a poem in its honor: "And none but I its dismal case lament—/ None, none,

but I o'er its cold relics mourn" (Freneau [1809] 1976, lines 40-41). In his private poetry, Freneau often makes suggestions of this sort. "The Power of Fancy," for instance, concludes with a similarly implicit self-praise: "Come, O come—perceiv'd by none, / You and I will walk alone" (Freneau [1786a] 1975, lines 153-154). The poet "walk[s] alone" with Fancy, which suggests not only that he does not need his senses or memories in order to create but also that he possesses a unique poetic imagination or genius that enables him to appreciate reality in a different, more sensitive way.

In discussing the transition from early to late-eighteenth-century literature, Abrams comments how, for several British authors such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Blake, "[t]he poet's audience [was] reduced to a single member, consisting of the poet himself […]. The purpose of producing effects upon other men, which for centuries had been the defining character of the art of poetry, now serve[d] precisely the opposite function: it disqualifie[d] by proving it to be rhetoric instead" ([1953] 1971, 25). Freneau's public poetry, as stated, is inherently defined in pluralistic terms. In his private writings, however, the author's self is no longer blended into a communal voice; rather, Freneau's private poetry acts as an exercise of self-assertion. The poet advocates his uniqueness as an individual endowed with a special sensitivity that enables him to perceive reality in a different way. This is why the poet makes use of the ruins of a farmhouse as a source of inspiration and melancholic brooding on transience. Ultimately, the description of the ruined farmhouse is but the excuse that the poet finds to discuss his apprehensions and individuality. Freneau's private writings are, in fact, defined in egotistic terms and primarily centered on the poet's concerns, feelings and reflections, advocating for his individual talent to perceive and project reality in unique terms.

Notwithstanding the above, in the three texts discussed in this section, the influence of British literature on Freneau should be noted. In "The Deserted Farm-House" (1809), this can be seen in the esthetics and subject matter that the poet employs. Freneau's melancholic attention to a farmhouse's ruins follows the delight in picturesque settings that typifies late-eighteenth-century British esthetics. The portrayal of the poet as a unique, gifted being, the use of nature as a channel for self-exploration or the promotion of imagination as a creative faculty superior to reason further evince the influence of the continental avant-garde fashions on the author's private writings. Despite his claims, Freneau's private poetry suggests the poet's adherence to the incoming literary tradition that was being developed in Europe during the years when he was active as a poet. Still, it may be argued that the poet does not target mere imitation. In his private writings, Freneau attempts to project a voice of his own, making use of poetry as a conduit for self-construction. For this purpose, the author carries out an exercise of literary appropriation, directed at elaborating a personal style that deliberately deviates from the conventions upon which his public poetry and persona are constructed. In other words, the poet's private writings portray Freneau's attempt to carry out a homeostatic process of stylistic- and self-elaboration rooted in the appropriation of the new fashions that were being developed in Europe and that advocated, among other things, for the value of the individual over the communal.

5. Final Remarks

The analysis carried out in the present study allows the following conclusions to be drawn. On the one hand, Philip Freneau's public persona is elaborated upon the use of Neoclassical fashions. This can be seen at three different levels. First, Freneau's public poetry has a markedly patriotic nature, while also serving a didactic or propagandistic function. Second, Freneau's public poetry fulfills a markedly sociocultural function: contributing to the process of elaboration of the American communal identity. The author makes use of poetry as a conduit for dialectical discourses on Americanness. In essence, he advocates the supremacy of the Enlightened ideals and posits them as the constituent traits of the American people's identity, further delineated by means of the establishment of a set of antonymic correspondences with an Other, the British and the Europeans. Third, Freneau channels the American self through the filter of the Classical world, reading Americanness in terms of the Classical tradition and thereby appropriating its associated legitimacy, prestige and power. On the other hand, Freneau's private persona is constructed upon the use of Romantic fashions. Again, this can be seen at three different levels. First, Freneau's private poetry deviates from his public writings' pragmatic or didactic nature, instead aiming at the expression and exploration of the poet's feelings, worries and reflections. Second, Freneau's private poetry is markedly egotistic and, hence, centered on the elaboration of the author's individual identity. The poet advocates and celebrates his unique talent and sensitivity, privileging his individual perception of reality and the creative potency of his imagination over the communal concerns and modes of representation that characterize his public production. Third, Freneau's private poetry departs from his public production's attention to the Classical world and figures, channeling his private identity through alternative sources of esthetic inspiration.

As the analysis evinces, therefore, the poet's deployment of Neoclassical and Romantic fashions conforms to a systematically discriminative pattern wherein the two traditions lie in complementary distribution, conditioned by the public or private nature of the texts. Paradoxically, in spite of his public pieces of criticism against Europe and Britain, and in spite of his private claims for individuality and creativity, neither Freneau's public nor private personae can be said to be the original product of the author's imagination: both are constructed upon the appropriation of originally European literary, esthetic and ideological proposals. The poet does not merely imitate, however, but carries out a complex exercise of homeostatic stylistic and self elaboration, deliberately outlining his public and private selves by means of two distinct literary modes. Ultimately, Freneau's poetic production evinces the author's restless and percipient sensitivity. Concerned with the projection of a public poetry in accordance with the tastes and needs of his audience and of a private poetry that explored and asserted his individuality, the poet engaged in a search for literary and esthetic models that could serve his twofold process of self elaboration—a search invariably governed by an underlying principle of homeostatic stylistic appropriation.

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Álvaro Albarrán Gutiérrez is a postgraduate student from the University of Seville, from which he received both a bachelor's degree in English Literature and a master's degree in Literature and Culture. His current field placement is with the University of Seville's Department of English and North American Literature, where he has provided academic assistance from 2013 to 2018. He is interested in comparative literature, Romantic studies, and social-cognitive perspectives on identity construction processes.

Address: Departamento de Literatura Inglesa y Norteamericana. C/ Palos de la Frontera, s/n. 41004, Seville, Spain. Tel.: +34 954553817.

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Filming Metatheatre in Gregory Doran's *Macbeth:* Refracting Theatrical Crises at the Turn of the Century

Víctor Huertas Martín
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)
vmhuertas@invi.uned.es

This article contends that Gregory Doran's production of *Macbeth* (2001) was, when translated to television, transformed into a metaplay. Although various previous analyses of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* have explored its metatheatricality, this artistic concept has not been tackled with respect to this production in particular. In this work I am examining Doran's laying bare of the film's theatrical apparatus as well as its refractions of the crises occurring at the Royal Shakespeare Company while the film and the stage production were in process. I will address the status of the main characters as players in a theatricalized microcosm, explore the film's backstage-onstage dynamics and discuss how the production's visual meanings illuminate the company's institutional crisis at the turn of the century.

Keywords: Gregory Doran; *Macbeth*; Royal Shakespeare Company; metatheatre; backstage-onstage; *ensemble*

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Filmando metateatro en *Macbeth* de Gregory Doran: refractando crisis teatrales en el cambio de siglo

Este artículo sostiene que la producción de *Macbeth* de Gregory Doran (2001) fue, en su traslado a la televisión, convertida en pieza metateatral. Aunque algunos estudios sobre *Macbeth* de Shakespeare han tratado la metateatralidad del texto, este concepto artístico no ha sido estudiado en esta producción. Mi intención es revisar la puesta en evidencia del aparato teatral y su paralelismo con las crisis que afectaron a la Royal Shakespeare Company mientras la propia puesta en escena y la cinta se producían. Analizaré la condición de los personajes principales como actores en un microcosmos teatralizado. Por

otro lado, estudiaré también las dinámicas entre el espacio escénico y los bastidores en la película para determinar cómo la configuración visual de la producción ilustra la crisis institucional sufrida por la compañía durante el cambio de siglo.

Palabras clave: Gregory Doran; *Macbeth*; Royal Shakespeare Company; metateatro; bastidores-escenario; *ensemble*

1. Introduction

Gregory Doran's production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) at the Swan Theatre (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1999), was adapted for Channel Four in collaboration with Illuminations Media and broadcast on January 1, 2001 (Doran 2001). The film's appeal was based on its faithfulness to the staging at Stratford. Ben Brantley's review for the *New York Times* had already testified to how thrilling the production was: "Without making the obvious bids for topical relevance, the director, Gregory Doran, has shaped Shakespeare's tale [...] into a harrowing and disturbingly funny parable for the dawn of the 21st century" (2000). Although half-way through rehearsal the production changed from Jacobean to modern dress, Doran was adamant that it did not relate to any specific, and in his view, irrelevant, contemporary setting—see interview in Doran (2001). The film was, rather, seeking a sense of "vivid neutrality"—a phrase attributed to Doran (Wyver 2016). In terms of its setting, producer John Wyver indeed stated that neither the director nor the team wanted a "radically different adaptation" of the stage production ([2007] 2015, 282). Nevertheless, he continues, they wanted to depart from the traditional "multiple cameras" approach seen in TV plays since, although "cost- and time-effective," this did not guarantee the "expressive potential of the screen that this process ought to be able to achieve" nor "sufficient control of what you put on the screen" (282; emphasis in the original). They decided instead to film using a single camera at a staging at the London Roundhouse, a site-specific performance in a venue adapted to resemble a warzone without power lines.

The London Roundhouse, built in 1847, was commissioned by Robert Stephenson, chief engineer of the plan to establish the railway line between London and Birmingham, and designed by Robert Dockray. Its function was to store and maintain engines and supplies, and, as such, the one-hundred-and-sixty-foot diameter circular space was divided into twenty-four bays and a turntable at its center enabled movement of the engines so that they could enter each of them. The building was topped by a conical roof supported by twenty-four columns. For many decades after it had fallen into disuse by the railway it was employed as a warehouse for liquor, although its structure was widely admired by architecture and arts students. In 1964, thanks to an initiative by Arnold Wesker, it was turned into "Centre 42," whose function was to harbor the promotion of new artistic works. Wesker's intention as he stated, was to spread the best existing high and popular cultures, to build "[a] cultural hub, which, by its approach and work, [would] destroy the mystique and snobbery associated with the arts [...] where the artist is brought in closer contact with his audience, enabling the public to see that artistic activity is part of their daily lives" (Centre 42 Annual Report 1961-1962; quoted from Roundhouse Trust, n.p.). Over the next twenty years, the Roundhouse's arena hosted music performances from Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Sex Pistols, The Doors, David Bowie, DJ Jeff Dexter, Black Sabbath, Genesis, Marc Almond, Elton John and the Rolling Stones as well as various Sunday night

gigs. It also saw theatrical performances of Tony Richardson's *Hamlet* (1969), spectacles by the Living Theatre, Peter Brook's *Themes on The Tempest* (1968), Steven Berkoff's *Metamorphosis* (1969) and Kenneth Tynan's *Oh! Calcutta!* (1970). In 1983, however, Thelma Holt, the then owner, decided to close it down for lack of sponsorship. After many people showed an interest in taking over the venue, in 1996 the Norman Trust bought the building to put it to use again (Roundhouse Trust, n.p.).

The simulated realism of the film was embedded in a theatrical microcosm with a main stage—the Roundhouse's arena—and the lower galleries, cellars, upper galleries, rooms, wings and other spaces being used as architectural as well as symbolic backdrops in this self-contained world. Anthony Davies has stated that in the theatre we are too aware of the artificially illuminated space and that performers are waiting in the wings ([1988] 1991, 5). This principle is, in fact, deployed—rather than hidden—in the film, and the film's postmodernist features (Greenhalgh 2003), its globalization-infused values (Burnett 2007, 50) and its *vérité* language (Hindle [2007] 2015, 263-264; Wyver [2007] 2015, 282-283) have all been analyzed by scholars. That said, the film's reflexivity has not been studied yet.

I argue here that the film transforms this *Macbeth* into an embedded metaplay which negotiates issues connected to the theatre as an art form and as an institution. According to Pedro J. Pardo García, metatheatre turns the theatrical medium into its object of representation, its *representamen* into its *representandum* (2017, 409). For metatheatre scholars, theatre does not merely represent the world but rather stresses the world's theatricality. Additionally, characters in metatheatrical plays become aware of their own condition as performers (Abel 2003, vi; Freese Witt 2014, 14). In Doran's film, metatheatre blurs the distinction between the story told and the embedded performance and it is through its performance that the story comes to a resolution. However, Pardo García also says that, strictly speaking, this conceit is only metatheatrical if the work is seen in the theatre (2017, 11). I, however, subscribe to Lionel Abel's more expansive definition—which includes novels within the metatheatrical project (2003, 23)—and with Freese Witt's view that we should not focus so much on defining metatheatre as on observing what it does (2014, 9). Metatheatre does not operate as an abstract metaphor here. Instead it should be viewed as a starting point from which to deal with the "negotiation, refraction, conversation and intervention" which, as Ramona Wray and Mark T. Burnett suggest, affect the relation between the text and "its moment of production" (2005, 85). The interrelation between what is shown on screen and the external and internal conflicts and ideological shifts taking place at the RSC when both the performance and the film were produced will be explored as tenors of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor.

The theoretical background of this article are drawn from the fields of Shakespeare on screen, metatheatre and performance theory, materialist criticism and studies of the history of the RSC. I will explore the treatment of the leading characters as performers in this theatrical world and tackle the film's metatheatricality through its spatial

articulation. Finally, I will deal with the film's refraction of the crisis through which the RSC was going at the time of production. This structure will attempt to explain metatheatre in the film, taking the characters-as-actors' *peripeteia* in this microcosm as a departure point, and then opening the scope of the commentary up to larger themes, resituating metatheatricality as a peephole through which to explore the context, reception and production circumstances of the film.[1]

2. *Macbeth* and Metatheatre

Scholars have written about the theatrical imagery in the playtext. To Caroline F. Spurgeon's analysis of clothing imagery ([1935] 2005, 324-329), Cleanth Brooks added the focus on the hero's theatrical skills: Macbeth "loathes playing the part of the hypocrite—and actually does not play it too well" ([1947] 1960, 32). Decades later, James L. Calderwood analyzed the hero's conception of the world as a restricted path where, in murdering Duncan, he simply acts "in accordance with his part" (1986, 38). Macbeth's inability to stop the consequences of his murders bounds this inconclusive tragedy to re-enactment and supplementation in the hero's mind. Recently, performance and materialist critics have pointed out the shifts between fiction and reality in the play (Wells 2013) and Macbeth's double function as "character" and "actor" (Fox 2013). From the materialist field, Richard Wilson (2013) relates the esthetic metaphor in the playtext to the ideological contentions of the Jacobean period. While, at first sight, the first performances of *Macbeth* might have seemed to confirm the New Historicist notion that Shakespeare was paying homage to the power of King James I (1566-1625), Wilson's Foucauldian reading of the mirror used in act four, scene one points at the potential mediating subversiveness with which the scene seemingly challenged the King's authority (2013, 272-274). This irrecoverable material context of production shows that the esthetic metaphor is a contingent but transferrable conceit. The original production of *Macbeth* by Shakespeare's company was staged at a transition period, for they had recently become the King's Men. Similarly, Doran's *Macbeth* was filmed at another period of transition, months before the RSC initiated a series of radical reforms.

The production's metatheatricality has been suggested previously. Doran argued that the claustrophobic atmosphere at the Swan Theatre made audiences complicit with Duncan's murder: "The space itself remind[ed] you that you [were] part of a theatre metaphor" (Doran 2002). This effect was multiplied in the film since Doran and Ernie Vincze (director of photography) explored the backstage-stage relations within the microcosm of the Roundhouse, which resulted in a politically loaded performative contest. Susan Greenhalgh points out this effect in her analysis of Antony Sher's delivery of Macbeth's "[t]omorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" speech (Shakespeare

[1] This article does not suggest that the RSC's crisis of 2001-2002 constitutes a direct reflection of the Scottish play. Insofar as we might think of Shakespeare's tragedy as a metaplay, this production's stylistics points to aspects of the context of production of the film.

[1623] 2008, 5.5.8-27).[2] When the hero speaks to the camera, he shows "the mixed cynicism and bravado of a contestant about to be voted off the show" and opens a fire door "letting a shocking burst of natural light and traffic noise into what [has] become, despite its initially realist feel, an artificial world" (2003, 107-108). Nevertheless, this comparison between the film and a competitive performance is not developed further. This is precisely the territory I intend to explore.

3. Theoretical Framework

The RSC's work has been received with applause, ambivalence and, sometimes, hostility. Some critics have denounced the company's concessions to the entertainment industry (Coursen 2002, 10). The RSC's hinting at discovering immanent meanings in Shakespeare's works has also been challenged (McCullough 1988; Bulman 1996). Materialist scholars have questioned the company's political agenda, which, according to them, has proved to be, at best, apolitical and at worst, adhering to the "establishment" and absorbing of marginal cultures (Sinfield [1985] 2003). The 1995-2002 period was crucial for the company since flexibilization, realignment, shifts in the company's style and a transition to commercialism marked their development. Media assaults and external and internal criticism gave way to intense debate and a corpus of studies trying to offer critical as well as positive, or at least balanced, narratives on the company's history and their new determination to confront the economic reality of the twenty-first century—see Adler (2001), Chambers ([2004] 2005) and Trowbridge (2013).

Since cultural analyses often privilege radical appropriations of Shakespearean texts, this film might be regarded as another attempt to reconstruct a "faithful" Shakespeare at a time in which post-textual, digital, spectral, media-inflected, new wave and global Shakespeare productions seem more representative of the culture that we inhabit, one with a "less voluminous, or at least less obvious, corpus of screen 'Shakespeares' [although] his works continue to reverberate; and the plays persist as repositories of lore and tradition even as they are reworked as salient signifiers of meaning and knowledge" (Wray and Burnett 2006, 1). Nevertheless, the film under study here takes one aspect of the play—metatheatre—and explicitly reconstitutes it in order to transform it into a vehicle for the ideological dispute reverberating within the material circumstances of its production—see Sinfield ([1985] 2003, 203). In addition, this essay shares its agenda with the resistance of Stephen O'Neill to "claims around Shakespeare's immanence, sovereignty and universalism" in favor of the consideration of "Shakespeare as contingent on historically situated media and users" (2018, 22).

[2] All quotations from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are taken from the The New Cambridge Shakespeare Edition, edited by A.R. Braunmuller (Shakespeare [1623] 2008).

In the 1980s, cultural materialism advocated a focus on contexts of articulation, production and reception of theatre plays (Dollimore [1985] 2003, 4; Bulman 1996, 1). At present, it is taken for granted that Renaissance studies should tackle the specificities of context to carry out solid analyses. At the heart of the RSC's crisis at the turn of the century lied the concept of "ensemble." Referring to the collective work carried by RSC performers, it has been repeatedly used to also define the company's spirit. Yet, the company's history has been marked by its struggles to complement its Arts Council funding with external sponsorship, to challenge official censorship, and to keep its ensemble spirit alive. Internal rivalries, changes in acting as a profession and struggles to meet market demands have tested the company's capacity to live up to its own standards. The company's financial difficulties in the 1990s forced Adrian Noble, artistic director, to carry out radical reforms including embracing a more market-friendly policy which worried a great many. Public attacks on Noble, and RSC membership resignations following his changes in 2001 ensued. Discontent amongst the theatrical profession and the company's staff came out as a consequence of the RSC's management and Noble's project to reform the company led to backstage personnel redundancies, which understandably caused discontent, strikes and upheaval. While the media challenged Noble's decisions, some practitioners defended Project Fleet, Noble's personal and controversial reform project—see Gilbert (2002). Doran supported the project and played a significant part in the Jacobean season at Stratford-upon-Avon when the crisis was at its height (2002). When Noble resigned, Michael Boyd, artistic director between 2003 and 2012, needed to boost the deteriorated company's morale. Institutional efforts were made in this respect, according to the report by Robert Hewison, John Holden and Samuel Jones (2010).

As Robert Stam suggests, narratives emphasizing the creative process "have the virtue of reminding [us] that [...] texts are products, created by individuals or groups and mediated by a complex commercial and cultural apparati" (1992, 71). The RSC's crisis affected a theatrical institution and that crisis is refracted in this film. This anchors Doran's metatheatrical allegory in its production context since the film envisages the Scottish world as theatrically determined. Pardo García defines "metatheatrical allegory" as one which sees life as theatre "since in life we undertake certain roles or patterns of conduct [...] in agreement with certain received guidelines or we impose a script upon ourselves" (2017, 411). These patterns configure Doran's production at the Roundhouse arena, where characters have no choice but to partake in a performance at the heart of which esthetic and ideological struggles are negotiated. Nevertheless, this theatrical world is a spectral one: a ruined theatre without spectators or backstage personnel. Our film's world is an anticipation of what will eventually be for the RSC the need for a new beginning.[3]

[3] Further and more thorough explanations on the RSC's crisis in 2000-2002 can be found in Gilbert (2002), Chambers ([2004] 2005), Hewison, Holden and Jones (2010) and Trowbridge (2013). Additional press sources can help analyze the film within this context (see section 6).

Sarah Hatchuel presents instances of the dialectics between metatheatre and film language in screen Shakespeares which are mainly articulated through characters playing directorial figures, films-within-the-film or characters as performers (2008, 95). Many *fin-de-siècle* Shakespeare films follow the conventions of backstage drama and metaplays where much of the action is developed in the wings and comes to a resolution in a performance (Burnett 2007). This trope is applied for political, nostalgic, romantic, comic and subversive effects. Michael Ingham describes examples of "embedded plays" as "site[s] of ideological and aesthetic conflict" in cinema (2017, 133). As Burnett shows, the global age's "filmic representations whose narratives prioritize theatrical shows and stagings of Shakespearean texts" proliferate (2007, 7). Douglas Lanier analyzes Kenneth Branagh's *In the Bleak Midwinter* (1995), in which "Shakespeare serves as a point of emotional identification between otherwise isolated individuals, a means of articulating their loss of communal feeling and their desire for its re-establishment" through the invocation of amateur theatre ([2002] 2012, 159). Philippa Sheppard associates this metatheatrical proliferation with "prestige" and the "director's longing to be involved with an artistic work that is lasting" (2017, 151). In the essay "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," Andreas Huyssen points out that these productions' use of the "forms of communion" of theatre opposes the inconstancy of the global marketplace with "memory practices" that challenge "the myths of cyber-capitalism and globalization's denial of time and place" with a "temporal anchoring" in reality (2000, 37; quoted in Burnett 2007, 8). Nevertheless, despite the evidence of Doran's interest in upholding this spirit of communion in his stage and his rehearsal work, Burnett mentions the film's emphasis on allusions to "a world with no clear dividing-lines or sharp edges," which gives "no clue [as] to its imagined geographical anchorage" and favors "only the narrative essentials." He continues that "each major player is, literally, cut from the same cloth" (2007, 50), which might reinforce Pardo García's thesis of the metatheatrical allegory as a world curtailing individuality. What remains to be seen is whether, following Pardo García (2017, 146), the film's reflexivity suffices to provoke transgressive *metalepsis*, and if it is possible to add to Burnett's arguments—on both this film and other metatheatrical screen Shakespeares—and find grounds to resituate this film's metatheatricality as a site of dispute in its context of articulation and reception.

4. Characters and Performers

The film enhances the characters' performativity since it circumscribes them within the backstage areas and presents them as trying to dominate the Roundhouse's arena. Several critics have spoken about the difficulties of playing Macbeth's part convincingly in the theatre, due in large part to existing preconceptions of how it should be played. One reviewer of the film said: "The performances tend to overacting as in the porter's speech about equivocation and with Sher's performance, where in the memorable 'tomorrow' speech he is uninvolved and its meaning is discarded" (IMDb 1990-2018, n.p.). As Sher

suggests, Doran and Patsy Rodenburg also had their ideas, justified or not, about how the hero's part needed to be played ([2001] 2009, 346). Sher's admitted anxieties on the subject may also have been related to the prestige of Trevor Nunn's RSC production in 1979 (334). However, Sher says that the part is an "overlap between the character and the actor" (346), which proves that he has detected the character's self-consciousness about his alleged performative inadequacy. This explanation progressively shifts to a focus on Macbeth as an actor who ends up trapped in "a scene by Beckett or Jarry [...] half-führer, half tramp" (344-345). Sher's solution to his block was to embrace Macbeth's performative difficulties.

Sher does not mention having read Calderwood's analysis of the play, but his performance resonates with this text. Calderwood describes Macbeth as a performer willing to be "cabined, cribbed" (Shakespeare [1623] 2008, 3.4.24) within a restricted field so he devises a "diabolical scene [...] in which regicide is not only plausible but obligatory" (1986, 38). The "dagger soliloquy" shows a "self-protective consciousness as it projects inner impulses outward to create a behaviorist world to whose stimuli then it can react" (38). In the film, Macbeth tries to grasp the imaginary dagger. When he fantasizes about the preamble to assassination, the recording mode changes to slow motion, showing Sher's determined walk to Duncan's chamber (2.1.49-56). The lens then returns to the *vérité* mode (2.1.56) and Sher gathers the courage to ascend the stairs to kill the King. This momentary *mise en abyme* inside Macbeth's mind shows a murderer belonging to a fictional world. Sher stresses this as he roleplays his upcoming murders. When he meets Banquo and Fleance at the Roundhouse's arena (2.1. 10-30), he grabs Fleance and playfully acts as though he were strangling him. As king, he repeats the strangling-in-jest, but the effect is the opposite of what he intended: to amuse his small audience of courtiers. After a moment of tension, a laughing Macbeth points at the pale-faced Banquo. Yet, was he really joking? Is not Macbeth's smiling mask revealing his true murderous self? Macbeth is exposed at his crowning ceremony.

Michael David Fox says that Shakespearean metadrama often directs "attention toward the concrete presence of the performing actors [...] by enabling [them] to distance themselves momentarily from the fiction and the role and stand before the spectators in their own concrete bodily and psychic presence" (2013, 214). In performance, as already mentioned, Sher revealed himself as an actor during the "Tomorrow" soliloquy and abandoned the theatre, breaking down the barrier of illusion. Sher says: "Shakespeare deliberately brings Macbeth and the actor face to face at the end of [the soliloquy]. Shakespeare then turns the spotlight on himself, the inadequate playwright" ([2001] 2009, 347). Overthought as Sher's reading of Shakespeare's intentions might have been, Sher's Macbeth perceives himself to be part of an uncanny performance. In this Pirandellian moment on screen, Sher opens the Roundhouse's backdoor and leaves. This confirms our suspicions that this allegorical world was indeed part of a livelier outside world. Macbeth discovers that he has been a puppet reciting lines and acquiring postures he was not comfortable with.

Nevertheless, rather than abandon the theatre, Sher, metaphorically speaking, accepts the lines he feels that someone has written for him. He returns to the theatre. The character's initial subversion is eventually revealed as a necessary step before his final subjection. Inside the Roundhouse's cellar, when he hears the news of the Forest of Birnam approaching, he collects his props—his staff, sword and crown—and escapes before the trees reach him. Later on, when he fights Macduff at the Roundhouse's arena, his death becomes a self-conscious finale. He is momentarily hypnotized by the flashes of light from Macduff's blade. In a final *coup de théâtre*, he tries, with a stylized gesture, to grab his knife before dying.

Harriet Walter's explanation of the performative status of Lady Macbeth is, I think, so apt that it deserves brief reply. Walter says that although Lady Macbeth remains off-stage for a significant length of time, she is assumed to be part of a "partnership that motors" the play's action (2002, 1). She goes on to say that "[a] lot of the rationale I [used] to explain [Lady Macbeth's] behavior was rooted in her remoteness from power" (26). Her backstage position renders thus Walter's work metatheatrically significant. A frequent offstage witness, the actress recalls several moments when she builds up her character by observing *Macbeth*'s soliloquizing on stage. Lady Macbeth's collaboration with her husband's unspoken desire to be king ultimately means her having a chance to have "a role" (33). Yet, her hopes of "perform[ing]" (Shakespeare [1623] 2008, 1.7.69) with her husband are ultimately dashed by Macbeth's decisions to improvise a text over which she has no control (Walter 2002, 39). Their separation takes place as soon as she perceives that her role as co-conspirator "seems to have been written out" (Walter 2002, 46). Lady Macbeth stage-manages, observes and is eventually removed from Macbeth's performance. A much similar patriarchy was predominant at the RSC before Boyd's take-over. Critics talk about the company's family environment, where dissident opinions were often unwelcome and where patriarchalism and testosterone—rather than efficiency—prevailed (Chambers [2004] 2005, 187; Beauman 1982, 338).

5. Offstage and Onstage

Doran lays bare the film's artifice, showing the ruined wings and the arena where power is disputed and performative anxieties are negotiated. The Macbeths' ultimate weakness is their inability to keep acting their parts in front of the thanes or to belong to the ensemble of Duncan's retinue. The "stage fright" experienced by the Macbeths—referred to by Sher ([2001] 2009, 346)—is stressed as the characters remain in both a physical and a symbolic offstage.

Ingham says that the visible offstage space reconfigured in films with embedded plays appears "to subvert the very dimensions of theatricality" (2017, 130). In Doran's *Macbeth*, the fly-on-the-wall approach configures a realistic war scenario. Power lines are gone and semi-ruined buildings harbor witches, savagely treated by soldiers, running

through corridors closely followed by the cameraman. In the wings, the Sisters, who inhabit the backwaters as scapegoats of this male-dominated context (Doran 2006, 12), prepare amulets and crucified voodoo figures for Macbeth's arrival. This progressively shows that this simulacrum is encapsulated in a theatrical world. This theatricality is perceived on the scene where Duncan is restored to power. Once this happens, we see the arena as a fully-fledged stage. This ceremony portrays the King as a divine monarch passing through an illuminated gate into a celestial anteroom. Duncan stands on a catwalk while a choir sings *Te Deum* and his captains grovel before him. When the camera pulls back, following Macbeth, the portal to the other world is shown for what it is: a piece of backlit scenography.

Performative duties in this film generate anxieties which are, in turn, articulated by the iteration of backstage psychological and physical spaces. For William Egginton, drawing from baroque drama and neo-baroque theory, what is true onstage is true in life, namely that people dedicate every speech act and action to a "disembodied gaze" which captures the individual's desires and motivations. Whenever expectations are not met, depression, disappointment and feelings of worthlessness force the individual to negotiate with that gaze (2003, 19). In this film, the Macbeths fail to meet these performative demands. The stark world that they inhabit, with its inadequate facilities and bare walls, depicts this world's classism, which the Macbeths resent. After all, if we regard the characters in this imagined world as actors in a play, the rules of the ensemble would dictate that main characters would frequently play minor characters and understudies in different plays, a premise which, for many different reasons, was always contested at the RSC (Beauman 1982, 302). This is not how this theatrical world in Doran's film operates since here characters occupying the center stage need to be expelled by those waiting and plotting in the wings. As soon as Lady Macbeth reads Macbeth's letter, she runs into their bedroom, opens a big trunk and prepares Macbeth's military suit for performance as she now perceives that it will be his turn to play the lead. Afterwards, she runs into the theatre's upper gallery and looks down on the arena where, minutes previously, we saw Duncan's ceremony. She simulates her own crowning by passing her hands through her hair. When her husband arrives, she washes him and tells him how to act in front of Duncan.

Despite their preparations, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth fall into the state of anxiety that Andrew Filmer situates backstage: Performers "need to physically negotiate the dangers of this marginal zone" (2006, 168). Yet Doran multiplies the Macbeths' stage fright through the iteration of the backstage space. When Macbeth dresses for the dinner in Duncan's honor (Shakespeare [1623] 2008, 1.7.1-12), he looks at himself in a mirror, which marks the endless *mise en abyme* that the film will be turned into. At the dinner table, he steps out of character and abandons the room rushing into the corridors, i.e., he moves into the backstage of the backstage, since the dinner was taking place in a little room in the wings of the venue. This iterative displacement to the backstage continues at the coronation banquet scene when

Macbeth leaves the little room to meet Banquo's murderer at this backstage of the backstage (3.4.13-32). Another iteration takes place when, after this second banquet, the Witches appear under the table (4.1.1-43) and Macbeth follows them through the backstage corridors to one of the darkest rooms where the Witches show him a reproduction of Duncan's backlit gates to heaven. This time, Banquo and Fleance emerge from the illuminated gate through which Duncan previously entered. In Doran's production, Macbeth constantly seeks refuge in the wings. This movement to the backstage is repeated until, as previously suggested, he decides to accept being part of this theatrical game.

Filmer describes strategies performers may use to deal with stage fright. For Filmer, "[t]he wings are a space where anxiety, superstition, and playfulness reach their heights and where joking, play, and sexually risqué behaviour that elsewhere is unacceptable somehow becomes acceptable" (2006, 178). Superstition in this film is seen when games, such as those between Macbeth and Fleance, are played. Sexual games are also mentioned by Filmer as resources to combat stage fright (192-193). When Lady Macbeth meets Macbeth in the corridor, after she persuades her husband to murder Duncan, he emphasizes nasal sounds with the intention of sexually arousing her—"Bri*n*g forth *m*e*n* childre*n* only / For thy u*n*dau*n*ted *m*etal should co*m*pose / *N*othing but *m*ales" (Shakespeare [1623] 2008, 1.7.72-74; emphasis made by the actor in the film)—and, for the first time in Doran's film, the couple show signs of their sexual complicity backstage. On their way back to the banquet table, they sing: "False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (1.7.82). Turning this final couplet into a song helps the two character-performers encourage each other prior to their performance before Duncan and their friends.

As Filmer says, many actors feel more at home on stage (2006, 170). This is not the case with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Walter indicates that Lady Macbeth ends up spoiling their performance of bonhomie in front of the guests at the banquet scene (2002, 52). Besides, Macbeth disregards courtly protocols. He does not adhere to the King's passing of the crown to the Priest, which Duncan scrupulously respected, and he replaces the Royal Choir with a recording—perhaps an uncanny refraction of the RSC's future "rightsizing" Duncan's rituals may strike the viewer as too full of pomp, but they seem to be accepted and needed by his nobles. There is no doubt that Duncan performs his part well even though the ceremony does not hide its theatricality. Prince Malcom takes these ceremonies equally seriously and, upon his return, fills the stage with trees to visually reinforce his theatrical power. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are removed from the performative contest since they have not followed the royal family's rules. Some of the ideological problems that the RSC were going through are alluded to since, as Chambers says, "the off-stage problems [during Noble's directorship] overshadowed achievements on stage" ([2004] 2005, 107). In the RSC, autocratic management, lack of transparency and low salaries incited many company members to leave or rebel.

6. Company and Metadrama

Metadrama is an overarching concept which may allude to the context of production of an artwork. Much of the understanding of this film lies in having knowledge of the context in a theatrical world that was having to start competing with many other forms of entertainment. When Adrian Noble took over direction at the RSC in 1991, he initiated a series of radical reforms to transform the company "into a different animal altogether" (Chambers [2004] 2005, 96).

The RSC's problems were connected to their difficulties in recruiting actors, raising profits and attracting younger audiences. Many of Noble's decisions, in an attempt to be fresh and innovative, were, as Chambers continues, in fact regressive (98). Project Fleet involved demolishing and reforming the Royal Shakespeare Theatre; abandoning the Barbican Theatre in London to lease other venues; fragmenting the company into smaller casts performing independently of each other. Noble wanted to turn Stratford-upon-Avon into a "theatre village" (*The Guardian*, 25 November 2001, n.p.). However, the RSC Board Members were not consulted and the project's strategy seemed unclear to many people. Theatre critic Charles Spencer said: "One of Adrian Noble's closest associates recently told me that Noble was great when it came to the big picture, but far less impressive when it came to the detailed nitty gritty of turning the big picture into reality" (2002, n.p.). Several of the RSC's prestigious figures—including Edward Hall, Sir John Mortimer and Terry Hands—resigned. Strikes by technical staff, backed by the actors, ensued when they found out that there would be redundancies. Nevertheless, Project Fleet continued. Miriam Gilbert pointed out how careless the economic planning had been regarding venues and transferability of productions (2002, 517). Some critical voices demanded Noble's resignation.

Scenes backstage in the film show what occurs at the locus of performance, but these are also places where violence is engendered, where social inequalities and patriarchalism are confirmed. It is significant that, after being seen sheltered in this space, Duncan recovers his star status in this symbolic and physical theatrical world. In most of the corridor events in this production, characters reveal their desire to overthrow the King, state assassination is commissioned, or the overthrowing of tyranny is planned. In other words, corridors are places where power is organized. Such corridor scenes echo the RSC personnel's allusions to the company's "corridor[s] of power" (Hewison, Holden and Jones 2010, 33), where decisions used to be made by the management before Boyd's decision to recompose the company's ensemble. Surely, as a semi-private theatre company, the RSC is entitled to let managers make final decisions. However, when words like "family," "ensemble," "company" and other terms appealing to human bonhomie are deployed when involuntary career events are in progress, workers were probably right to be suspicious. On 25 November 2001, as *The Guardian* said, "facing a threat of backstage strikes and with grandees resigning from senior posts, [Noble had] had the worst week of his career" (n.p.). Dominic Cavendish's opinion in *The Telegraph* was that, "[t]he off-stage antics have come to overshadow the productions themselves.

You feel that you need a plot synopsis just to keep up with this wild sideshow, which combines elements of farce, tragedy and state-of-the-nation epic" (2002, n.p.).

When Duncan's followers walk toward Macbeth's house from the arena to the backstage entrance, Banquo speaks of the "temple-haunting martlet" (Shakespeare [1623] 2008, 1.6.4), although the viewer only perceives the roof of an abandoned theatre. We could read this as simple convention or as metonym for the many references to buildings in relation to the RSC's crisis. Most of the reforms, transitions and shifts in power at the company have been related to the refurbishing of buildings, and the expansion, leasing out, demolishing and abandonment of premises. Much of the protest carried out by HOOT (Hands Off Our Theatre) and the Henry Moore Institute revealed anxieties about maintaining heritage buildings. Some of Noble's attempts to find other buildings and to refurbish the old company's buildings were applauded: "theatre has to acknowledge—and quickly—that [this art] is not some form of architectural preservation society. Without destroying the past, we need to recognize that the magic only happens when the space fits the play. Theatre is a living, breathing organism and the message to our property owners and artistic directors is stark and simple: adapt or die" (Billington 2001, n.p.). Noble defended his initiative against attacks from some actors: "A lot of people who have acted on that stage in the past have nostalgic memories of it, but if you ask people who are stuck on the balconies during performances what they think, it is a B-grade experience" (Morrison 2002, n.p.). Critic Matt Wolf points at the "British tendency to blame buildings for theatrical ills [...] but [...] it is not so much the space itself that is the problem, as the tendency for artistic directors to get bogged down in their administration" (BBC News, 30 May 2001). Is Doran's reflection of this bad state of the building a reflection of inefficient administration? The RSC's decisions on buildings affected the workers' morale since they included redundancies. What is worse, the RSC's abandonment of the Barbican Theatre in order to rent other venues like the National Haymarket or the Roundhouse proved difficult to swallow too since these buildings did not guarantee cheaper ticket prices or better access to the venue or better audience attendance—see also Gilbert (2002, 517).

Chambers remarked that "the crisis under [Noble] inevitably fed nostalgia about the old days, burying memories of the bad productions" ([2004] 2005, 182). Commercial fiascos, although already noted in the company's history, were particularly resented at that period and a mythical view of the RSC's better past was constructed by veteran artists and critics alike. Performances with empty houses produced more anxiety during this critical period than in the past. Indeed, Doran's setting reads as a refraction of this anxiety about empty venues. Furthermore, Doran's production might be termed as critical with nostalgia for several reasons. It restores a legitimate monarchy in an apparently literal reading of the social order as reflected in the play and as shown in the screen version of Nunn's stage production of Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* (Philip Casson 1979). Yet this order appears under threat when, after

Malcom is restored, Fleance enters carrying Banquo's amulet signifying the Witches' prophecy with regard to his offspring becoming monarchs. Secondly, the choice of the Roundhouse, where many RSC performances were staged, brings us back to a theatrical past when the "Centre 42" encouraged the utopian celebration of both the high and the popular arts. Thirdly, it invokes the spirit of a prestigious predecessor: Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* (1979). Agreement exists about an indebtedness to past Shakespearean screen productions, which, as Wray and Burnett suggest, affects many Shakespeare films, which "range from those which look forward to *fin-de-siècle* debates to those which are full participants in that ongoing discussion, [and] glance to the future as much as they look back" (2000, 4). Fourthly, Malcom's return and the spirit of community invoked by the small circle of praying friends (5.9.27-42) conjures up the ancient narrative of community, which, in real life, would become necessary for Doran months afterwards, when director Edward Hall—Peter Hall's son—resigned and Doran needed to take on organizing several shows for the Jacobean season in Stratford.

At that time, the RSC felt the urge to call upon the ancient spirit of "ensemble," which had defined the company's work from its very origins. Doran faced the press saying: "So the RSC is chucking out the idea of ensemble, abandoning the principles defined by Peter Hall and Co when they set up the Company in the early 1960s? Nonsense!" (2002). Doran's attempt to restore confidence is refracted as *prolepsis* in the film's invocation of the RSC's past as a small company of players in venues such as The Other Place, the Roundhouse and the Barbican working as a family under the leaderships of Peter Hall, Peter Brook, Michael St. Denis and Trevor Nunn. Nonetheless, this company's grassroots origin was discredited by Alan Sinfield's analysis of their detachment from radical theatre long before the 1990s ([1985] 2003). Financial problems, an ambiguous relationship with the public and the private, hierarchical verticality, patriarchal sexism and overwork did not help the RSC live up to its utopian ideals. Although other accounts of the RSC's history, such as Beauman's, are, doubtless, more optimistic, they also acknowledge that the company had become part of the Establishment as early as the seventies (1982, 310). Doran portrays Duncan's monarchy in similar fashion: hierarchical, patriarchal and theocratic. Men grovel before Duncan and subjects are not consulted about Malcom's election—as the camera reveals by focusing on their surprised faces. Duncan's thanes show deep respect for him at dinner in Macbeth's house, where the King is the main orator, upstaging everyone else. The thanes in this "corridor of power" celebrate bonhomie. As Chambers says, Noble's management often hid behind a disguise of company spirit but left many members excluded ([2004] 2005, 100-102).

Pamela Mason argues that Doran follows the light-and-dark contrasts in the playtext too literally (2013, 347-348). Nevertheless, this type of Manichean lighting does not necessarily represent the director's personal worldview. It rather implies a connection with Philip Casson's filming of Nunn's stage production. While Nunn's

theatrical sets "heightened the sense that one was watching a theatrical performance" (Beauman 1982, 333), when his production was transferred to television the effect was sacrificed for a predominance of close-ups and mid-shots which only allowed the viewer to distinguish the production's meta-theatricality in the first scene. Both films endorse this dark-versus-light worldview, but Doran's clearly exposes its theatrical apparatus whereas Nunn's does not do it sufficiently. Doran's setting is also the site where Tony Richardson's *Hamlet* was performed and filmed. As Hindle says, "[w]hereas Tony Richardson's [film] was filmed in close-up and medium-shot in the enormous open arena of the venue, Doran used every available space" ([2007] 2015, 264), which presents an additional point of departure from past recorded Shakespeares. This opening-up of the film's spatial possibilities reads as irony as much as nostalgia. Such nostalgia was paramount when journalists, critics and actors attacked the RSC's new business discourse in 1996 when Chris Foy and Lord Alexander, the latter a former chairman of National Westminster Bank, became board members and their business "jargon" in new contracts transformed the RSC's dream of a Leavisite "cottage industry" into a "multinational conglomerate" (Trowbridge 2013, 134). As such, Fleance's arrival also signifies nostalgia in terms of the RSC's yearning for their pristine origins in a market-dominated world. On stage, Doran had Banquo's ghost emerging from the circle of Malcom's friends and facing the young *arriviste*. While in the Swan this indicated that subversion would come from within as well as outside the kingdom, in the film, Banquo's child stands for the RSC's renewed focus on attracting younger audiences and making the shows more marketable. Neil Sinyard's analysis of Al Pacino's *Looking for Richard* (1996) leads to the question: Does the film "take Shakespeare in new directions as we enter a new century?" (Sinyard 2000, 69). This question could be reformulated for Doran's *Macbeth*: Does Doran's film indicate the new direction taken by Shakespeare at the RSC for the new millenium? Doran's discourse eighteen months later reflects this:

> We've assembled a group of 28 actors, led by Antony Sher and David Rintoul, to present this Swan [Jacobean] season. There are company regulars, familiar faces, well-established actors and youngsters making their RSC debuts. Are they an ensemble?
>
> Well, perhaps the true answer is that they are not an ensemble—yet. That will come as their knowledge of each other grows in rehearsal and, with that, mutual confidence and strength. (2002, n.p.)

Many months after the film was recorded, the company had gone through hard times and the "ensemble" had clearly suffered. So, this inter-generational crusade will bring the ensemble back. Arguably, the RSC needs evolution but not at the ensemble's expense. As Trowbridge remarks:

> [T]he Jacobean season at the Swan was acclaimed […] a personal success for Gregory Doran, who formed a crack ensemble of young actors to perform five works […] Doran asked his

> actors and fellow directors to create a production after only three weeks of rehearsal. Born under the vitriolic criticism of the reforms and threatened in its first weeks of rehearsal by the illness of one director and the last minute resignation of another, Doran's vibrant project defied all expectations. (2013, 138)

After the film was shot, Doran did what was sensible: he kept calm and carried on when the edifice's foundations were shaking. Even so, before this Jacobean season started, a few BECTU members—the UK's Media and Entertainment Union—had accepted redundancy packages. Chris Foy's justification of the redundancies as being based on the need to "remain fresh and relevant to a new generation of theatregoers" was quoted by BBC News (18 September 2001). The RSC had good reason to keep its stiff upper lip and *ipso facto* turn the page. Eventually, the company publicly admitted that Noble's policies had been disastrous (Jury 2003).

7. Conclusion

This essay has explored the *theatrum mundi* metaphor in Doran's *Macbeth* as an example of how this conceit depends on artistic decisions and cannot be separated from its social, political and ideological production context. The film explores the meanings of the play by engaging with a series of dialogues, conversations and interactions with the crisis that the RSC faced during the 1990s that culminated in the early 2000s. The choosing of a half-refurbished building as a site for filming parallels the constant reconstruction of a kingdom always at war. Examining the Macbeths shows their double function as both characters and actors engaged in a performative competition, in contrast to the spirit of ensemble that has actors collectively working together over a period of time (Hewison, Holden and Jones 2010, 17). Duncan's divine rule displays a conservative façade with a rigid hierarchy and strict codes of behavior. Performance anxieties are also the anxieties of surviving that affect underpaid actors and artists living under the stress of instability and the insecurity experienced in institutions where power negotiations take place in the corridors rather than in open meetings. Duncan's conservative rule strains and undermines the familial and positive ambience presented in his court, which contrasts with an architectural and psychological shortage of resources backstage. This engenders subversion, paranoia and discontent, which threatens stability. The social order needs to renew its positive image with theatrical displays and renewed codes of interaction. While the film elicits nostalgia for the company's past, the laying bare of the past's theatricality is embedded in a ruined theatre. After their period of disruption, the RSC needed to restore their public image and to build a positive collective autobiography. What they could not avoid was, rightly or wrongly, becoming more entrenched in the global marketplace in order to be able to expand.

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Víctor Huertas Martín received his PhD in Literature at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia in 2017. His dissertation topic dealt with John Wyver's TV productions of Shakespeare's plays recorded between 2001 and 2012. He has published several papers on reflexivity and intertextuality in recent television Shakespeare films. At present, he works as an Assistant Lecturer at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia.

Address: Facultad de Filología. Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. Paseo Senda del Rey, 7. 28040, Madrid, Spain. Tel.: +34 913986813.

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The Alien as a Vehicle for Cosmopolitan Discourses: The Case of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*

Pablo Gómez Muñoz
Universidad de Zaragoza
pablo.gomezm@yahoo.com

This article looks at the remake of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Derrickson 2008) as a representative example of a group of early twenty-first century science fiction films that have shown remarkable interest in transnational and global phenomena. Given the recent emphasis of the genre on these issues, this article proposes cosmopolitanism as a particularly useful theoretical framework for analyzing contemporary science fiction. The article focuses on the remake's reliance on the figure of the alien and its destructive potential as a means of drawing attention to the global threat of climate change. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* presents cosmopolitanism as a perspective and way of acting that develops as a response to specific transnational challenges.

Keywords: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*; science fiction; film; cosmopolitanism; alien; climate change

. . .

Lo alienígena como vehículo de discursos cosmopolitas: el caso de *Ultimátum a la Tierra*

Este artículo ofrece un análisis de la nueva versión de *Ultimátum a la Tierra* (Derrickson 2008) como representativa de un grupo de películas de ciencia ficción de principios del siglo XXI que muestran especial interés en fenómenos transnacionales y globales. Debido al reciente énfasis de la ciencia ficción en estos temas, el artículo presenta el cosmopolitismo como una herramienta teórica particularmente útil para el análisis de la ciencia ficción contemporánea. El artículo se centra en el uso de la figura del alienígena y su potencial destructivo como forma de dirigir la atención hacia la amenaza global del cambio

climático. Por último, sugiere que *Ultimátum a la Tierra* presenta el cosmopolitismo como una perspectiva y un modo de actuar que surge en respuesta a desafíos transnacionales específicos.

Palabras clave: *Ultimátum a la Tierra*; ciencia ficción; cine; cosmopolitismo; alienígena; cambio climático

1. Introduction

In contrast to science fiction (SF) film classics such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Siegel 1956) that have been remade multiple times over the decades (Kaufman 1978; Ferrara 1993; Hirschbiegel 2007), fifty-seven years passed between the release of the original version of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* directed by Robert Wise in 1951 and its 2008 remake by Scott Derrickson.[1] The fact that *The Day* has been remade at a time—the early twenty-first century—when SF cinema is exhibiting a particularly strong investment in discourses on globalization and cosmopolitanism invites us to analyze how the remake reworks some of the cosmopolitan tropes in the earlier film in order to articulate contemporary transnational concerns. Although the more recent version of *The Day* has not been as widely lauded as the original, it is worthy of study because it is representative of two key trends in contemporary SF cinema: it is an example of both the growing number of films that imagine dialogic and mutually-beneficial relations between aliens and humans at the turn of the twenty-first century, and also of films that deal with planetary environmental concerns, particularly with the devastating effects of climate change. Other similar films such as *Avatar* (Cameron 2009) and *Godzilla* (Edwards 2014) feature a more incomplete presence of the cosmopolitan outlook of contemporary SF cinema. Indeed, *Avatar* barely explores the global dimension of its environmental discourse and *Godzilla* presents only a limited avenue for communication between its monster and humans. The cultural and generic importance of the remake of *The Day* lies in the fact that, through its participation in the two aforementioned strands, it offers a comprehensive picture of some of the main cosmopolitan concerns of contemporary SF cinema. As such it will be analyzed here.

This article first considers the unusual cosmopolitan tone of the original film in order to explore its relationship with the remake, albeit primarily focusing on the more recent version and its ability to reshape the cosmopolitan outlook of the 1951 film. Cosmopolitan theory offers a particularly useful framework of analysis because the cosmopolitan, in contrast to the transnational or the global, does not simply describe realities that transcend the framework of the nation. Cosmopolitanism offers a critical perspective from which to interpret transnational and global phenomena (Delanty 2012, 42). This critical dimension is primarily based on human rights, openness towards difference and environmental ethics. Cosmopolitanism is also useful to critique the impact of globalized neoliberalism on human lives thanks to the centrality of well-being and decent life conditions to this theoretical framework (Appiah 2006, 167). However, for purposes of clarity, this article focuses on openness and its relationship with cosmopolitan transformation. In this sense, Gerard Delanty's work is central to the approach employed here. Delanty describes cosmopolitanism as "an ethical and political

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medium of societal transformation that is based on the principle of world openness" (2009, 53). That is, cosmopolitanism is grounded on the willingness to interact with the Other and "gain distance from one's own culture in order to accommodate the perspective of the Other" (130). In other words, cosmopolitanism describes a receptive attitude towards the different perspectives of other cultures and societies, the practice of dialogue with the Other, and the possible changes that derive from these experiences as a way of striving—often in an unsteady, irregular manner—towards conviviality, mutual benefit and sustainability in transnational contexts (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš 2009, 105-107; Delanty 2012, 40-2; Papastergiadis 2012, 117, 129). Even though this may appear to idealize cosmopolitan theory, cosmopolitan discourses and actions tend to be intermittent and ambivalent, as Zlatko Skrbiš and Ian Woodward—among others—note (2013, 26, 116). Looking at the remake of *The Day* through a cosmopolitan lens, this article shows how it subverts threatening images of aliens, questions geopolitical and ecosystemic supremacy and advocates dialogic relations between humans and aliens as a path towards cosmopolitan changes that might reduce anthropogenic ecological threats at a global level.

2. Transnational Science Fiction and Cosmopolitanism

The recent focus of scholars such as Istvan Csicsery-Ronay (2002; 2012), Mark Bould (2012, 177-195), Sherryl Vint (2012; 2016) and others on discourses on globalization in SF and the publication of the volumes *Alien Imaginations. Science Fiction and Tales of Transnationalism* (Küchler, Maehl and Stoutt 2015) and *Simultaneous Worlds. Global Science Fiction Cinema* (Feeley and Wells 2015) evince the centrality of global issues in current understandings of the SF (film) genre. Like globalization, the alternative worlds of SF combine and reconfigure spatial and temporal dimensions. The boundless imagination of the genre also allows it to project geopolitical formations that express current socioeconomic trends and craft metaphors for emerging modes of transnational bonds. Its imagination of disaster also visualizes the transnational impacts of environmental degradation. In addition, SF narratives often revolve around two key elements of globalization: technology, which is central to global communications and mobility, and borders: human / non-human, Earth / outer space, upper-class / lower-class, humanity / technology, physical / virtual. David Higgins has also argued that the generic ability of SF to articulate imperial and colonial fantasies allows the genre to "extrapolate cosmopolitan alternatives to imperial domination" (2011, 332). As he suggests, many contemporary SF films expose abusive relations of power at a supranational level and explore, at least in part, cosmopolitan notions.

Although some twenty-first century SF films such as *Avatar* (Cameron 2009) and *Jupiter Ascending* (Wachowski and Wachowski 2015) channel cosmopolitan discourses through their depiction of neocolonial practices in alternative universes, other recent productions explore several additional paths to convey cosmopolitan concerns.

For example, *Elysium* (Blomkamp 2013) denounces the bordering of the benefits of modernity and the violation of human rights by global, neoliberal, public-private partnerships; *In Time* (Niccol 2011) condemns the system of economic extraction from which global financial firms benefit; *The Day After Tomorrow* (Emmerich 2004), *2012* (Emmerich 2009) and *Snowpiercer* (Bong Joon-ho 2013) highlight the planetary dimension of climate change and explore the biopolitics of catastrophe; *Code 46* (Winterbottom 2003), *Sleep Dealer* (Rivera 2008) and *District 9* (Blomkamp 2009) point at the critical situation of many migrants and refugees; *Africa Paradis* (Amoussou 2006), *Upside Down* (Solanas 2012) and *The Host* (Niccol 2013) consider the role of transnational or human/alien love in the flourishing of cosmopolitan sensibilities; and *Cloud Atlas* (Tykwer, Wachowski and Wachowski 2012) and *I Origins* (Cahill 2014) trace personal connections, influences and alliances across time and space as a way of reflecting on the idea of cosmopolitan empathy. Although earlier films such as *When Worlds Collide* (Maté 1951), *Rollerball* (Jewison 1975), *Blade Runner* (Scott 1982) and *The Matrix* (Wachowski and Wachowski 1999) also set their narratives in contexts of transnational socioeconomic connections and ecological impacts, more recent films tend to make transnational links evident in their stories, not only conceptually but also visually and narratively. The proliferation of this kind of SF films at the turn of the twenty-first century makes cosmopolitan theory a particularly fitting prism from which to interpret such texts.

As mentioned above, the remake of *The Day* offers a useful gateway to the workings of two of the key strands of cosmopolitan SF cinema. Although a growing number of films present sympathetic portraits of aliens, it is also true that there has been a proliferation of alien invasion films and TV series in the years following the 9/11 attacks which have acted as a vehicle for "anxieties concerning terrorism" (Higgins 2015, 45-46), and indeed continue to do so in the current climate of global ISIS-related terrorism. *Signs* (Shyamalan 2002), *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg 2005), *The Invasion* (Hirschbiegel 2007), *Cloverfield* (Reeves 2008), *Battle LA* (Liebesman 2011), *Edge of Tomorrow* (Liman 2014), *The 5th Wave* (Blakeson 2016) and *Independence Day: Resurgence* (Emmerich 2016) are prominent examples of the warmongering, destructive or deceiving character of contemporary aliens. Yet other early twenty-first century films—especially since the late 2000s—have cast a more positive light on human-alien relations and frame contacts (and clashes) between different species through a cosmopolitan lens. In *Transformers* (Bay 2007), *Avatar* (Cameron 2009), *District 9* (Blomkamp 2009), *Planet 51* (Blanco 2009), *Monsters* (Edwards 2010), *Super 8* (Abrams 2011), *Paul* (Mottola 2011), *I Am Number Four* (Caruso 2011), *Upside Down* (Solanas 2012), *Ender's Game* (Hood 2013), *The Host* (2013), *Earth to Echo* (Green 2014), *Guardians of the Galaxy* (Gunn 2014), *Home* (Johnson 2015) and *Arrival* (Villeneuve 2016) aliens appear as beings that are better than humans at living in harmony with their natural environment, beings who seek refuge on Earth, peaceful visitors, allies willing to share their knowledge and strength, victims of human exploitation, or victims of humans' violent overreaction

to fear. These aliens are often harmless and well-intentioned. Sometimes they even get involved in romantic relationships with humans, mirroring 1970s and 1980s films such as *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (Roeg 1976) and *Cocoon* (Howard 1985). Some of these recent aliens also help humans to see their own society and environment from a different—cosmopolitan—perspective. Such is the case in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

Regarding the emphasis of SF cinema on the cosmopolitan character of contemporary environmental challenges, *The Day After Tomorrow* (Emmerich 2004), *The World Sinks Except Japan* (Kawasaki 2006), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Derrickson 2008), *2012* (Emmerich 2009), *Snowpiercer* (Bong Joon-ho 2013), *Elysium* (Blomkamp 2013) and *Godzilla* (Edwards 2014) are key examples of films that offer critical portraits of the environmental consequences of the hegemony of the global, late-capitalist economy, and which present ecological challenges that require transnational (re)actions. Despite the seemingly mindless spectacles of disaster in some of these films, they cultivate what for Ursula Heise is an essential element of eco-cosmopolitanism: "a sense of planet," that is, an awareness of the transnational impact of processes of extraction, production and disposal (2008, 56). A "sense of planet," then, contributes to giving visibility to the hidden environmental and social costs of human activities that have as their goals ever-increasing profits and non-stop, low-cost consumption. Although these films tend to focus on a specific location, they regularly make connections between the ecological damage that they focus on and other places around the world, building a sense of planetary interconnectedness. Other eco-conscious films also draw attention to the accelerated degeneration of ecosystems at the turn of the twenty-first century, but they tend to present the action in national terms even though they often set events in a context of global environmental impacts. That is the case of films such as *Children of Men* (Cuarón 2006), *The Happening* (Shyamalan 2008), *Pumzi* (Kahiu 2009), *The Road* (Hillcoat 2009), *Hell* (Fehlbaum 2011), *The Colony* (Renfroe 2013), *Autómata* (Ibáñez 2014), *The Rover* (Michôd 2014), *Young Ones* (Paltrow 2014), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller 2015) and *Crumbs* (Llansó 2015), which depict extreme climate conditions and temperatures, pollution, the alteration of body functions, a lack of resources, a return to primitive life conditions and general distress. Similarly, *Wall-E* (Stanton 2008), *Pandorum* (Alvart 2009), *Avatar* (Cameron 2009), *Cargo* (Engler and Etter 2009), *Moon* (Jones 2009) and *Interstellar* (Nolan 2014) imagine alternatives to life on Earth or galactic searches for natural resources, but often fail to draw connections between their main line of action and other world locations, or between their US American protagonists and the citizens of other nations.

Although climate change appears to be the main concern of the remake of *The Day*, the alien plays a central role in the articulation of the eco-cosmopolitan discourse of the film. Applying the work of Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš (2012) on cosmopolitan sociology to film studies, Celestino Deleyto suggests looking at films as "performers of cosmopolitanism" that can "activate and enact a series of cosmopolitan strategies" (2016, 98). He argues that films "may [or may not] ostensibly identify themselves

with a diversity agenda or with certain discourses of solidarity" (98). Such discourses may range from denouncing and challenging attitudes of disrespect for human rights and dignity (Fine 2012, 380), to working against the processes that lead some people to live precariously, or to helping or empathizing with Others in the context of everyday life. Drawing on Deleyto's remarks, I read the figure of the alien in *The Day* as a potential vehicle for cosmopolitan strategies. The alien offers opportunities for interrogating the self and its social relation with Others. Darko Suvin's theorization of SF as a genre of cognitive estrangement also hints at the cosmopolitan potential of the alien. He describes aliens as a "mirror," comparing them to a "differing country" (1979, 5). Suvin also notes that "the mirror is not only a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one" (5). Like cosmopolitan processes of learning and transformation, the figure of the alien may articulate a dialogue between cognition—a person or a society's perceived reality—and estrangement—an alternative mode of being, thinking or acting. Ulrike Küchler, Silja Maehl and Graeme Stout suggest that alien narratives are not only about how we (humans) perceive aliens or sometimes fail to do so, but also about how aliens see humans (2015, 2). Aliens do not only offer opportunities to look at the Other, but also opportunities for humans to reflect upon themselves and, more specifically, for dominant groups of people to reconsider their attitudes, actions and relationships with Others. The figure of the alien is an optimal instrument for considering cosmopolitan questions: it invites an examination of the notion of openness (or lack thereof) towards other cultures and societies; it allows characters and viewers to consider the perspectives of different societies or cultures; and the alternative civilizations that aliens represent offer viewers opportunities to assess their own (human) and the other species' social structures and conventions. As Suvin's words hint, the cognitive estrangement that aliens produce has the capacity to trigger the individual and societal transformation that is central to Delanty's understanding of cosmopolitanism. For all these reasons, the remake of *The Day*—which features remarkably vocal aliens and humans—constitutes a valuable case study of cosmopolitanism in contemporary SF cinema.

Following these observations about the alien, my analysis of cosmopolitanism in *The Day* pays particular attention to the central relationship between cosmopolitanism and processes of personal and social transformation. In addition, I focus on the presentation of what Ulrich Beck calls "deformed cosmopolitanism" as a way of addressing the ecological and biological threats that both film versions present ([2004] 2006, 19-20). Regarding the first aspect, Gerard Delanty identifies personal and "societal transformation" based on learning processes as one of the defining features of cosmopolitanism (2006, 27, 41, 44). This kind of transformation derives from contact and interaction with elements of "alternative society" (39): another country, conflicting social norms, different modes of thinking and doing, or—in the case of this article—an alien civilization. Such interaction may lead to changes in habits and social structures that do not exploit or harm other people or species and that promote well-

being both within and beyond the nation. More specifically, cosmopolitan learning and transformation develop from the "interplay of Self, Other and World" (13) and require "self-reflexivity" (87) and "self-problematization" (130). Bearing in mind the centrality of alternative perspectives, learning and change to cosmopolitanism, this article considers how the remake of *The Day* both challenges viewers' assumptions and involves characters in transformation processes mediated by socio-cultural difference and a planetary consciousness. In addition, despite the positive connotations often associated with the term, cosmopolitanism does not offer a straightforward, bump-free road towards desirable change. As already mentioned, Ulrich Beck distinguishes between deformed and non-deformed cosmopolitanism ([2004] 2006, 19). Non-deformed cosmopolitanism attempts to give form to equitable social circumstances and legal frameworks (21)—that is, a set of cosmopolitan norms which closely resemble the definition of cosmopolitanism offered at the beginning of this article. The term "deformed cosmopolitanism" refers to "really existing" social contexts in which cosmopolitan (re)actions emerge out of necessity rather than idealism (20). That is, deformed cosmopolitanism describes situations in which transnational processes and events that develop in distant places and nations influence individual human experiences and their local circumstances, driving—and sometimes forcing—people to adopt cosmopolitan approaches to transnational challenges. My analysis of the remake of *The Day* focuses on the articulation of cosmopolitan change in relation to ecological challenges, paying particular attention to uses of deformed cosmopolitanism. I first consider the role of the alien in the original film and then discuss how the new version reworks its cosmopolitan discourse.

3. You Have Nothing to Fear: The Original Version of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*

The cosmopolitan discourse that Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) develops is an exception in the context of 1950s SF cinema, when films frequently expressed anxieties about the Cold War, the misuse of nuclear power and Soviet influence by presenting aliens as an outside menace (King and Krzywinska 2000, 4-6; Telotte 2001, 94-98; Cornea 2007, 37). In contrast, Wise's *The Day* not only avoids presenting aliens as an invading or mind-controlling civilization but also links their visit to a reconsideration of human attitudes, world geopolitics and the use of technology. One of the main ways in which the first version of *The Day* challenges negative portraits of the alien is by misleading viewers: it hints at the aliens' potential untrustworthiness and dangerousness (often through visual cues) but then regularly shows those suspicions to be baseless. In this paragraph, I focus on the ways in which the film presents the aliens as a potential menace and then the next paragraphs address how the film subverts such images through the behavior of the aliens. Some scenes in Wise's film rely on the kind of *mise-en-scène* that is typical of film noir and present Klaatu (Michael Rennie) as a

potentially dangerous character. The use of high light contrasts, Klaatu's silhouette in the darkness when he arrives at the guesthouse and the shadows of fences and banister rods in the background present the alien as a menace. The repetitive, otherworldly melodies of electronic instruments, especially the theremin (Sobchack [1980] 1987, 211), also increase the sense of suspense, as in the scene in which Klaatu leaves the house to go into the spaceship, when Klaatu and Helen (Patricia Neal) are trapped in the elevator, or during the montage sequence that shows different people seeing their routines interrupted because of a worldwide power cut. Sometimes Klaatu also comes excessively close to other characters or bumps into them, as if he were threatening their safety. The employment of film noir features was common in other science fiction films of the time like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Grant 2013, 85). Yet, the use of film noir in Wise's *The Day* is slightly different in that it subverts the meanings attached to film noir conventions and in fact reassures viewers that Klaatu and Gort (Lock Martin) are well-intentioned visitors.

Apart from providing viewers with visual cues that invite them to consider the aliens a potential menace, this version of *The Day* also draws connections with the strained character of US-Soviet relations at the time, and then reassures viewers that aliens are not dangerous. Mr. Harley (Frank Conroy), a US government official, recognizes: "our world at the moment is full of tensions and suspicions." Mrs. Barley (Frances Bavier), a woman staying at the guesthouse, also says that Klaatu comes from another place on Earth, hinting that she is referring to the Soviet Union. Even though characters show awareness and concern about the Cold War conflict, the film leaves nuclear anxieties in the background. Instead, Wise's film focuses on the attempts of Klaatu to gather world leaders and deliver a message giving humans an ultimatum to cease hostilities. As Keith Booker notes, *The Day* is an "anti-militarist" film that exposes and criticizes Cold War hysteria (2006, 37). This is established in one of the first scenes as Gort, instead of harming the humans who confront him, makes their guns and tanks disintegrate. He also tells the child Bobby (Billy Gray) that there are no wars where he comes from. In contrast to most 1950s films, the alien visitor thus appears to have noble intentions. As Peter Biskind writes, "Klaatu is surely the best behaved, most polite alien who ever hopped across hyperspace" (1983, 151). Klaatu's first words are very clear: "We have come to visit you in peace and with good will." Even when Klaatu gives humans an ultimatum, he assures that the other races that he represents do not want to take any freedom from humans—except the freedom to attack each other. He also adds that they do not care what humans do in their own planet, showing that aliens do not want to interfere with the sovereignty of Earth's nations. Klaatu only wants to prevent future nuclear threats to other planets.

Despite the generally positive image of aliens that *The Day* projects, Mark Jancovich and Derek Johnston see Klaatu and Gort as authoritarian aliens (2009, 74). At first sight, the aliens certainly appear to adopt a hegemonic position in relation to humans: Klaatu's demands are straightforward and Gort unveils his potentially

destructive power shortly after landing. Moreover, the intention of the group of races that Klaatu represents is to exterminate humanity if they do not improve their behavior. Klaatu mentions several times that he is running out of patience and that he considers taking "violent action" in order to draw the attention of the governments of Earth. Yet, throughout the film he also repeatedly states that he wants to avoid threatening humans. He in fact only makes his threat after having been among humans for a while and noting that violence "seems to be the only thing [they] understand." Of course, in the end Klaatu does not harm anybody. Indeed, the greatest display of authority and power by the aliens consists of bringing the world to a halt in both films—and only for a half an hour. As Keith Booker suggests, *The Day* shows the aliens' superiority to promote humility among humans (2006, 39). Wise's film underlines Klaatu's demanding character in order to cast humans in a powerless position, that is, in a role that they usually do not have in their relations with other species. By extension, through his demand to meet with representatives from every country, Klaatu also questions the hegemonic position of major world actors, particularly the US, the Soviet Union and the UK.

Although an alien visit to Earth can always potentially cast people from different nations as members of a united humanity when pitted against the more different extraterrestrials, Klaatu's demands and the use of global montages highlight the idea of humans being part of a planetary community that shares its fate. In the eyes of Klaatu's civilization, humans share a home and should manage to work together in some matters at least. From the very beginning, the alien visitor Klaatu insists that what he has to say is relevant to everyone on Earth and that he needs to speak to representatives of all countries. In addition, the film includes two montages that present Klaatu's arrival as a planetary event. The first montage appears at the beginning of the film, as the alien saucer approaches Earth, and includes shots from India, France, the UK and the US, thus establishing the international transcendence of the events that it portrays. The second montage features places in the US, the UK, France and the Soviet Union, showing the outcome of Klaatu's decision to leave the world without power and electricity for thirty minutes. Providing a different reading, Christine Cornea argues that *The Day* offers a US American point of view, as the US organizes humanity's transition towards a future without nuclear weapons in the film (2007, 41). Certainly, apart from the montage sequences that show the impact of the alien arrival and reactions to it in other parts of Earth, the film is mostly set in the US. Even in the montages, shots of the US predominate. More generally, US American officials and citizens are the only interlocutors with the aliens, except in the final scene where Klaatu is finally able to address leaders from almost every nation. Still, the emphasis of the film on the global scale of the problems that it presents is indeed an aspect that differentiates Wise's *The Day* from other science fiction films of its time, which tend to focus on outside threats to local environments, such as *The Thing from Another World* (Nyby 1951), *It Came from Outer Space* (Arnold 1953), *Them!* (Douglas 1954) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Siegel 1956).

4. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* Remade: The Influence of the Original Film

In line with the 1951 version of *The Day*, the 2008 remake also includes montage sequences that register the reactions to the alien visit in different countries. In addition, the remake introduces several details that reinforce the global scope of the message that the aliens have come to deliver. Instead of focusing on the US from the very beginning, the film opens with a scene in India in which the aliens collect human DNA so that they can adopt human form a few years later when they come to warn humans of their actions. Secondly, instead of flying saucers, the aliens use spheres to travel to Earth, the shape of the vehicles suggesting that the whole planet is at stake. Unlike in the 1951 version, the alien spheres do not only land in a major US city, Washington D.C./New York, but they appear in different countries. In addition, in the remake, a military official underlines the global range of the situation when he notes that the "mass"—a swarm of insects unleashed by Gort that devours everything in its path—goes "everywhere." Finally, the 2008 film ends with a shot of Earth from outer space, reminding viewers that the whole planet is in danger. The films *The Day After Tomorrow* (Emmerich 2004) and *2012* (Emmerich 2009), which also depict natural disasters in order to allude to climate change, employ this same strategy of including a shot of Earth at the end of the film, presenting the planet as a single ecosystem. The remake, then, must be contextualized within this contemporary trend to emphasize the global dimension of ecological disaster that was already present in the original film.

The 2008 version of *The Day* also draws on similar strategies to those employed in the original to generate suspicion in viewers and eventually show that Klaatu (Keanu Reeves) and Gort have little to do with fearful concerns that are common in popular imaginaries.[2] At the beginning of the remake, viewers witness the imminent impact of an object in Manhattan. In addition, later in the film a government interviewer asks Klaatu whether he is "aware of an impending attack on the planet Earth." Through these elements, the film invites viewers to extrapolate and consider whether this is a film about 9/11—like the 2005 remake of *The War of the Worlds* (Spielberg). *The Day* also includes several references to science fiction films that reflect on the difference between humans and other beings such as aliens or cyborgs. Mirroring *Independence Day* (Emmerich 1996), the poster of *The Day* features a spaceship, or sphere, looming over New York and emitting a stream of light that appears to be about to destroy Manhattan. In addition, the scene where a government official (David Richmond-Peck) interrogates Klaatu resembles the Voight-Kampff test scene in *Blade Runner* (Scott 1982). In both films, the replicant/alien attacks the interviewer after answering a series of questions. While Derrickson's remake visually recalls scenes from previous films that draw on invasion themes and emphasize binary distinctions, it also offers a different perspective on the relationship between human

[2] No actor name is provided for Gort because in the 2008 remake Gort was made through CGI and the robot does not say any word. Klaatu is the one who speaks in the name of the alien civilization.

self and non-human Other. Constantine Verevis argues that remakes alter film genres as much as they modify the source film (2006, 24, 83). In like manner, the 2008 remake of *The Day* does not only take the 1951 original as a model, it also remakes a set of genre conventions. Klaatu does not turn out to be as destructive as the aliens in *Independence Day* (Emmerich 1996) or as revengeful as the replicants in *Blade Runner* (Scott 1982). Derrickson's film reconfigures scenes from major SF films, subverts generic conventions of uncosmopolitan distrust and revises definitions of self and Other. In this way, the film does not limit itself to offering a positive image of aliens: it rather questions the systematic casting of the Other as suspect.

Apart from questioning threatening images of aliens, the remake of *The Day* disputes human dominance as a species and casts humans in a subordinate position to other species—the league of aliens that Klaatu represents. *The Day* employs fast cutting and a shaky camera to show scientists' hypothesis about the presumed UFO impact as they fly in a plane, suggesting that humanity is clueless and vulnerable. The film emphasizes alien superiority by consistently combining low- and high-angle shots to portray the alien and humans respectively. One example is Klaatu's conversation about human behavior with Dr. Benson (Jennifer Connelly) and Professor Barnhardt (John Cleese). This scene includes high-angle shots of the humans to highlight their inferiority as they plead with the alien—who features in the low-angle shots—for an opportunity to change. Following the original film, when US armed forces attack Gort, the robot renders weapons and technology useless. In addition, in the 2008 film, the "mass" absorbs missiles and bullets, increasing its volume every time something reaches it. The 2014 eco-conscious remake of *Godzilla* (Edwards) offers a similar portrait of clueless humans who do not seem to come up with a better plan than shooting at giant and more powerful creatures with mere machine guns. As Klaatu tells Dr. Helen Benson's son, Jacob (Jaden Smith), there is nothing humans can do—apart from changing their behavior. In the remake of *The Day*, the US military keep attacking Gort until the very end of the film, suggesting that humans do not learn so easily, even when their planet is on the brink of destruction. In sum, rather than presenting authoritarian aliens, *The Day* hints that humans need to reconsider their arrogance, their reliance on armed responses to conflicts and the way that they use resources and treat nature. *The Day* questions humanity's role as a dominant species and invites viewers to reassess their identities in non-exceptional terms.

Like the original film, the 2008 remake introduces several details that reinforce the image of aliens as peaceful visitors. This version incorporates a new alien character, Mr. Wu (James Hong), who has adopted an Asian appearance and says that he loves the human species and feels at home on Earth. This character, despite being secondary, embraces Otherness and clearly shows an attitude of cosmopolitan openness. *The Day* also includes visual cues that connect with movies about friendly aliens from the 1970s and 1980s. The alien arrival scene recalls *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Spielberg 1977), as a strong source of light fills most of the screen,

projecting human and alien silhouettes against an almost-blinding background. In addition, the scientists' suits and the stretcher/capsule that soldiers use to transport Klaatu are similar to those that appear in a scene from *E.T.* (Spielberg 1982) where doctors observe E.T. and Elliot (Henry Thomas) at a field hospital. By referring to this specific scene from *E.T.*, *The Day* reminds viewers of the different perceptions of the aliens that children and most adults (especially the US government) have in Spielberg's film and its implication that most adults are prejudiced against aliens (Geraghty 2009, 70). Citing well-known films that feature harmless aliens, *The Day* reassures viewers that Klaatu and his kind are far from the destructive, machine-like extraterrestrials or the cold, mind-controlling invaders that appear in other films. *The Day* shifts attention away from the aliens' evilness and configures an alternative cosmopolitan narrative that gives viewers opportunities to consider different questions from those that invasion stories usually pose. Specifically, the film presents a series of situations that allegorically allude to the critical state of Earth's environment and the catastrophic horizon of climate change. At the same time, the film suggests that humans have much to learn from the aliens' approach to the environment.

5. Between the Horizon of Ecological Disaster and Deformed Cosmopolitanism

The 1951 and the 2008 versions of the film differ in their representation of the motivations of the aliens to intervene on Earth. In the original, aliens do not care what is happening on Earth unless it affects their planet. They only travel to Earth because they observe an escalation towards nuclear hostility that could pose a threat to them. The remake presents a league of aliens that is concerned about human actions on Earth because it is one of the few planets that is capable of sustaining life and providing rich natural resources. Aliens come to Earth to make humans aware of the uniqueness of the planet that they inhabit and do not appreciate. In this sense, the 2008 film appears to present less self-centered and more universe-aware aliens. Yet, in the remake, aliens also delay their involvement in Earth affairs, which suggests that their cosmopolitan stance is not an ideal moral position but derives from a set of conjunctural circumstances. As seen above, they are an example of deformed cosmopolitanism in Ulrich Beck's terms ([2004] 2006, 19-20). The aliens do not rely on cosmopolitanism as a blueprint. Despite the theoretically advanced character of their civilization, aliens—like humans—only seem to have cosmopolitan concerns when threats or impacts are evident. In this way, the film suggests that cosmopolitanism primarily thrives as a response to specific situations, rather than as an outlook and way of acting that helps prevent hazards and improve lives. At least, the aliens are able to react when they see early signs of ecological impacts. Unlike humans, they do not need to witness large-scale disaster in order to recognize the need to change their way of acting.

Instead of aliens, the actual threat in both versions of *The Day* is humanity, especially in the 2008 remake. The humans in Robert Wise's film do not yet pose a threat for anyone, except for themselves and conviviality in their planet. The remake emphasizes the idea that humans are a dangerous species. When Klaatu has a conversation with the Asian alien who is considering staying on Earth until it is destroyed, Klaatu reminds him that humans are a "destructive race." For Klaatu, it is very clear that humans are killing the planet. He tells Dr. Benson: "If the Earth dies, you die. If you die, the Earth survives." Klaatu perceives humanity as a deadly virus or plague. In an article about the relationship between cosmopolitanism and climate risks, Ulrich Beck, Anders Block, David Tyfield and Joy Yueyue Zhang assert that "civilization is a wolf to civilization" (2013, 5-6). That is, the actions and consumption patterns of humans—or rather, affluent humans—put the whole of humanity (but especially those living in precarious circumstances) at risk (Harris 2010, 7-9). Klaatu's words point beyond anthropocentric notions of climate change. Humans are not just an "imagined risk community" that poses a threat to itself and shares a global fate (Beck, Block, Tyfield and Yueyue Zhang 2013, 6-9). In Klaatu's view, humans are an imagined community that constitutes a threat to the life of the planet and the rest of the life forms that it hosts. What makes humans dangerous in *The Day* is not their monstrosity or Otherness, but their stubbornness, pride and sense of exceptionalism. When the US Secretary of Defense Regina Jackson (Kathy Bates) refers to Earth as "our planet," Klaatu reproaches her that it does not belong to humans alone. Klaatu also asks the US Secretary of Defense whether she represents "the entire human race," thus exposing the hegemonic attitude of her government. By questioning humans' conception of world order, supremacy and property, Klaatu encourages viewers to participate in a cosmopolitan exercise of critical revision, reflection and potential transformation.

As in the original film, Klaatu also represents a group of alien species, but, most importantly, he represents nature: he has the power to unleash or restrain environmental impacts that metaphorically allude to climate change. The destruction that the alien causes mirrors that of nature itself in other eco-cosmopolitan SF films like *The Day After Tomorrow* (Emmerich 2004) and *2012* (Emmerich 2009). In these films, natural catastrophes and destruction voice the agony of nature in the real world. In contrast to the 1951 version of *The Day*, in which Klaatu comes to Earth to make humans negotiate and cease hostilities, in the 2008 remake, Klaatu is determined to eradicate humanity. He tells people that "the decision is made" and that "the process has begun." Klaatu's words present climate change as a process that has already started and is going to have an impact on people's lives because of previous inaction. The original film does not make any reference to the costs of humans' behavior: all people have to do is avoid an escalation of the nuclear conflict. Conversely, in the 2008 film, part of the planet is destroyed, showing that climate change has human, natural and economic costs. Some people die, the environment is severely damaged and

some buildings, factories and infrastructure are destroyed—although the film avoids pointing at the economic processes, neoliberal actors and mindless consumerism that are responsible for those impacts.

The *mise-en-scène* also presents a planet at risk. While the military run some tests on Gort at their facility, the glass windows that separate the robot from people start cracking. The cracking of the glass produced by Gort's power invites to read this effect as a visual reference to the depletion of the ozone layer around Earth, which was getting thinner and thinner until the 2000s but which now seems to be recovering three decades after the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in 1987 (Fountain 2016). In the film, however, the glass eventually breaks, the destructive "mass" escapes and everyone in the sealed room dies. Through this visual allegory, the film suggests that it is not possible to escape the impacts of climate change. Towards the end, *The Day* recovers this allegory when the front windscreen of a car starts cracking a few moments before Klaatu stops the destruction of human civilization. This time nobody dies, but, as Klaatu notes in a previous scene, stopping climate change has a price for human lifestyles: people will have to change their production and consumption patterns. Despite the film's attempts to emphasize the urgency of a change in human attitudes towards the environment, it skirts around the actual behaviors and actions that humans need to change—a neoliberal quest for the continued growth of profits; non-stop, low-cost consumption; endless resource extraction; poor waste management; energy consumption and emissions. *The Day*, then, develops an ambivalent discourse that both points at the problem of ecological exploitation and simultaneously refuses to explore the actors and activities behind it.

The remake of *The Day* presents the influence of unusual events and catastrophes, rather than cautionary political discourses, on people's awareness of cosmopolitan challenges and their interest in finding solutions for them. When humans show their surprise about Klaatu's intentions to destroy them, he explains: "I tried to reason with you. I tried to speak to your leaders." Klaatu's words reflect the difficulties of engaging in meaningful international talks to determine measures that address climate change at a global scale. In fact, political leaders are largely absent in the film. The only exception is the US Secretary of Defense. When she has a conversation with the President, viewers only listen to what the Secretary says, highlighting the President's inaction. In this way, the film shows that learning processes and transformation are not possible without practicing dialogue and a willingness to distance oneself from one's own culture (Delanty 2009, 130), except in extreme scenarios. As a matter of fact, the film suggests that cosmopolitan change can ultimately develop from a deformed sense of cosmopolitanism forced by circumstances. The idea of having aliens come to Earth (in the name of nature) to make humans react is quite an apt image, as individuals, governments and international institutions do not seem to be doing much to lower the impact of their lifestyles and economic activities on the environment. On September 21, 2014, *The Guardian* published an article with the

headline: "Climate Warning to World Leaders: Stick to 2C Limit or Face 'Mayhem'" (Mckie 2014). While the article presents experts, campaigners and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the people responsible for getting the attention of global leaders and organizing a meeting in New York to address climate change, the headline itself suggests that leaders might be more willing to negotiate for a different reason: the "mayhem" on the horizon. As in *The Day*, it is the current circumstances—as we begin to witness and experience the effects of climate change—that are making some leaders acknowledge the gravity of the situation.

The Day resorts to the narrative strategy of depicting impending disaster to make audiences understand the severity of the problem. In this sense, the film seems to confirm Gerry Canavan's hypothesis that, in eco-conscious SF, apocalyptic imaginaries not only provide the thrill of witnessing destruction itself, but can also show "*something* [that] *might intervene in time to force us to change*" (2014, 13; emphasis in the original). Towards the end of the film, a bird's eye-view shot captures how the "mass" unleashed by Gort destroys a stadium. The camera goes around the stadium and tilts up towards the end of the shot, showing how the "mass" is heading for New York City, which appears on the horizon. Through this camera movement, the film highlights the evaporation of everything that the "mass" finds on its way and hints at potential larger-scale destruction. Ulrich Beck suggests that living through a transnational disaster event accidentally contributes to opening up avenues for cosmopolitan thinking and problem-solving. He notes that, in Oskar Maria Graf's SF novel *The Conquest of the World* (1949), "a complete catastrophe, an existential tabula rasa, becomes the precondition for a cosmopolitan global order" ([2004] 2006, 13). Similarly, in the original version of *The Day*, people do not react until Klaatu and Gort bring the world to a halt. A more negative image of humans appears in the 2008 remake, as most people do not react until they witness destruction, and some not even then. Beck, Block, Tyfield and Zhang assert that "the perceived globality of risk" is necessary for cosmopolitan organization (2013, 6). Similarly, *The Day* suggests that humans need to see their world crumbling in order to change their behavior. As Professor Barnhardt remarks, it is "only at the precipice [that] we evolve."

Apart from highlighting the importance of changing institutional attitudes towards the environment around the globe, the remake of *The Day* also hints that cosmopolitan challenges require individuals to revise their personal stances. As I noted earlier, Gerard Delanty argues that learning processes are central to cosmopolitanism. For him, it is necessary to interrogate the self in order to see through a cosmopolitan lens (2006, 41). The remake of *The Day* shows the development of a self-reflexive, dialogic attitude in certain characters such as Jacob, US Secretary of Defense Regina Jackson, and even Klaatu. Even though Jacob mistrusts Klaatu from the very beginning, the circumstances of the alien and the child—they need each other's help to get from the forest to the city—lead them both to collaborate and realize that they can trust each other. Jacob's initial distrust of Klaatu allows the film to underline the centrality

of revising personal stances to cosmopolitan thinking. Similarly, the Secretary of Defense initially deals with Klaatu and Gort in a hostile way but eventually comes to realize the futility of her government's attitude and tries to convince the President that they need to have a conversation with the aliens instead of attacking them. Even Klaatu goes from being determined to wipe humans off the face of the Earth to appreciating them as kind-hearted beings. While the ending of the 1951 version does not hint as to whether nuclear threats will cease or not, in the remake, Klaatu believes that humans are going to change, and so stops the destruction of the Earth. A few leaves whirl in the 2008 film just before Klaatu changes his mind, emphasizing that it is fall: the time when many trees drop their old leaves and get ready to grow new ones. In this way, learning and change become much more prominent in the remake. Through this metaphor, the film connects its cosmopolitan emphasis on personal and societal transformation with ecological processes. This might give the equivocal impression that characters' internal processes of change simply result from spending time with and getting to know the Other better. Yet, in the fashion of deformed cosmopolitanism, kindness does not inspire the learning processes of the characters in the remake. Rather, their conjunctural situations lead them to realize that they may fare better if they change their attitude.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the remake of *The Day* addresses contemporary cosmopolitan challenges by advocating dialogic relations between self and Other and drawing attention to the urgency and impact of climate change through its apocalyptic framing of planetary environmental awareness. The 2008 version of *The Day* intensifies the cosmopolitan message of the original film, recycling and developing some of its narrative techniques and themes and introducing new stylistic and thematic elements in order to reflect on contemporary cosmopolitan paradigms. Like the 1951 film, the remake relies on the figure of the alien to maintain the critical emphasis on human hegemony, exceptionalism, armed violence and stubbornness of the original film. Drawing on the critical, self-reflexive cosmopolitanism of Wise's film, the remake subverts generic conventions that project menacing images of Others, grants aliens the hierarchical position that (certain groups of) humans typically hold, shows humans' helplessness and emphasizes the danger that they pose to themselves, the planet and the universe. By challenging popular expectations about aliens and equipping them with nature's apocalyptic power, the remake submerges characters and viewers in learning processes and urges them to reconsider their relationship with the Other and the planet that they live in. In order to adapt to the unusual scenario that the film presents, characters need to transform their self-centered perspective into an attitude of openness towards the alien and respect for the environment. The motivation of aliens to intervene on Earth and the position taken by individuals and institutions towards the aliens' arrival

and the state of the planet imply that it is a deformed sense of cosmopolitanism that makes both people and aliens react. The apocalyptic imagination of *The Day* suggests that, as a rule, risks in themselves do not prompt a response. It is people's perception and experience of such risks that actually lead to changes in their attitudes—although the film barely points at the neoliberal, extractivist and consumerist actions that need changing. Also, while deformed cosmopolitanism can effectively draw attention to the impacts of climate change, it produces the illusory image that people can always do something last minute to stop or reverse climate change impacts. Indeed, waiting for signs of stronger environmental degradation—when there is already indisputable evidence that governments, companies and citizens need to take action—will surely lead humanity into a scenario in which it will be too late to act.

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Pablo Gómez Muñoz is a PhD Research Fellow in Film Studies at the Department of English and German of the University of Zaragoza. In his dissertation, he uses cosmopolitanism as a theoretical framework to study how twenty-first century science fiction films represent borders, economic globalization, transnational mobility, romance and climate change. His work has recently appeared in *Geopolitics*, the *Journal of Transnational American Studies* and *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*.

Address: Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Universidad de Zaragoza. Pedro Cerbuna, 12. 50009, Zaragoza, Spain. Tel.: +34 876553993.

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Love on the Margins: The American Indie Rom-com of the 2010s

Beatriz Oria
Universidad de Zaragoza
beaoria@unizar.es

Ever since Brian Henderson famously diagnosed the death of romantic comedy in 1978 there have been numerous attempts to "kill" the genre. In view of its apparent lack of popularity in the 2010s, scholars and popular culture writers are proclaiming, once more, its demise. This article aims to question this view, arguing that the genre is alive and well, though living largely on the margins and finding alternative ways to re-imagine itself. It interrogates the term "independent" and uses genre theory to produce a non-taxonomical definition of the "indie rom-com" in the 2010s. With this purpose, this work outlines the basic conventions of these films and ends with a close analysis of a recent indie rom-com: Jim Strouse's *People, Places, Things* (2015). The essay concludes that the relative mainstream dearth of the genre is masking a notable presence in other less visible sites. Contemporary romantic comedy is currently leading a "secret life" right before our eyes, independent cinema being rife with exciting examples of the genre. These films are finding new formulas that will eventually result in the reinvention of the genre at a larger scale, and not just in the independent sector.

Keywords: romantic comedy; independent US cinema; indie rom-com; film genre; generic conventions; *People, Places, Things*

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Amor en los márgenes: la comedia romántica independiente estadounidense en la década de los 2010s

Desde que Brian Henderson diagnosticara la muerte de la comedia romántica en 1978 ha habido numerosos intentos de acabar con ella por parte de la crítica. A la vista de su aparente pérdida de popularidad en la última década, se está proclamando, una vez más, el fin del género tanto en el ámbito académico como en el popular. Este artículo se propone

cuestionar esta postura, argumentando que, lejos de estar acabada, la comedia romántica contemporánea goza de buena salud en los márgenes, donde está encontrando modos alternativos de reformulación. El ensayo explora el significado del término "independiente" y hace uso de la teoría de género para producir una definición no taxonómica de lo que significa "comedia romántica independiente" en las primeras décadas del siglo XXI. Con este propósito, el artículo trata de perfilar las convenciones principales de estas películas, ejemplificándolas con el análisis de *People, Places, Things* de Jim Strouse (2015). El ensayo concluye que la relativa "sequía" del género en el *mainstream* enmascara su prodigalidad en sitios menos visibles, pues la comedia romántica parece estar viviendo una "vida secreta" en el cine independiente estadounidense actual. En este ámbito, estas películas están encontrando nuevas fórmulas que culminarán en la reinvención del género en su conjunto, y no solo en el sector independiente.

Palabras clave: comedia romántica; cine independiente norteamericano; *indie rom-com*; género fílmico; convenciones genéricas; *People, Places, Things*

1. Introduction

It has become a cliché in romantic comedy scholarship to begin an article by recalling Brian Henderson's famous diagnosis of the death of the genre in 1978.[1] Since then there have been numerous further attempts to "kill" the rom-com. More than three decades later, academics and popular culture writers are proclaiming, once more, the downfall of the genre. Critics' lack of faith in contemporary rom-com's viability is evident, as suggested by titles such as "R.I.P. Romantic Comedies: Why Harry Wouldn't Meet Sally in 2013" (Siegel 2013), "Who Killed the Romantic Comedy?" (Nicholson 2014) and "The Rom-Com is Dead. Good" (Yahr 2016). To justify their claims, these commentators appeal mainly to the genre's current lack of commercial potential. Indeed, the 2010s have witnessed a significant number of box-office flops. The disappointing figures obtained by films like *The Big Wedding* (Zackham 2013), *The Five-Year Engagement* (Stoller 2012) and *What to Expect When You're Expecting* (Jones 2012) marked 2012-2013 as especially critical years in the downward slide of the genre, with not a single rom-com in the top 100 box office performers (Nicholson 2014, n.p.). In 2015 the genre seemed to hit bottom: while the average annual US rom-com market share between 1995 and 2004 was 6.4 per cent (the highest point being at 9.9 per cent), in 2015 it plummeted to an all-time low 0.6 per cent (The Numbers 1997-2018, n.p.). The year 2016 was not much better, as the only rom-com to be found on the list of the year's fifty biggest movies was the breakout hit *La La Land* (Chazelle 2016). In 2017, the highest-grossing rom-com, the indie sleeper *The Big Sick* (Showalter 2017) did not even make it into the top 50 (Box Office Mojo, n.p.). These figures have severely affected the studios' appetite for projects within the genre, which has in turn reduced the number of rom-coms that actually get made.

This article aims to question the generalized view of romantic comedy's latest downfall. It is my contention that the genre is alive and well, living largely on the margins and finding alternative ways to re-imagine itself. This essay argues that the mainstream dearth of the genre hides a rich life in less visible sites. Romantic comedy is actually leading a "secret life"—as Celestino Deleyto (2009) would put it—but this is happening right before our eyes, since independent cinema is rife with exciting examples of the genre. This may not be readily apparent because these romantic comedies do not tend to come wrapped up in the sleek package that Hollywood has accustomed us to, or follow the conventional rom-com tick list, but this is precisely where their interest lies. These films are finding new formulas that may well eventually result in the reinvention of the genre at a larger scale, and not just in the independent sector. This article explores some of these new formulas.[2]

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[2] Contemporary romantic comedy is also experiencing a generic revival on television but this exceeds the scope of this essay.

2. What is the Indie Rom-com?

To answer this question, two issues should be addressed: the contemporary conception of independent cinema and the boundaries of the romantic comedy as a genre. Over the years, critics have struggled to define the term independent, yet it has proven to be slippery, both because of its evolution, and the seemingly contradictory features it appears to encompass. In 1999, Emanuel Levy argued: "Ideally, an indie is a fresh, low-budget movie with a gritty style and offbeat subject matter that expresses the film-maker's personal vision" (1999, 2). On the one hand, this definition relates independent cinema to low-budgets, yet numerous films that might fall under the umbrella of independent cinema have relatively substantial budgets. Gritty style and offbeat subject matter are not essential requirements either: many indies are "packaged" in a very mainstream way and deal with well-trodden topics. On the other hand, Levy links independent cinema directly with the romantic vision of a single individual who is ultimately responsible for the film. Nowadays, this is true of some films, which portray the idiosyncratic perspectives of their creators. Others, however, prefer to hide any auteurist marks.

Economic and industrial factors have probably been the most controversial when it comes to defining a film's "independence." Independent cinema's popularity during the 1990s awakened Hollywood's interest, which led to its absorption of some of these independent companies or the opening of its own specialized divisions trying to capitalize on their success. In the 2000s, the emergence of what Thomas Schatz termed "conglomerate Hollywood" meant that there were three basic types of film being produced: (1) big-budget blockbusters with an average $100 million budget, aimed at a lucrative worldwide market fueled by globalization that accounted for seventy-five to eighty-five percent of all box-office revenues; (2) art-house and specialty films produced by the indie divisions of the conglomerates ($40 million average budget); and (3) genre and specialty films handled by independent producers with limited distribution and a budget of less than $10 million (2008, 31).

The second category is a gray area that would include what is commonly referred to as "Indiewood," a term often tinged with scornful undertones. The narrowing of the gap between the mainstream and the margins was received with a certain degree of bitterness by some critics, who regretted that "the word [independent] has been corrupted. Independent no longer means 'independent.' It now means 'appendage'" (Hillier 2001, xv). I believe that this bitterness sometimes stems from an inability to see the wood for the trees. Something may have been lost with the stepping of indies into the mainstream, but something else has been gained. Indie cinema today is a more inclusive term than before, capable of gathering a greater array of films and viewers under its umbrella. As John Berra argues, indie "used to describe both a mode of production, and a form of thinking, relating to the financing, filming, distribution and cultural appreciation of modern film" (2008, 10), but today it is

a more elastic term, encompassing a wider variety of films, directors, themes and genres (17). Instead of regarding this as negative, this wider conceptualization of the meaning of independent cinema has the potential to open the floor to a larger number of voices, both on the side of production and of reception, thus allowing for a richer debate and a larger social impact.

The fact that in 1999 the Spirit Awards were opened up to include all films made in the "spirit" of independence (Holmlund 2005, 7) probably legitimizes the idea that in the new millennium "independence" should be finally acknowledged to lie in a film's "spirit" rather than in its industrial or economic circumstances. This somewhat vague term is meant to encapsulate equally elusive features, such as the film's attitude towards the mainstream, the way it is marketed, its provocative subject matter or original aesthetics, its social or political agenda, etc., in a word, its recognizable distinctiveness from Hollywood in one aspect or another. This essay will adopt this broad though rather intangible notion of independence as "spirit," as a "brand" that evokes certain symbolic and emotional associations in its viewers (Newman 2011, 4). In this sense, "indie" will be regarded as a cultural category characterized by a specific sensibility, style, themes, viewing practices, and, crucially, the self-aware outsider status as being "off-Hollywood" that stems from a shared consensus between film-makers and interpretive communities. This spirit does not, though, necessarily imply a radical break with the mainstream. This article will, generally, focus on accessible films with crossover potential, rather than on more alternative, *avant-garde* examples. However, in terms of budget, these films are worlds apart from big studio fares. In the 2010s the second kind of movie identified by Schatz—the mid-budget film—has virtually disappeared. Indiewood seems to be on the wane, with studios betting exclusively on multimedia juggernauts that can be sold across different verticals. As a result, the talent that used to work in the mid-budget zone has been forced to retreat to the indie scene, which is increasingly crowded these days (Bailey 2014). With one or two exceptions, the budgets of the movies discussed in this essay do not generally exceed the $10 million mark, and many are well below this figure.

The broad conception of independent cinema adopted in this essay parallels my own equally broad understanding of film genre. Before explaining what I mean by "indie rom-com," it should be kept in mind that genres are not clear-cut categories. The constitution of genres is, in Rick Altman's words, "a never-ending process" (1999, 64) and their boundaries are nebulous, and thus hard to pinpoint. Drawing on Lakoff (1987) and Wittgenstein (1953), rom-com scholars like Celestino Deleyto (2009, 12-13) and Leger Grindon (2011, 73) argue that genres are constituted by the conventions films deploy rather than by the films themselves. Similarly, I will use the label "romantic comedy" for those films that participate in the conventions of this genre in one way or another. This participation will vary in degree and will determine the "centrality" of each film in relation to the corpus.

Romantic comedy has received a considerable amount of academic attention in the last decade—see Jeffers McDonald (2007), Abbot and Jermyn (2009), Deleyto (2009), Mortimer (2010), Grindon (2011) and Kaklamanidou (2013)—but most works deal primarily with mainstream examples of the genre. These scholars have tried to rescue romantic comedy from critical opprobrium, arguing for a greater degree of narrative complexity and ideological variety in the genre than has traditionally been acknowledged. The detailed consideration of individual films reveals the inaccuracy of associating the genre with patriarchal heterosexual determinism. Similarly, upon close inspection, the "boy-meets-girl" formula and other seemingly "compulsory" conventions prove to be far more elastic in the uses that they are actually put to: the happy ending, for instance, has necessarily evolved with the times in order to include constantly changing mores in the intimate realm (Deleyto 1998). Now it is no longer an unavoidable trope, having been sometimes replaced by the "happy for now"—*Knocked Up* (Apatow 2007), *The Proposal* (Fletcher 2009)—or by other alternatives to heterosexual coupling—*La La Land* (Chazelle 2016), *How to Be Single* (Ditter 2016). In the same way, the romantic plot has experienced a remarkable degree of genre-mixing in the same period, prominence being given to elements that had traditionally played second-fiddle to the romantic quest, including the following: offspring—*The Back-Up Plan* (Poul 2010), *Life as We Know It* (Berlanti 2010), *Bridget Jones's Baby* (Maguire 2016); older characters—*It's Complicated* (Meyers 2009), *The Rewrite* (Lawrence 2014), *Book Club* (Holderman 2018); fantasy—*Enchanted* (Lima 2007), *The Invention of Lying* (Gervais and Robinson 2009), *About Time* (Curtis 2013); action—*Knight and Day* (Mangold 2010), *Killers* (Lucketic 2010), *Mr. Right* (Cabezas 2015); the man's point of view—*Made of Honor* (Weiland 2008), *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (Stoller 2008), *(500) Days of Summer* (Webb 2009); or the woman's career—*New in Town* (Elmer 2009), *My Life in Ruins* (Petrie 2009), *The Intern* (Meyers 2015) (Kaklamanidou 2013, 27-124).

Among the recent output of rom-com criticism, Celestino Deleyto is the only author who has explored the concept of indie rom-com in some depth (2009, 148-176). In keeping with a more open, less biased, conception of the genre, he emphasizes the great variety of approaches to intimate matters that romantic comedy as a whole has progressively incorporated in recent decades, including the increased visibility of non-heterosexual romance, the preference for friendship over love, the prevalence of a female point of view on intimate matters, and a realistic approach to the representation of heterosex, among others. He partly attributes this variety to the impact of independent cinema on the mainstream, thus highlighting the fruitful process of cross-fertilization between the two—a process that has rendered the boundaries between them quite vague. Examples such as *My Best Friend's Wedding* (Hogan 1997), *The Object of my Affection* (Hytner 1998), *High Fidelity* (Frears 2000), *Rumor Has It…* (Reiner 2005) and *The Break-Up* (Reed 2006) confirm the

importance of indie cinema's influence on Hollywood while problematizing widely-held assumptions about the homogeneity and blandness of commercial cinema. Similarly, Deleyto acknowledges the emergence of the concept of the independent rom-com, going against the tendency to identify this genre exclusively with the mainstream, which is arguably related to a general reluctance to disrupt the well-established (and manifestly mistaken) mainstream/conservative, independent/progressive associations by mixing up the two binomials (2009, 148-157). Deleyto's book highlights indie cinema's impact on the mainstream and points to the rise of the indie rom-com during, mainly, the late 1990s and early 2000s, a period when the genre had as yet shown no signs of commercial decline. Faced, now, however, with just such a crisis, this article argues that the consolidation of the indie rom-com in the 2010s is the principal reason that the genre is not only surviving but also being revitalized. With this purpose, I will consider indie rom-coms all those films that deal in one way or another with issues of love, desire, intimacy and relationships and that do so from a mostly comic perspective and in a way that is self-consciously distinct from the mainstream, displaying a clear willingness to set themselves apart in thematic, narrative, ideological or esthetic terms.[3] The next section will outline the main conventions of these movies, and this will be followed by the analysis of a recent example, *People, Places, Things* (Strouse 2015), taken here as an exemplar of the genre in its recent indie metamorphosis.

3. Conventions of the Indie Rom-com

Independent cinema runs parallel to the mainstream and is not an intrinsically oppositional film practice; it would thus be overly simplistic to consider certain formulas as the sole property of this kind of cinema. Similarly, I do not intend to provide a comprehensive taxonomy of conventions, as this would contradict my fluid vision of film genre. Rather, this section tries to paint a broad picture of the variety and relative novelty of the main elements on which the indie rom-com draws nowadays, acknowledging its richness and diversity.

3.1. Love differently

In Indiewood, rom-com appears to have found that romance and the pursuit of love need not be the only preoccupation of lovers. In this "dispersion" of their narrative focus, it is relatively common for these movies to deal with unconventional, uncomfortable or thorny topics usually overlooked by Hollywood, such as abortion—

[3] This definition is in keeping with Deleyto's open conception of romantic comedy. For him, romantic comedy is a "genre which uses humour, laughter and the comic to tell stories about interpersonal affective and erotic relationships" (2009, 30).

Greenberg (Baumbach 2010), *Obvious Child* (Robespierre 2014); mental illness—*Greenberg*, *It's Kind of a Funny Story* (Boden and Fleck 2010), *In Your Eyes* (Hill 2014); death—*Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* (Scafaria 2012), *The Pretty One* (LaMarque 2013), *Life after Beth* (Baena 2014), *Tumbledown* (Mewshaw 2015); parenthood—*Happythankyoumoreplease* (Radnor 2010), *Friends with Kids* (Westfeldt 2011), *Gayby* (Lisecki 2012), *Begin Again* (Carney 2013), *Maggie's Plan* (Miller 2015); addiction—*Don Jon* (Gordon-Levitt 2013), *The Spectacular Now* (Ponsoldt 2013), *Newlyweeds* (King 2013), *Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015); sickness—*Take Care* (Tuccillo 2014), *The Big Sick* (Showalter 2017); or economic stability and career prospects—*The Giant Mechanical Man* (Kirk 2012), *Laggies* (Shelton 2014), *Life Partners* (Fogel 2014).

3.2. Crazy in love

Romantic comedy's protagonists have always been presented as non-conventional. However, in the indie rom-com—as happened often in the screwball comedy—these characters are true eccentrics, and their integration in society constitutes a difficult (sometimes impossible) process. Their eccentricity may be defined in terms of age, sexuality, race or occupation. The characters in these films are not usually alpha males and females, and they do not have high-flying jobs nor tend to lead remarkable lives, a fact that is often emphasized by the narrative— *Happythankyoumoreplease* (Radnor 2010), *The Giant Mechanical Man* (Kirk 2012), *Save the Date* (Mohan 2012), *Hello I Must Be Going* (Louiso 2012), *Drinking Buddies* (Swanberg 2013), *In a World…* (Bell 2013). Moreover, they are not usually played by glamorous stars, but by relatively ordinary-looking actors. When big Hollywood stars are featured in these films their beauty or glamor tends to be downplayed. Thus, unlike mainstream rom-coms, which lean towards reasonably well-adjusted and conventionally attractive twenty-somethings in top jobs, these films make room for older—*Enough Said* (Holofcener 2013), *Hello, My Name is Doris* (Showalter 2015)—or younger protagonists—*Submarine* (Ayoade 2010); *Moonrise Kingdom* (Anderson 2012), *Sing Street* (Carney 2016); quirky—*The Dish and the Spoon* (Bagnall 2011), *Slow Learners* (Argott and Joyce 2015); or even mentally unbalanced characters—*Greenberg* (Baumbach 2010), *Silver Linings Playbook* (Russell 2012), *Safety Not Guaranteed* (Trevorrow 2012). Indie rom-coms also favor under-represented minorities, often featuring central characters who are non-white—*An Oversimplification of her Beauty* (Nance 2012), *Newlyweeds* (King 2013), *Top Five* (Rock 2014), *People Places Things* (Strouse 2015); and non-heterosexual—*BearCity* (Langway 2010), *The Kids Are All Right* (Cholodenko 2010), *Boy Meets Girl* (Schaeffer 2014), *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Gayby* (Lisecki 2012), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014), *Life Partners* (Fogel 2014), *Me Him Her* (Landis 2015).

3.3. Boy meets girl, with a twist

There are myriad screenplay writing manuals explaining the "compulsory" plot points that a rom-com should feature. The typical rom-com plot is generally considered to consist of the following: meet cute, initial antagonism, overcoming of obstacles, transformation, happy ending.[4] Indie rom-com plots are prone to a looser narrative structure. This is the case of *The Dish and the Spoon* (Bagnall 2011), *2 Days in New York* (Delpy 2012), *Before Midnight* (Linklater 2013), *Drinking Buddies* (Swanberg 2013) and *Maggie's Plan* (Miller 2015). These films tend to eschew "important" plot points, such as climactic endings, as happens in *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Save the Date* (Mohan 2012), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014) and *Top Five* (Rock 2014).

The "unconventionality" plot-wise of these movies is also apparent in the frequent subversion of other typical tropes of the genre, such as the obstacles that the couple has to overcome to reach their happily ever after: in mainstream rom-coms obstacles are often of an external nature, at least the more ostensible ones. While there are many exceptions to this, the romantic quest in Hollywood rom-coms is more often than not hindered by straightforward impediments: she is married to someone else, he lives miles away, the father of the heroine hates the chosen partner. Obstacles in indie rom-coms, on the other hand, are more often internal, that is, related to the characters' mental lives. *Lola Versus* (Wein 2012), for instance, suggests that its protagonist is single because she needs to get over her ex first. The inability to get over a past relationship is a recurrent "obstacle" in these films: Rose (Greta Gerwig) and the nameless homeless boy (Olly Alexander) with whom she spends time in *The Dish and the Spoon* (Bagnall 2011) never actually get to be romantically involved due to her obsession—bordering on mental illness—with her husband's infidelity. Something similar happens to Pat (Bradley Cooper), the male protagonist of *Silver Linings Playbook* (Russell 2012), although he does eventually manage to find love with Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence), who is still trying to recover from her husband's death. Internal obstacles also keep characters apart in *Greenberg* (Baumbach 2010) and *Safety Not Guaranteed* (Trevorrow 2012)—the male characters are mentally deranged—*Don Jon* (Gordon-Levitt 2013)—he is a porn addict—*Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011)—he is grieving over his brother's death—*Liberal Arts* (Radnor 2012)—he is too moral to date a younger girl—*Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015)—he is a womanizer, she is obsessed with her ex—*Her* (Jonze 2013)—he cannot open up, and *Life after Beth* (Baena 2014)—she is a zombie!

[4] Of course, not every Hollywood romantic comedy falls into this pattern. Romantic comedy admits more variation than critics usually concede. However, the most representative examples of the genre do follow this structure, which is why the formula has become paradigmatic.

3.4. Happily ever after?

The happily ever after has traditionally been one of the defining features of the Hollywood rom-com. Although this tendency is starting to change (Deleyto 2009, 30-38; Ruiz-Pardos 2010) as mainstream films nowadays present an increasingly larger number of options for their happily ever afters, indie rom-coms are more likely to feature anti-climactic, open or ambiguous endings—*The Romantics* (Niederhoffer 2010), *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *Save the Date* (Mohan 2012), *Top Five* (Rock 2014) which may even include the final separation of the couple—*The Dish and the Spoon* (Bagnall 2011), *Liberal Arts* (Radnor 2012), *Celeste and Jesse Forever* (Toland Krieger 2012), *Begin Again* (Carney 2013), *Her* (Jonze 2013), *Comet* (Esmail 2014). Even if the couple stays together, by the end, some films exude an air of provisionality and uncertainty, replacing the "happily ever after" with the "happy for now"—*Greenberg* (Baumbach 2010), *Tonight You're Mine* (Mackenzie 2011), *Obvious Child* (Robespierre 2014), *Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015). In other cases, the happy ending lies not in the formation of the couple, but in other alternatives to romantic love. Fulfillment may take the shape of friendship—*Drinking Buddies* (Swanberg 2013), *Life Partners* (Fogel 2014); parenthood—*Gayby* (Lisecki 2012), *Maggie's Plan* (Miller 2015)—professional accomplishment—*The Giant Mechanical Man* (Kirk 2012), *In a World…* (Bell 2013), *Begin Again* (Carney 2013), *The Incredible Jessica James* (Strouse 2017)—family ties—*Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011)—or simply finding one's self-identity—*It's Kind of a Funny Story* (Boden and Fleck 2010), *Hello I Must Be Going* (Louiso 2012), *Lola Versus* (Wein 2012), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014). This is a particularly popular "category," where the romantic relationship is not an end in itself, but rather a vehicle for self-discovery which is presented as a higher aim than the union with the opposite sex.

3.5. Reality bites

Indie rom-coms purport to search for more "authentic" representations of romantic relationships. This may include the deflation of romantic ideals and myths like the soul mate or the "One," so crucial in earlier approaches. They often focus on the transitory nature of romantic love, on the seriality and provisionality of relationships, on infidelity, divorce, instability, uncertainty, and the role of luck and coincidence in the formation and dissolution of attachments.

Apart from movies depicting new love, the penchant of these films for realism is also apparent in their focus on already formed couples, and not only on the courtship process, as is often the case in Hollywood. These movies show a wide variety in their representation of love, often depicting tumultuous, dull, awkward or unhappy relationships. The couples featured in these films often require "work" to stay afloat, something rarely explored by mainstream cinema, which is reluctant to show us what

happens after the couple's final kiss. This is the case of films like *Friends with Kids* (Westfeldt 2011), *Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *2 Days in New York* (Delpy 2012), *Celeste and Jesse Forever* (Toland Krieger 2012), *Before Midnight* (Linklater 2013), *The One I Love* (McDowell 2014), *Maggie's Plan* (Miller 2015) and *I Do… Until I Don't* (Bell 2017), all of which feature slightly older characters than the average mainstream rom-com and the everyday reality of quotidian, non-idealized love.

3.6. Let's talk about us

Indie rom-coms are frequently "relationship stories," their focus often lying in the interrogation and problematization of the actual workings of romantic relationships, exploring their constructed nature and conventionality in the process. This "thematization" of relationships is apparent, for example, in *Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *An Oversimplification of her Beauty* (Nance 2012), *Celeste and Jesse Forever* (Toland Krieger 2012), *Her* (Jonze 2013), *What If* (Dowse 2013), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014), *Comet* (Esmail 2014), *Two Night Stand* (Nichols 2014), *Life Partners* (Fogel 2014) and *Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015). In these films dialogue often fulfills purposes other than the advancement of the plot, as the characters obsess and over-analyze their relationships without necessarily getting anywhere or drawing any conclusions. In this sense, some of these films are reminiscent of the "nervous romances" of the 1970s (Krutnik 1990) or the "relationship films" that followed them (Shumway 2003, 157-187). In some of these indie rom-coms dialogue follows a "conversational" style or is partially improvised by the actors, thus echoing the "mumblecore" tradition, as in *Audrey the Trainwreck* (Ross 2010), *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Before Midnight* (Linklater 2013), and *Drinking Buddies* (Swanberg 2013).[5] Again, this style contributes to increasing the impression of realism in the representation of relationships.

3.7. Let's talk about sex

Sex in mainstream romantic comedy has been traditionally downplayed, delayed until the final union of the couple or simply disregarded. The new wave of "raunchy" rom-coms produced by Hollywood—*The Ugly Truth* (Luketic 2009), *Bridesmaids* (Feig 2011), *Friends with Benefits* (Gluck 2011), *No Strings Attached* (Reitman 2011)—appear, on the surface, to bring about a change in this pattern. However, the openly farcical approach to sex and the body in these films may not be the most appropriate way to explore the place of sexual desire in relationships. Indie rom-coms, on the other hand, frame their treatment of sex within the same aspirations of realism mentioned

[5] "Mumblecore" is a term that designates a style of film, born in the early 2000s, characterized by low production values, naturalistic performances, an emphasis on dialogue over plot and on the personal relationships of its characters.

above. In these movies sex is frequently highlighted in different ways: it is actually shown on screen in realistic terms—*Greenberg* (Baumbach 2010), *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Lola Versus* (Wein 2012), *Before Midnight* (Linklater 2013)—and it often plays a more important role in the courtship process—*Save the Date* (Mohan 2012). It may be unconnected to romance, thus highlighting sexual satisfaction as an end in itself—*Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* (Scafaria 2012). It may be more explicitly represented and talked about—*Two Night Stand* (Nichols 2014), *Obvious Child* (Robespierre 2014), *Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015)—or underrepresented sexual practices, such as masturbation—*Gayby* (Lisecki 2012), *Her* (Wein 2012), *Don Jon* (Gordon-Levitt 2013)—or threesomes—*Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014), *Top Five* (Rock 2014)—may be made visible as part of the "plastic sexuality" blueprint of the turn of the century (Giddens 1992, 2). Alternatively, sex may be negatively presented as a source of tension or neurosis, or as an obstacle for romantic fulfillment—*Don Jon* (Gordon-Levitt 2013), *Boy Meets Girl* (Schaeffer 2014), *Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015), *That's Not Us* (Sullivan 2015).

3.8. The game of love

Although many indie rom-coms try to present themselves as a "slice of life," using the classical style look, a considerable amount of these films offer a more self-conscious look by means of formal games, which may include narrative complexity, unusual visual esthetics or generic play. Some offer different types of pleasures to the savvy spectator: "puzzle" and time-scrambling narratives—*Begin Again* (Carney 2013), *Comet* (Esmail 2014); multi-protagonist ensembles which prompt the viewer to establish connections—*The Romantics* (Niederhoffer 2010), *Happythankyoumoreplease* (Radnor 2010), *That's Not Us* (Sullivan 2015), *I Do… Until I Don't* (Bell 2017); and subjectively playful narratives that may include science-fiction or fantasy elements (Newman 2011, 182-217) as in the case of *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* (Scafaria 2012), *Her* (Jonze 2013), *Life After Beth* (Baena 2014), *Comet* (Esmail 2014), and *In your Eyes* (Hill 2014). The inclination for science-fiction and fantasy contrasts with the gritty realism of many other indie rom-coms and may occasionally be seen as a way to create "parallel universes" in which romance can actually happen, as in *Safety Not Guaranteed* (Trevorrow 2012) or *The One I Love* (McDowell 2014), for instance.

Apart from generic play, there is also a considerable number of indie rom-coms that flaunt a self-conscious style or some form of formal distinctiveness in terms of narrative, esthetics or visual style, such as *Tonight You're Mine* (Mackenzie 2011), *Almost in Love* (Neave 2011), *Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *Newlyweeds* (King 2013), *Comet* (Esmail 2014), *The Man on Her Mind* (Guthrie and Hruska 2014), and *Me Him Her* (Landis 2015). In the most extreme cases, formal experimentation becomes an end in itself, and is not necessarily motivated by plot or character development. This formal

self-consciousness may be seen as a way to problematize the way in which romance is represented and desire is channeled in the mainstream rom-com. This is the case of *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* (Nance 2012), a quasi-experimental film whose scrambled narrative arguably mirrors the non-linear, often chaotic way in which human memory works. The movie becomes a faithful account of the protagonist's emotional memory, thus resembling the way in which we recall past relationships, which rarely follows the Hollywood three-act structure.

3.9. Not that kind of girl, not that kind of guy

Hollywood romantic comedy has regularly been accused of painting fairly traditional pictures of gender roles, with women normally seeking security through marriage and men refusing to relinquish their freedom. The truth is that the genre is not as conservative as is routinely claimed, and the portrayal of gender roles in the mainstream has moved with the times, evolving from petrified notions of masculinity and femininity towards more contemporary depictions of gender. Indie cinema, on the other hand, has been frequently regarded as being on the progressive side of the equation. Again, this is not always necessarily the case: the ideology of a film, or any cultural text, is never a simple matter and it certainly does not depend exclusively on its industrial context. Only particular examples of a genre can be deemed to be progressive or conservative, not the genre as a whole. However, it can be safely argued that indie cinema is, if not necessarily ideologically ahead of the mainstream, at least more engaged with the depiction of a wider variety of gender roles. The indie rom-com frequently offers more nuanced and idiosyncratic representations of heterosexual masculinity and femininity. For instance, it is common to find insecure men seeking commitment and assertive women who are not necessarily interested in emotional stability—*Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *Save the Date* (Mohan 2012), *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* (Nance 2012), *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* (Scafaria 2012); and an abundance of beta males and females—*Greenberg* (Baumbach 2010), *The Giant Mechanical Man* (Kirk 2012), *In a World…* (Bell 2013), *Slow Learners* (Argott and Joyce 2015). This increased complexity in the portrayal of gender roles sometimes makes the happy ending problematic.

The nuanced representation of gender also extends to non-heterosexual frameworks. These movies tend to break with stereotypical portrayals of the LGBT community, offering more "real" representations of people as individuals rather than as a token example of a category, as for instance in *The Kids are All Right* (Cholodenko 2010), *BearCity* (Langway 2010), *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Gayby* (Lisecki 2012), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014), *Life Partners* (Fogel 2014), *Me Him Her* (Landis 2015), *Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List* (Hanggi 2015) and *That's Not Us* (Sullivan 2015). A small number of films also delve into non-normative gender frameworks,

problematizing essentialist male/female models through transgender or gender-fluid characters. Such is the case of *Boy Meets Girl* (Schaeffer 2014), a ground-breaking film that depicts the romantic relationship between a transgender girl and her best friend, a straight man, from a comic perspective.

4. *People, Places, Things*: An Indie Rom-com

Evidently, not all of the above themes and perspectives are to be found in every indie rom-com. Similarly, many mainstream rom-coms participate in these conventions on occasion. Genres are in constant flux, and the mainstream and indie sectors feed off each other. In the case of romantic comedy, the current drought in the mainstream forces fans of the genre to turn to the "periphery," whose generic departures are arguably contributing to the development of romantic comedy as a whole in a more significant manner than their Hollywood "cousins" are.

People, Places, Things (Strouse 2015; henceforth *PPT*) is an example of a film that pushes the boundaries of the genre from the margins. Written and directed by Jim Strouse and produced by Beachside Films—an indie company established in 2013 and specialized in low-budget movies—it premiered at Sundance in 2015 to positive reviews, and was picked up for limited theatrical distribution in the US by The Film Arcade, another recently-founded independent distributor. It tells the story of Will (Jemaine Clement), a graphic novelist and professor in his early 40s who discovers that his long-term partner, Charlie (Stephanie Allyne), is cheating on him on their twin daughters' fifth birthday. He walks in on her while she is having sex with Gary (Michael Chernus), an off-Broadway monologuist with whom he clumsily tries to fight in an attempt to avenge his honor. It is no use, though, as Charlie breaks up with him on the spot. A year later, he is still trying to put himself back together, but his life seems to be going nowhere, while Charlie is pregnant and engaged to her lover. Depressed by his job, his tiny apartment and the little time that he is allowed to spend with his daughters, he forces himself to go on a blind date with Diane (Regina Hall), the accomplished mother of one of his students. They do not seem to hit it off at first but they eventually start a promising relationship that is abruptly disrupted by Will's unresolved issues with his ex-partner. His ineptitude in the romantic realm is only matched by his failure to thrive in his career and his incompetence as a single parent. These issues take center stage in a romantic comedy that widens its scope to include topics such as parenthood, art, professional accomplishment, and above all, the explicit search for self-identity after a traumatic break-up. The film depicts Will's painful process of re-invention as he finishes writing a novel and becomes a better father to his daughters, while opening himself up to the possibility of starting a relationship with someone new.

The characters in *PPT* are not played by A-list actors and, although not without charm, Will is not a conventional rom-com hero. Stuck in middle age in his teaching job, he is depressed, insecure, conflicted, witty, disarmingly honest and tenderly vulnerable, thus displaying a mixture of features that paint an alternative picture of

what a rom-com lead is. *PPT* provides a more nuanced representation of gender than is common in the genre, one which legitimates beta masculinity as a viable—even desirable—option for romance. This romance is interracial, Diane being played by an African-American actress and Will by a part-Maori New Zealander. The fact that this is a non-issue in the film arguably points to indie cinema's greater openness to the normalization of interracial romance on the screen. In addition, Diane is slightly older than Will. By having a divorced mother in her mid-forties portrayed as a desirable romantic partner, *PPT* distances itself from Hollywood's ageist tendencies.

PPT's premise is not new, but its loose narrative structure sets it apart from the well-trodden rom-com formula. The film does not focus on the romantic entanglement exclusively, and when it does, it avoids familiar plot developments: the "meet-cute" between the new lovers is not very "cute," as they go through an ill-fated first date. The courtship process lacks the "getting to know each other" and the "having fun together" parts, as they move practically straight to bed, or rather, the floor of Diane's Columbia office, in their second encounter. The obstacles keeping the lovers apart in this movie are clearly internal, as Will does not seem able to get over Charlie, despite how attractive Diane is. Finally, their relationship is abruptly interrupted, just as the romantic plot starts to pick up, by his doubts and his comic excess of sincerity. The viewer's expectations are not fulfilled by the ending, as no romantic reconciliation with either of the women in Will's life is explicitly shown. The movie has no big climaxes, no dramatic turning points, and no closed ending. This lack of recognizable tropes or familiar plot points makes the film more convincing in its implicit claims of realism. The characters move in and out of relationships, attachments are formed and dissolved without grand gestures and all these vicissitudes are presented as a "slice of life." *PPT* strives for greater realism in the representation of relationships, focusing on the darker side of love—infidelity, heartbreak, loneliness, economic struggle, the "work" that real relationships require to stay alive after the initial infatuation—and deflating romantic myths such as that of "love at first sight," the "One" or the "happily ever after." On the contrary, the film highlights the blurriness of the boundaries of romantic narratives and the provisionality of relationships in the contemporary romantic arena, where even the strongest-looking ones seem to have an expiry date, just as in real life.

This realistic approach to relationships is, nevertheless, characterized by a deep self-consciousness. In contrast to what is customary in the genre, Will has no sidekick to talk to about his sorry state, no confidant to dissect his relationships with. However, he constantly interrogates himself through his art: the graphic novel he is writing is used to communicate his inner struggles, functioning as a means to unraveling the intricacies of his relationships with Charlie, Diane and his daughters, and to unload his anger towards Gary and his frustration at his professional stagnation. The movie is sprinkled with Will's illustrations, which fit into the narrative diegetically, becoming a meta story presented in a distinctive visual style that is intensely self-reflexive.

The film's self-reflexivity also extends to its deployment of a number of romantic comedy conventions, such as the protagonist's learning process, the last-minute romantic gesture, the wrong partner or the happy ending. This is especially evident in the film's denouement. In one of the last scenes of the movie Will attends Charlie's wedding. Before the ceremony, he spots Gary and walks resolutely towards him, determined to make amends for his pathetic attempts at fighting him at the opening of the film. His self-assured walk conveys the character's transformation: the tracking shot that accompanies his steps moves from right to left, signaling a "backward movement" that suggests an attempt to go back to the past, not only to resume his unfinished fight with his ex-partner's lover but also to settle his unresolved issues. When he reaches Gary, Will announces that he is going to punch him, which Gary accepts graciously as long as he is not hit in the face. After a polite exchange between the two, Will punches him in the ear, which is followed by an absurd discussion about whether or not the ear is part of the face. The awkwardness of the scene speaks about the nuanced kind of gender representation which indie films often feature: the ridiculousness of the physical confrontation (of a sort) presents an alternative model of masculinity while highlighting the film's self-awareness of the conventions of romantic comedy. The rom-com connoisseur knows that a final showdown between the two male rivals is required in order to resolve one of Will's main conflicts, but the extreme politeness with which the confrontation is carried out and its subsequent "analysis" by its contenders turns generic clichés upside-down while emphasizing both characters' unequivocal status as beta males. While the final scenes emphasize that Will has completed a learning process that has turned him into an improved, more resolute version of himself, the model of masculinity that he represents is unconventional and, in the film's discourse, closer to real twenty-first-century people, something which is celebrated in the film as part of the character's idiosyncratic charm, rather than highlighted as a deficiency.

In the next scene Will confronts Charlie. At first, she is nowhere to be found, as she is having second thoughts about the wedding. Again, the scene constitutes a playful re-examination of the classical rom-com formula, as her clichéd line "I knew you'd know where to find me" is met with Will's dry remark "it kind of helped that you texted me where you were." (Strouse 2015, 1:18-50). The scene thus self-consciously subverts one of the genre's best-known tropes, the quasi-magic serendipity that connects the lovers, allowing them to find each other in their hiding place at the critical point which makes or breaks the couple. *PPT*, on the contrary, opts for a more mundane meeting arrangement, which is, once more, connected to indie cinema's penchant for realism. Will and Charlie hold a short but poignant conversation:

Charlie: I'm afraid I'm making another mistake.
Will: I don't think of what we did as a mistake.
Charlie: It didn't work out.

WILL: It did... And then it didn't.
CHARLIE: What does that mean?
WILL: It means... We can't predict what's going to happen. Or how we're going to change.
CHARLIE: I love you.
WILL: I love you, too. But if you wait any longer, you're going to miss your wedding.
CHARLIE: Are we friends?
WILL: We're more than that.
CHARLIE: What are we?
WILL: We're parents (Strouse 2015, 1:18-58)

This dialogue is representative of the indie rom-com's general take on romance. Firstly, it presents the individual's romantic trajectory as a succession of relationships, emphasizing the seriality of modern romance and dismissing the myth of the "One": Will and Charlie were not each other's perfect match, but they had a fulfilling relationship while it lasted, and that is what counts. Charlie is on her way to the altar, but Gary does not seem to be an improvement on Will, which problematizes her "happily ever after." Secondly, the "I love you's" exchanged by the characters are deeply self-aware in their subversion of the traditional rom-com's ending. Their declaration of love has more to do with companionate love, which is based on friendship and commitment, than with the romantic love often depicted by Hollywood (Sternberg 1998, 20). Again, this idea constitutes an obvious disruption of the expectations of the viewer, who was maybe hoping for a grand romantic gesture on Will's part in order to regain Charlie's love. On the contrary, he gives her the final push to marry her "wrong partner," and this is not necessarily perceived as an unhappy turn of events. Finally, the last lines of dialogue spoken in the film provide one of the keys for its "happy ending": Will and Charlie may not be lovers anymore, but they will be friends, and more importantly, they will be parents together. Friendship and parenthood are thus put on equal footing with romantic love as rightful paths towards personal realization and happiness, pointing to a future for the genre in which the meanings of what love is able to encompass are significantly expanded. This exploration is carried out through a self-conscious deflating of familiar generic tropes and their replacement by concerns that appear to be more in synch with contemporary experience of relationships.

This does not mean that romantic love is altogether excluded from the picture, either. The last minutes of the film show Will attending the ceremony. He is witnessing somebody else's happy ending: pregnant Charlie's new beginning with a new partner. He does not seem sad or bitter, though. A series of point-of-view shots together with Jemaine Clement's subtle performance provide the key to interpreting the scene: he has made the decision to close a chapter in his life and start a new one. Does it involve a romantic interest? It is likely, but uncertain. The last scenes show Will walking away from the wedding party. He has surreptitiously stolen some flowers. Are they for

Diane? Will she take him back? The open ending leaves the spectator wondering, but one thing seems clear: he has finally managed to pull himself together and the flowers symbolize this new beginning, drawing a parallel with the bouquet that Charlie carries on her way to the altar. *PPT* does not really end, it simply "stops" at this point, with an ambiguous but optimistic nod towards personal realization as a legitimate option for individual happiness instead of romantic love.

5. Conclusion

People, Places, Things has a suggestive title. Its "unspecificity" seems to announce, among other things, its generic "diffusion." It deploys comedy, drama and romance (all of them in small doses), but it is difficult to unproblematically classify it as any of the above. As this essay has shown, the independent romantic comedy of the 2010s is characterized by a playful generic spirit. Some instances feature unusual generic combinations, mixing romantic comedy with science fiction, horror, comedian comedy, the musical or the disaster movie. These films are often hybrids of two or more genres, but the main feature of the indie rom-com is, arguably, its resistance to any kind of generic categorization. These movies like to explore conventions and often contest them, which frequently compromises their clear alignment with particular genres. This is the case for most of the films mentioned in this article. As opposed to Hollywood, the romantic quest is sometimes understated and many of these movies cannot be classified as laugh-out-loud comedies or tear-jerking dramas. This kind of cinema is often perceived as a "genre in itself," one that cannot be easily pigeonholed and that is often filed under the broad tag of "Independent Cinema" in databases such as filmaffinity.com and imdb.com. This lack of a recognizable generic framework constitutes an important part of their appeal and identity as "off-Hollywood."

Generic "indeterminacy" does not mean that the independent rom-com does not participate in the conventions of clearly established genres. The difference lies in the movies' self-conscious attempt not to present themselves as belonging to any particular genre. Unlike Hollywood movies, which tend to rely heavily on the use of generic markers, the independent rom-com strives for the opposite: to "dilute" these markers. Mainstream movies try to agglutinate as many genres as possible in a single product in order to attract the widest possible audience. Independent films, on the other hand, while often generically complex, tend to target a niche audience, and this audience, more often than not, reads independent cinema as a genre in itself. This "genre" is defined by opposition to the mainstream and contributes to the construction of these particular spectators' sensibilities as "alternative." So, paradoxically, the same feature—generic complexity—may serve two different purposes, or rather, create different effects, depending on the individual case. This is partly due to the different use both groups of films make of generic conventions: while Hollywood tends to deploy these conventions in a more predictable way, addressing an audience that seeks more repetition than

variation in their generic mix, the independent rom-com consciously subverts these conventions more frequently, trying to please a smaller niche, but one which expects a greater degree of distinctiveness from familiar Hollywood formulas. The result is often a crossover product that draws on the Hollywood romance but with a twist on what is, in essence, well-trodden territory. However, the "twist" is precisely what makes these films interesting and, as I have argued here, the key to the genre's renewal as a whole. Romantic comedy may be moribund for the big studios nowadays, but it is thriving on the margins, waiting on the wings to become Hollywood's next big thing once more.

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Beatriz Oria is Lecturer at the English Department of Zaragoza University, where she teaches Film Analysis. Her primary areas of interest include film, television and cultural studies. She is the author of *Talking Dirty on "Sex and the City"* (NewYork, 2014) and co-editor of *Global Genres, Local Films: The Transnational Dimension of Spanish Cinema* (London, 2015).

Address: Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Universidad de Zaragoza. San Juan Bosco, 7. 50009, Zaragoza, Spain. Tel.: +34 976761535.

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Evaluation of "Status" as a Persuasive Tool in Spanish and American Pre-electoral Debates in Times of Crisis

Mercedes Díez-Prados and Ana Belén Cabrejas-Peñuelas
Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, Universitat de València
mercedes.diez@uah.es, ana.belen.cabrejas@uv.es

The evaluative function of language is explored from the point of view of the expression of "status," or how the world is presented, and its persuasive potential in pre-electoral debates in the US and Spain. The types of statements used in two comparable corpora in Spanish and English are examined using Hunston's model (2000; 2008) for the evaluation of "status"—the degree of alignment of a proposition and the world—to discover similarities and differences between them. The results show that, in general, all politicians prefer to use statements that refer to the actual world—"world-reflecting statements" in Hunston's classification—rather than "world-creating propositions" in an attempt to be seen as objective candidates. However, each language group behaves differently: Americans seem to prefer a more rational stance and Spaniards favor opinions and value judgments in the samples analyzed. The correspondence found in the results between certain rhetorical strategies and success in the post-debate elections may be an indicator of using effective discursive strategies by winners as opposed to losers. In our corpus, election winners used more objective propositions in the debate than losers—the ethos of the former may, thus, be more reliable—which may, in turn, imply that this strategy contributes to persuading the audience. If this is so, adopting a negative stance of facts attributed to the opponent seems to contribute to persuasion more than a positive stance of ideal intentions and suggestions attributed to oneself, which means that the audience gives more credibility to negatively-depicted actions than to positively-charged intentions. This conclusion may be self-evident somehow, but this study provides empirical quantitative evidence to support it.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; evaluation; status; persuasion; political discourse; pre-electoral debates

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Evaluación del "estatus" como herramienta persuasiva en debates preelectorales españoles y norteamericanos en tiempos de crisis

En este estudio se explora la función evaluativa del lenguaje desde el punto de vista de la expresión del "estatus"—es decir, cómo se presenta el mundo—y su potencial persuasivo en los debates preelectorales en Estados Unidos y España. Para ello, se contrastan los tipos de proposiciones utilizadas en dos corpus equivalentes en español e inglés para así estudiar las similitudes y diferencias, conforme al modelo de evaluación de Hunston (2000; 2008) y su concepto de "estatus": el grado de convergencia entre una proposición y la realidad que representa. Los resultados obtenidos indican que, en general, los políticos analizados prefieren proposiciones que reflejan el mundo actual más que aquellas que lo crean, en un intento por ser vistos como candidatos objetivos. Sin embargo, hay diferencias entre los dos debates: en el debate americano parece haber una preferencia por la evaluación racional mientras que en el español encontramos más opiniones y juicios de valor. Los resultados de este trabajo indican, además, que podría haber una correspondencia entre el éxito político y las estrategias retóricas utilizadas. Asimismo, los ganadores de las elecciones que nos ocupan utilizan proposiciones que reflejan mayor objetividad que los perdedores (es decir, los primeros presentan un *ethos* más fiable), lo que, a su vez, puede contribuir a persuadir a la audiencia. Si esto es así, adoptar una postura negativa hacia el oponente sería más persuasivo que una postura propia de intenciones y sugerencias positivas. En conclusión, la persuasión parece presentarse más a través de la evaluación negativa del mundo factual que a través de la evaluación positiva de una realidad utópica. Esta conclusión, que, en cierta medida, podría parecer evidente viene avalada por la investigación empírica en este trabajo.

Palabras clave: Análisis Crítico del Discurso; evaluación; estatus; persuasión; discurso político; debates preelectorales

1. Introduction

A rich wealth of literature—see, among others, White (2002), Hunston and Thompson ([2000] 2003), Martin ([2000] 2003), Martin and White (2005), Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer (2007), Simon-Vandenbergen (2008) and Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados (2014)—has attempted to analyze the linguistic mechanisms that speakers and writers use to convey their personal attitudes and assessments and how various genres differ in terms of such mechanisms.[1] There are several lines of research, which differ in the approach taken and methodology used, and these include consideration of "evidentiality" (Chafe 1986), "affect" (Ochs and Schieffelin 1989), "evaluation" (Thompson and Hunston 2000), "appraisal" (Martin [2000] 2003) and "stance" (Biber and Finegan 1989)—see Thompson and Hunston (2000) for a review of other terms. Despite their differences, all of them focus on the meaning of the speaker's assessment, the linguistic realizations of stance and the function of evaluation in building and maintaining relations between writer/speaker and reader/listener—i.e., the so-called interactional-nature of stancetaking (Englebretson 2007, 16). "Evidentiality"—the assessment of the status of knowledge—and "affect"—the assessment of personal feelings, emotions and attitudes—lie at the heart of the modern conceptions of evaluation.

There is no doubt that evaluation plays an important role in persuasion (Bamford 2007). Political language in general, and pre-election debates in particular, is a type of persuasive discourse that is especially suited for the expression of evaluation, since politicians need to create a distinct profile for themselves in order to persuade their audience to vote for them. In doing so, they present their viewpoints and those of the opposing candidates (and of the parties that they each represent) and evaluate these viewpoints and their opponents' actions—i.e., they criticize their opponents and put themselves in a positive light. The final purpose of the discourse is to convince and appeal to the public, something that seems unlikely to happen without an expression of a particular stance. While the idea of "faceless stance" exists—"the relative absence of all affective and evidential stance features" (Biber and Finegan 1989, 108)—and there are cases where stance is more implied than explicit, it is hard to imagine that politicians would fall into this case.

The evaluative uses of journalistic, academic and political discourse have been studied by a number of researchers (Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer 2007; Simon-Vandenbergen 2008). In previous publications (Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados 2014; Cabrejas-Peñuelas 2015; Díez-Prados 2016; Cabrejas-Peñuelas, forthcoming) diverse discourse strategies—positive and negative evaluation, fallacies

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or metaphorical mappings—have been tackled from a contrastive English-Spanish perspective in pre-election and other types of debate, with the final aim of discovering how these devices may contribute to persuasion in texts. The objective of the present study is to expand on our previous work on evaluation (Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados 2014), which applied Martin and White's categorization of "affect" (2005) We now test a different evaluation model, proposed by Susan Hunston (2000; 2008; 2011) which focuses on the evaluation of status by comparing the results from a Spanish pre-electoral debate (Rajoy vs. Rubalcaba in 2011) with those from a debate in English (Obama vs. McCain in 2008); the characteristics of the two debates being equitable in that both were held during the worldwide financial crisis and both Rajoy and Obama managed to attract a massive vote through their respective political campaigns. In order to gain insight into Obama's and Rajoy's messages and those of their opponents—McCain and Rubalcaba, respectively— the research questions that we attempt to answer here are the following:

RQ1. What are the similarities or differences in the expression of evaluation of status—i.e., the degree of alignment between a proposition and the world (Hunston 2008, 65)—between Spanish and American politicians in the economy section of both debates?

RQ2. To what extent do the candidates' evaluations of status contribute to the persuasive power of their interventions?

RQ3. Taking into account that pre-electoral debates attempt to gain swing or undecided voters, what is it that the election winners, as opposed to the losers, do that may contribute to winning the elections?

In the next section we present an overview of evaluation as used in political discourse and section three provides background information on the pre-electoral debate between Rajoy and Rubalcaba, on the one hand, and Obama and McCain, on the other. Section four introduces the framework that we use to analyze evaluation, while section five discusses the methodology employed as well as the methodological decisions made. Section six gives the results of the analysis of evaluation and an analysis of the way in which evaluation of status can be used as a persuasive tool. Finally, section seven provides the conclusions to the present study.

2. Evaluation in Political Discourse

The language of evaluation has been studied by a number of researchers—see, among others, White (2002), Martin ([2000] 2003), Martin and White (2005) and

Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados (2014)—who have concluded that politicians often depict themselves and others subjectively and evaluate issues, such as the healthcare system, unemployment benefits, social benefits, either positively or negatively. To this end, they use positive and negative attitude markers to praise themselves and their deeds, and thus convince the electorate of their good qualities, while at the same time emphasizing the negative qualities of their opponents. More specifically, politicians use affect to evaluate people's emotions (e.g., *happy, angry*) and judgment to praise a person's capacity and propriety (e.g., *skilled*, *fair*) and to criticize a person's incapacity and impropriety (e.g., *incapable*, *intolerant*). They also use appreciation to evaluate issues positively or negatively (e.g., *employment*, *unemployment*). Evaluation of people's emotions is not common in political debates, which instead are used to "assess things, processes and human behavior" (Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados 2014, 15). Political texts, in addition, show high rates of judgment and appreciation in relation to the topic of the text and the content (Simon-Vandenbergen 2008, 58; Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados 2014, 171). Negative judgment is often directed at the opposing candidate and their administration (i.e., *the other*), while positive judgment is employed towards themselves. Also, positive appreciation markers are used with respect to the politician's own plans and negative ones for their opponent's agendas. Some differences in the issues being evaluated by politicians from different countries may be explained by their belonging to different traditions. For example, in the American speech tradition, there tends to be references to the greatness of America and its people by using a combination of positive attitude markers, references to historical figures, American history and anecdotes (Simon-Vandenbergen 2008, 97).

Politicians' use of evaluative markers has been studied further to include various lexical and grammatical expressions of the speakers' attitudes towards the content of their propositions within the notion of modality (Harris 1991; Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer 2007). This might include "evidentials, hedges, concession, negation and others" (Simon-Vandenbergen et al. 2007, 34), and there is increasing evidence that politicians use rhetorical strategies to reach their rhetorical goal of persuading the audience (Simon-Vandenbergen 1996; Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer 2007; Díez-Prados 2016). One such strategy is the use of expressions to indicate cognitive certainty (e.g., "we had very detailed evidence," "we have no evidence at all"), emotional commitment (e.g., "I certainly think") and social commitment (e.g., "which commands the strong enthusiasm of the overwhelming majority") (Simon-Vandenbergen 1996, 392-408), although there is also evidence that politicians' responses are frequently evasive (Harris 1991). Similarly, certainty adjectives and adverbs (e.g., "clear," "obvious," "of course," "obviously") serve to convince the audience of the politician's ideas by presenting the addressee as inevitably sharing his/her point of view, thus placing those who disagree in an awkward

position (Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer 2007). While such adjectives and adverbs are evaluations attributed to the speaker/writer, they are presented as facts, presuming an implied consensus (Koutsantoni 2005, 133), and, thus, "their strategic power lies [...] in the strategic manipulation of power and solidarity and their complex dynamics" (131). Expressions of certainty undoubtedly impose views on readers/listeners by controlling their inferences, although they are, at the same time, addressed as knowledgeable readers/listeners who are able to follow the writer's/speaker's reasoning (Hyland 1998). This is the case for pre-electoral debates.

3. The Rajoy-Rubalcaba and Obama-McCain Debates

Pre-electoral debates are direct confrontations in front of an audience—television viewers, but also on occasions a stage audience and a journalist panel, as in American debates—where two political candidates compete dialogically. In Spain, the 2011 General Elections were preceded by an almost eight-year period of Socialist government. The president at the time of the debate under analysis, Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (born 1960), called early General Elections for November 20th, 2011, mostly due to public unhappiness over economy and the defeat of the Socialists in regional and local elections in May 2011, which had weakened the government. Various opinion polls predicted an absolute majority for the Popular Party (henceforth, PP). Within this context, the two main parties agreed to hold a single debate on November 7th, 2011 in the Spanish TV Academy between Mariano Rajoy (born 1955) for the PP and Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba (born 1951)—widely known as Rubalcaba—for the Socialists, who had been the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs in Zapatero's government.

Unlike American debates, where candidates are often standing at podiums or seated at a table with a moderator, the format of Spanish pre-electoral debates is a face-to-face confrontation between the candidates, which is favored by them facing each other at the table. The 2011 debate lasted for ninety minutes and was divided into sections—a forty-minute section dealing with economy and employment, a thirty-minute section about social policy and a twenty-minute section about foreign policy and other topics—without subtopics as in 2008, which made it more fluid. Each section was divided into interventions, which were largely monological. This favored preparing the interventions before the debate without much fear of being interrupted. The debate started with an opening and finished with a closure made by the moderator and had an introduction and a conclusion by the interlocutors. However, in 2011, for the sake of flexibility in the debate, the candidates were given a set amount time for each section, which they could manage as they wished and, thus, the different interventions in each section could have different lengths. The candidates still had a fixed number of interventions, which did not contribute to

flexibility, although the format favored refuting the arguments presented by the opposing party. The debate was opened by Mariano Rajoy and was closed by Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, which had been decided by a draw.

The American presidential debate of September 26th, 2008 took place at the University of Mississippi's Gertrude C. Ford Center (Oxford, Mississippi) and was the first of three debates that happened in the course of a few days. The two candidates were Democrat Barack Obama (born 1961) and Republican John McCain (1936-2018). While the debate had been originally planned to focus on foreign policy and national security, the major cracks appeared in the American financial system in September 2008, which made economic issues move to the forefront of the debate. Indeed, a considerable amount of time was spent on discussing economic issues and this was followed by foreign policy and national security. Analysts agreed that Obama had won on economy, while McCain had done better in foreign policy. CNN opinion poll declared a draw between both candidates, which contributed to raising expectations for the second debate.

The format of the American debate was divided into time segments and the candidates were allowed to address each other directly, answer the moderator's follow-ups and, on occasions, answer the audience's questions, contributing this way to a less rigid, more dialogical format. The 2008 ninety-minute Obama-McCain debate dealt with economic issues, foreign policy and national security, which were further divided into eight nine-minute segments, where each candidate had two minutes to speak and five minutes for debate. The issue segments were preceded by an opening to the debate made by the moderator and finished with a conclusion by the two interlocutors and a closure by the moderator. One may presume that there should be more evaluation in the parts where there is more dialogical battle, that is, in the central parts, than in the introduction and conclusion to the debate.

4. Theoretical Framework for the Evaluation of Status: Status and Value

In a previous study (Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados 2014), the Spanish Rajoy-Rubalcaba debate was analyzed applying the Appraisal model developed by Martin and White (2005). Of all types—"graduation," "engagement" and "attitude"—only "attitude" was analyzed (subdivided into "affect," "judgment" and "appreciation"), because the focus then was on the "expression of evaluation itself, rather than on the source (i.e., 'engagement') or on the intensification of the expression of evaluation (i.e., 'graduation')" (Cabrejas-Peñuelas and Díez-Prados 2014, 164). What is at stake now is in the domain of "engagement." However, rather than using Martin and White's sense of dealing "with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse" (2005, 35), our interest is in the source of evaluation and,

particularly, in discovering how the world is depicted by the politicians in their claims (i.e., the "status" assigned by the addressees to their propositions). Thus, instead of studying devices, "such as projection, modality, polarity, concession, and various comment adverbials" (Martin and White 2005, 35) that take into account the audience's potential reactions as regards the value positions advanced by the addressor, we analyze the types of statements uttered by the participants in the interactions, since our interest is in the propositional content of the utterances rather than in their lexico-grammatical realizations. Notwithstanding, Susan Hunston's model of evaluation (2000; 2008; 2011) also includes explicit mention to the source of the proposition (*self* vs. *other*), as will be explained below. All in all, the present study advances on our previous one by providing a different perspective on evaluation (i.e., the evaluation of "status") and by, concurrently, introducing a contrastive analysis with an American debate of the same period.

Hunston presents a theoretical framework of evaluation based on the concepts of "status" and "value" (2000). Hunston defines "status" as "the degree of alignment, or correspondence, between a proposition and the world," which is averred by the speaker/writer in every single act of communication (2008, 65). For example, a text may be assigned a status of a fact or a hypothesis; a book, a status of fiction or non-fiction; a proposition, a status of interpretation, etc. Thus, all propositions in a text fulfill an evaluative function in the sense that they are all intrinsically provided with a given status as to how the world is presented—as a fact, as an opinion, as fictional, and so on. Hunston further explains that she regards the identification of status as evaluation, because both concepts share three properties: (1) being subjective, (2) being attitudinal and (3) being set within a context of social values (2008, 66).

No doubt, the status of the propositions in a text may be derived from the language used and, thus, the text is subjective. For instance, within the same text, some propositions may be assigned a status of suggestion and others a status of proof in an attempt to convince the audience; this way, the author maintains an apparently objective stance. When a status is assigned to various propositions, it also offers judgments as to how credible they are and, hence, the text is also attitudinal: stating that a proposition has been proved has more credibility than stating that a proposition has been suggested. Finally, the propositions that are aligned with the world may be more highly valued—i.e., they are seen as more reliable—than those that are less aligned with the world and, thus, the text shows social values (Hunston 2008, 67).

According to Hunston, status is "intrinsically linked to evaluations of 'good' and 'bad,' especially in [...] texts which seek to influence actions using rationality as a means of persuasion" (2011, 26). This is the case of pre-election debates, the type of political discourse selected for analysis. The notion of status allows the classification of statements into the following types—see table 1, where excerpts taken from our own corpus are included as way of illustration.

Table 1. Hunston's classification of statements

Theoretical framework for the evaluation of status: status and value (Hunston 2000, 187-189)				
Category	**Type**	**Subtype**	**Definition**	**Realization**
Informing	World-creating	**Assumption**	The addresser asserts that something should be taken as an assumption.	(1) "I think that the fundamentals of the economy have to be measured by whether or not the middle class is getting a fair share." (Obama)
		Hypothesis	Opinionated guess that needs to be justified (close to interpretation, but in the realm of non-existent yet).	(2) "Probablemente compartamos con muchos de ustedes los problemas fundamentales que tienen los españoles." (Rubalcaba) ["It is possible/probable that we share/We probably share with many of you [formal] the fundamental problems Spaniards have"].
		Recommendation	Directive speech act like giving advice, rather than assertive, i.e., informing.	(3) "You've got to look at our record. You've got to look at our records. That's the important thing. Who fought against wasteful and earmark spending?" (McCain)[2]
	World-reflecting	**Fact/event**	Verifiable; denial of the truth is not an option for the reader ("what is").	(4) "And, yes, I went back to Washington, and I met with my Republicans in the House of Representatives. And they weren't part of the negotiations." (McCain)
		Interpretation	Statements that are evaluated by the writer as possibly true ("what might be" or "what is said to be").	(5) "Es la excusa de siempre, ¿no? La crisis la ha provocado el mundo, pero parece que el Gobierno no tiene ninguna responsabilidad." (Rajoy) ["It is the usual excuse, isn't it? The crisis has been provoked by the world, but it seems that the Government has no responsibility"].
		Assessment	The reader is free to disagree with the writer; they may be evaluated for their truth value. These are often supported by evidence ("what we think is").	(6) "We haven't seen the language yet. And I do think that there's constructive work being done out there." (Obama)
Focusing			Description of the current text (aims and organization), e.g., "This point will be discussed again in Chapter 8; this chapter is divided into two sections."	(7) "Lo que vamos a debatir aquí esta noche …" (Rajoy) ["What we are going to debate here tonight…"].

[2] "Earmark spending" is defined as "funding inserted into the annual federal budget by individual legislators in the US Congress for special projects or purposes of interest to their constituents" (Longley 2017). Notice that McCain, in this example, recommends a course of action using an impersonal verb to confer the rank of objective obligation to his subjective statements in an attempt to distinguish himself from Obama. Indeed, he presents himself as a reformer who focuses on reining in government spending, while Obama is a big spending liberal.

Hunston (2000, 190-192) also distinguishes two different sources for any given averral (see table 2).

Table 2. Types of averral

Statement sources (Hunston 2000)				
Category	**Type**	**Subtype**	**Definition**	**Realization**
Self	**Averred** (attribution to the speaker/ writer and, thus, s/he "assumes responsibility for what is averred," [Hunston 2000, 178]).	**Sourced**	The averral is expressed as deriving from a source.	(8) "Senator McCain is absolutely right that…" (Obama)
		Non-sourced	Presented as averred facts.	(9) "And, yes, I went back to Washington, and I met with my Republicans in the House of Representatives. And they weren't part of the negotiations." (McCain)
	Emphasized	**Attribution to self**		(10) "I can't think of a more important…" (Obama)
	Hidden (when the attribution is disguised, although the writer may be responsible for the assertion).	**Attribution to text**		(11) "This package has transparency in it." (McCain)
		General attribution		(12) "It hasn't worked." (Obama)
Other	**Attribution, responsibility delegated**		The attributee is a specific person, a group or a speech act.	(13) "And you're wondering…" (Obama)
	Attribution, responsibility reclaimed		The writer reclaims responsibility for the statement, choosing a verb such as to prove, *to point out, to show*, and others.	(14) "Now, we also have to recognize that…" (Obama)

This classification of statements was applied to categorize the propositions made by the politicians that are being compared.

The evaluation of status is, according to Hunston, "crucial to the epistemology of any society," since "the way that propositions are evaluated for status sets up a hierarchy of evidence-sources and establishes a world-view common to that society against which future propositions will in turn be evaluated" (2008, 69). Thus, the concept of status helps reveal persuasive strategies because the way politicians present the world has

the aim of influencing the electorate's value system or faltering beliefs in order to win votes (Jaffe 2007). This is particularly true in the case of swing voters, if we understand persuasion as "any process that creates a new belief or changes your level of commitment to an existing one" (Pullman 2013, xx). In the following section, the details of the analytical methodology will be explained.

5. Methodology

To carry out the present study two corpora were selected: the Economy and Employment section of the Spanish Rajoy-Rubalcaba debate (7,775 words), which is compared with the Economy Issues section from the first Obama-McCain pre-electoral debate (6,421 words).[3] The two extracts can be considered of equivalent size and, thus, comparable. They were selected for analysis because they were regarded as a turning point in Spanish and American pre-electoral debates, since the elected candidates represented hope and change after a serious financial worldwide crisis. Also, both were reelected for a second term, despite losing a large section of the voters that had propelled them to strong wins in the previous elections, mostly due to dissatisfaction with the economy. This produced disappointment in the American and Spanish electorate, which led to distrust in mainstream political parties and, eventually, to a new discursive sphere, that of "populism" (Breeze 2018, 2).

This study focuses on the verbal content of the debates, based on transcriptions, as if they had been produced as written text. This means that no indication of oral linguistic features or other multimodal features are included, since what is under investigation here is the propositional content of the message and not the actual performance of the respective politicians. Both debates were uploaded in text format into a freeware program called *UAM Corpus Tool*, developed by Mick O'Donnell (2012). This software is, in fact, a set of tools to annotate text after making a search of the corpus and then run descriptive and inferential statistics. For the present study of evaluation, we inserted Hunston's coding scheme in the program before carrying out the analysis (2000). The unit of analysis for status was generally the orthographical sentence (from capital letter to full stop), although some statements extended over stretches of language which were longer or shorter than the sentence. See (15), which has been taken from one of McCain's interventions:

(15) And we've got a lot of work to do. And we've got to create jobs. And one of the areas, of course, is to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil (McCain).

[3] The debates and the transcripts can be consulted on "Elecciones Generales 2011. Debates" ["2011 General Elections. Pre-electoral debates"] *Radio y Televisión Española*, Nov. 20, 2011 and "The First Presidential Debate Election 2008" *The New York Times*, May 23, 2012.

This whole extract, transcribed as three orthographical sentences, is considered one single recommendation because they represent a general recommendation ("work to do") with two specific examples of that task: "to create jobs" and "to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil."

Since fragmenting the debates into analytical units was problematic, the propositional statements were identified manually by the two researchers, who worked collaboratively, and then every statement was analyzed individually by one of the researchers. One researcher analyzed the whole corpus, while the second analyzed 30% to check reliability of the analysis, with the two researchers reaching 95.68% agreement for those sections that were analyzed by both. In the following section the results obtained are presented and discussed.

6. Results

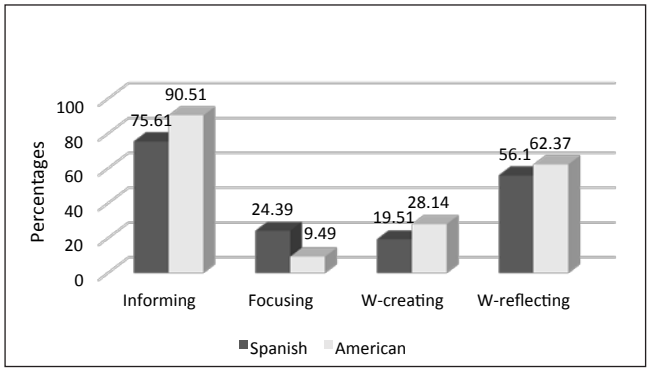
This section is divided into two subsections. The first one tries to answer RQ1 through the description and interpretation of the quantitative results derived from the study of evaluation in the Economy section of the Spanish and the American debates. On the other hand, the second section reflects on the persuasive power of statements used by all four candidates, thus providing an answer for RQ2 and RQ3.

6.1. Results from the contrastive analysis of evaluation between the Spanish and the American debates

Significant differences were found between the Spanish and American debates for most types of statements—see table 3 for a summary of results. As can be seen in figure 1, although politicians from both countries favor INFORMING over FOCUSING, the Americans do so to a far greater extent—90.51% vs. 9.49% in the American debate ($p<0.02$) and 75.61% vs. 24.39% in the Spanish ($p<0.02$). This indicates that the Spanish debaters lay greater emphasis on challenging their opponent's interventions or refer more often to the debate itself, mainly to talk about its purpose, as if this had not been decided beforehand—see example (7). Their American counterparts, on the other hand, prefer to focus on the content of their propositions by reflecting the world or creating it for the audience. Within INFORMING, all politicians use more WORLD-REFLECTING statements than WORLD-CREATING ones, since they need to sound convincing by presenting their propositions as related to the real world rather than by making up a world with their words. However, the American debaters significantly surpass the Spanish in terms of world-creating statements: 28.14% of 267 INFORMING statements vs. 19.51% of 155 such statements, respectively, ($p<.05$). The apparent higher frequency of WORLD-REFLECTING statements by Americans (62.37% of 267 statements vs. 56.10% of 155, respectively) is not so, since this difference is not statistically significant, showing an equivalent realistic

stance when WORLD-REFLECTING statements are observed as a whole. However, when dealing with the individual specific types (i.e., FACT/EVENT, INTERPRETATION, and ASSESSMENT), significant differences are evident, as will be discussed below.

FIGURE 1. Significant differences in statement types (Spanish vs. American)



Of the three WORLD-CREATING statement types (see figure 2), RECOMMENDATION is the most frequent, which is to be expected since candidates present their intended courses of action in pre-electoral debates, their proposals for the prospective government:

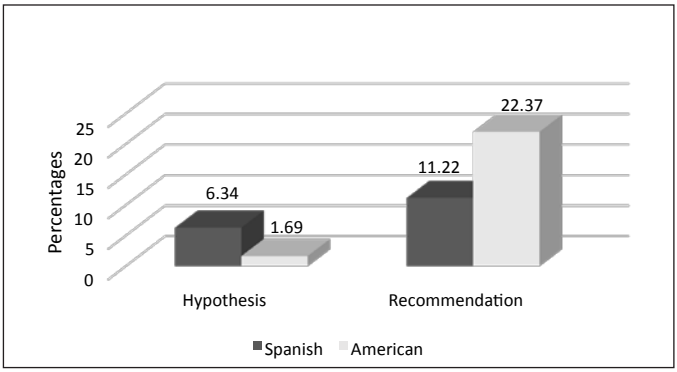
(16) It [a package] has to have accountability and oversight. It has to have options for loans to failing businesses, rather than the government taking over those loans. We have to—it has to have a package with a number of other essential elements to it (McCain). [RECOMMENDATION]

However, the results show that the Americans use more RECOMMENDATIONS—22.37% vs. 11.22%, respectively ($p<0.02$)—but less hypothetical statements than Spaniards—1.36% vs. 6.34% ($p<0.02$)—while differences for ASSUMPTIONS are not statistically significant: Spanish 1.95% vs. American 4.41%. That is, the Americans adopted a more practical stance and the Spaniards a more theoretical one, since RECOMMENDATIONS imply presenting courses of action as favorable or suitable, while HYPOTHESES are ideas put forth as conjectures:

(17) Usted va a bajar las prestaciones por desempleo. Yo creo que va a ser así. Y lo creo por las citas que le he dado y por lo que pone en su programa (Rubalcaba). [HYPOTHESIS] ["You [formal] are going to reduce unemployment benefits. I believe so. And I believe so because of the quotations I've told you and what your electoral program says."]

In (17), Rubalcaba hypothesizes and, thus, he is in the realm of non-existent.

FIGURE 2. Differences in WORLD-CREATING statement subtypes (Spanish vs. American)



In the case of WORLD-REFLECTING mechanisms, there is no single preferred device (see figure 3): the Americans mainly resort to factual information (FACTS/EVENTS) with 26.78% of all their statements ($p<0.02$), while the Spaniards favor ASSESSMENTS (31.17%) ($p<0.02$). This implies that the American politicians adopt a more rational affect when discussing economic issues, while the Spanish representatives produce more opinionated statements:

(18) There's no doubt about that (Obama). [FACT]

(19) Pero lo más importante es que de que se apliquen unas ideas u otras depende el futuro del país. No es lo mismo que sea de una forma o que sea de otra (Rubalcaba). [ASSESSMENT]
["But the most important thing is that the country's future depends on which ideas are applied. One way is not the same as the other"].

Obama resorts to FACTS, as in (18), when explaining the state of the current American economy and the recovery plan necessary to solve the crisis, which he presents as the result of the policies of the Bush administration, supported by McCain. In (19), Rubalcaba attempts to undermine his opponent's credibility by using ASSESSMENTS from Rajoy's manifesto, which, however, have no effect since "para Rajoy era fácil descalificar esas denuncias como simples juicios de intención, imposibles de probar" ["for Rajoy it was easy to disqualify those accusations as simple opinions, which were impossible to prove"] (Santamaría 2012, 42). Regarding INTERPRETATION (i.e., statements that are evaluated by the writer/speaker as possibly true), the Americans use this device almost three times as often as Spaniards—17.29% vs. 6.34% ($p<0.02$)—in many cases with the final aim of interpreting accounted events—see example (20)—or re-interpreting

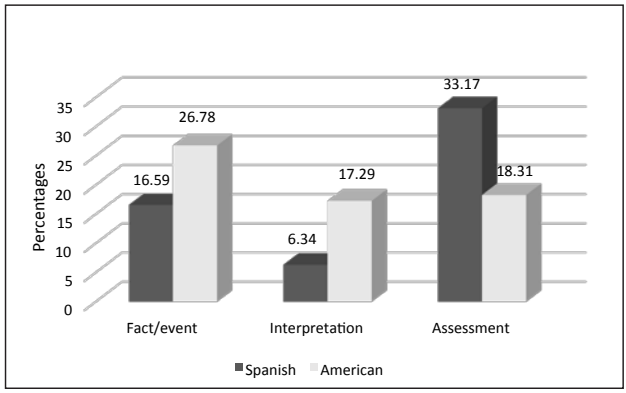
their opponent's INTERPRETATIONS, as in example (21). In the case of Rubalcaba, most of his INTERPRETATIONS are related to Rajoy's intentions, were he to become President, mainly included in his agenda; in turn, most of Rajoy's INTERPRETATIONS are used to re-conduct Rubalcaba's INTERPRETATIONS of his intentions and thus turn the argument on his opponent—see example (22)

(20) We did not set up a twenty-first century regulatory framework to deal with these problems (McCain).

(21) Well, I think Senator McCain's absolutely right that we need more responsibility, but we needed it not just when there's a crisis (Obama).

(22) En sus Comunidades Autónomas empieza a haber derivación de los enfermos más costosos hacia la sanidad pública para mantener el negocio de la sanidad privada, señor Rajoy, y eso es gravísimo (Rubalcaba).
["In your autonomous communities the sick, whose treatments are the most expensive, are started to be derived to the public health system to support the business of the private health system, Mr. Rajoy, and that's very serious"].
[…]
Eso es una insidia suya y si no, deme los datos, en qué hospitales y en qué Comunidades (Rajoy). [INTERPRETATION]
["That's your malicious act; and, if it is not, give me data, in which hospitals, in which regions"].

FIGURE 3. Significant differences in WORLD-REFLECTING statement subtypes (Spanish vs. American)



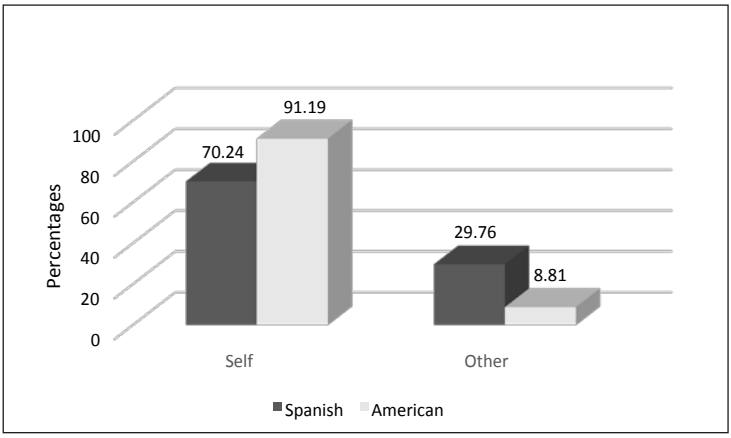
Statistically significant differences are found not only in the subtypes of the statements uttered but also in the source to which the statement is attributed: while

Americans claim themselves responsible for most of their utterances (91.19%) ($p<0.02$), Spaniards delegate this responsibility in 29.76% of cases ($p<0.02$)—see figure 4 and examples (23) and (24):

(23) And I think that the fundamentals of the economy have to be measured by whether or not the middle class is getting a fair share (Obama). [EMPHASIZED SELF]

(24) Señor Rajoy, ustedes llevan tres años diciendo que el único problema de la economía española es el Gobierno. Sugieren […] (Rubalcaba). [RESPONSIBILITY-DELEGATED]
['Mr. Rajoy, you (plural, formal) have been saying for three years that the only problem in the Spanish economy is the Government. You (plural, formal) suggest (…)']

FIGURE 4. Significant differences in SOURCE
(Spanish vs. American)



Within the SELF and OTHER types, statistically significant differences are also found between the American and Spanish debaters. Americans use the three types more evenly—AVERRED, 27.80% ($p<0.02$), EMPHASIZED SELF, 31.86% ($p<0.10$) and HIDDEN SELF, 31.53% ($p<0.02$)—whereas Spaniards notably prefer the Averred type (43.90%) and almost totally avoid the HIDDEN type (2.44%), the EMPHASIZED-SELF category being used in a quarter of their self-attributed statements (23.90%) (see figure 5). This suggests that the Spanish politicians are interested in demonstrating their responsibility for their statements and, thus, sound straightforward to the audience rather than disguising their own opinions. American politicians, however, not only attribute their statements to themselves but also to people in general in an attempt to "set up an 'in-group' of like-minded people to which the [audience] is positioned as belonging, and thus to construct consensus" (Hunston 2000, 191).

FIGURE 5. Significant differences in SELF SOURCE type (Spanish vs. American)

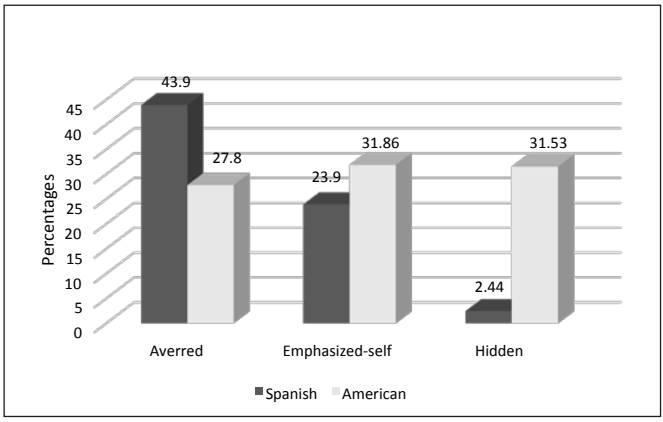
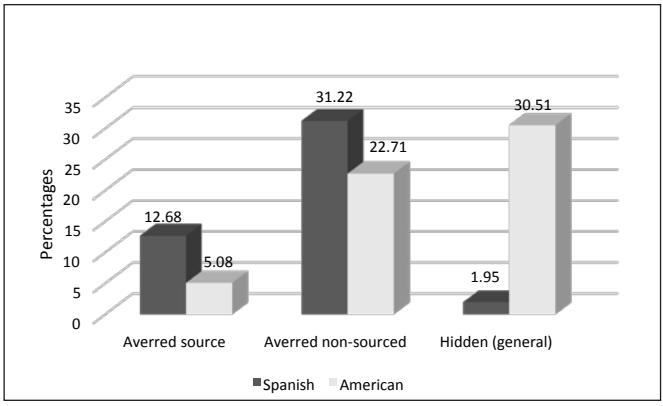


FIGURE 6. Significant differences in sub-categories of SELF (Spanish vs. American)



As figure 6 shows, in the Spanish debate the most frequent subcategory of SELF-AVERRED source is that in which statements are presented as FACTS (NON-SOURCED, 31.22%, $p<0.05$), while in the American debate the most used type is HIDDEN/GENERAL ATTRIBUTION—i.e., when the attribution is disguised, making the general public responsible for the averred statement (30.51%, $p<.02$), as in (16) and (18) above, where the politicians use the impersonal expressions such as "[i]t has (got) to (be)" and "[t]here's no doubt that." These and other impersonal expressions, such as "we've got to," "that kind of thing is not the way to," etc. are devices to aver statements believed to be quasi-universal truths or obligations that no one would deny, when, in fact, it is the speaker who holds the proposition. Both presenting NON-SOURCED averrals and HIDDEN statements attributed to the general public

TABLE 3. Percentages of evaluation types in the Spanish and American debates

	SPANISH		AMERICAN		STATISTICS			
Feature	N	Percent	N	Percent	ChiSq	Significance	T Sta	Significance
STATEMENT TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Informing	155	75.61%	267	90.51%	20.39	+++	4.60	+++
Focusing	50	24.39%	28	9.49%	20.39	+++	460	+++
INFORMING-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
World-creating	40	19.51%	83	28.14%	4.85	++	2.21	++
World-reflecting	115	56.10%	184	62.37%	1.98	Not signif.	1.41	+
WORLD CREATING-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Assumption	4	1.95%	13	4.41%	2.22	Not signif.	1.49	
Hypothesis	13	6.34%	4	1.36%	9.15	+++	3.05	+++
Recommendation	23	11.22%	66	22.37%	10.28	+++	3.23	+++
WORLD REFLECTING-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Fact/event	34	16.59%	79	26.78%	7.19	+++	2.69	+++
Interpretation	13	6.34%	51	17.29%	12.99	+++	3.64	+++
Assessment	68	33.17%	54	18.31%	14.49	+++	3.86	+++
SOURCE	N=205		N=295					
Self	144	70.24%	269	91.19%	36.91	+++	6.30	+++
Other	61	29.76%	26	8.81%	36.91	+++	6.30	+++
SELF-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Averred	90	43.90%	82	27.80%	13.90	+++	3.77	+++
Emphasized (attribution-to-self)	49	23.90%	94	31.86%	3.75	+	1.94	+
Hidden	5	2.44%	93	31.53%	64.93	+++	8.62	+++
AVERRED-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Sourced	26	12.68%	15	5.08%	9.28	+++	3.07	+++
Non-sourced	64	31.22%	67	22.71%	4.53	++	2.13	++
HIDDEN-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Attribution-to-text	1	0.49%	3	1.02%	0.43	Not signif.	0.65	Not signif.
General-attribution	4	1.95%	90	30.51%	64.61	+++	8.60	+++
OTHER-TYPE	N=205		N=295					
Attribution responsibility-delegated	58	28.29%	10	3.39%	63.83	+++	8.54	+++
Attribution responsibility-reclaimed	3	1.46%	16	5.42%	5.19	++	2.29	++

+ = weak significance (90%) ++ = medium significance (95%) +++ = high significance (98%)

imply taking for granted a reality without providing proof of its truthfulness, which can incur in an overgeneralization fallacy. Table 3 summarizes all comparative results between the Spanish and American debates.

Table 3 and statistics are generated by the annotating tool used for the analysis, *UAM Corpus Tool* (O'Donnell 2012). Percentages are obtained taking as reference the total number of statements, signaled in table 3 as N—e.g., the 19.51% of WORLD-CREATING statements is calculated in relation to the 205 total statements in the Spanish debate, not in reference to the total number of informing statements, which is 155. That is why in all cases N equals the total number of tokens found in the corpus: 205 in the Spanish case and 295 in the American.

6.2. Evaluation of status and persuasion

In order to interpret the use of different types of statements from a persuasive perspective, one might wonder what each candidate says to sound more convincing and what distinguishes election winners from election losers that may have contributed to their persuasive power. Close examination of the statements made by the four politicians suggests that their political success to some extent correlates with the rhetorical strategies applied. In this section, we concentrate on the qualitative analysis of the target of the RECOMMENDATIONS (suggested courses of action) and the ASSESSMENTS (statements of opinion), respectively recommended and assessed by each politician: two strategies widely used in verbal confrontations.

Rajoy's successful rhetorical strategy in the political debate stems from his attempt to be seen by the audience as taking a down-to-earth position and to link his opponent to the unsuccessful policies of the former Prime Minister, Rodríguez Zapatero, and the Socialist party. To this end he makes numerous negative ASSESSMENTS of the Socialist party's failing policies as regards the economy, and these are expressed as if they were facts, which may not in fact be the case—see example (25)—and he recommends a change of government:

(25) Son ustedes unos auténticos maestros, se lo he dicho antes, en decir una cosa y hacer exactamente la contraria (Rajoy). [ASSESSMENT]
[''You are masters, I told you before, in saying something and doing exactly the opposite.''}

This, coupled with the fact that the Socialist party had taken the brunt of the blame for Spain's economic problems and Rubalcaba's poor credibility in the eyes of the audience, help Rajoy to meet his objective;[4] namely, convincing the electorate that

[4] On the advent of the general election, numerous newspapers commented on the sky-high unemployment rates while Zapatero and the Socialist party were in the government, which many considered "a failure for which the government was to be blamed" (Sánchez-Cuenca 2011, n.p.).

he is the best candidate to achieve Spain's economic recovery.[5] In contrast, Rubalcaba is unsuccessful in his attempt to persuade the audience to vote for him, mainly because he uses the wrong rhetorical strategy: he employs RECOMMENDATIONS (particularly, directive speech acts towards his opponent) as he attempts to reveal the austerity measures that Rajoy would implement if he were to become the new Prime Minister—see example (26):

(26) En resumen, señor Rajoy, le pido: primero, que diga rotundamente si va o no a cambiar el sistema de prestación por desempleo […] y segundo, que me explique qué reforma laboral tiene en la cabeza (Rubalcaba). [RECOMMENDATION]
["Summing up, Mr. Rajoy, I'm asking you to: first, say definitely whether you are going to make changes in unemployment benefits or not (…) and second to explain to me what labor reforms you have in mind."]

(27) Nosotros efectivamente tardamos mucho en pinchar la burbuja inmobiliaria […] pero creció con ustedes (Rubalcaba). [ASSESMENT]
["In fact, it took us too long to prick the housing bubble (…) but it grew with you when the PP was in office."]

Rubalcaba also makes negative ASSESSMENTS of the opposing government—see example (27). However, his strategy fails since Rajoy does not go on to reveal his true intentions and Rubalcaba's ASSESSMENTS sound like empty excuses to cover up for the bad economic results of the Socialist government. Instead, Rubalcaba's intervention only serves to fix in the electorate's mind that Rajoy is the new Prime Minister-to-be.[6]

Obama's success and McCain's defeat in the 2008 elections are also related to the rhetorical strategies employed by the two politicians. Certainly, Obama attempts to tie McCain to the failed policies of the Bush administration in order to undermine his opponent's credibility and he does so by using RECOMMENDATIONS and ASSESSMENTS, both accounting for 19.57% of evaluation types.[7] Obama's RECOMMENDATIONS are concrete proposals for reforming certain policies that do not work well in the US (healthcare system, infrastructures, energy sources, education) while his ASSESSMENTS are negative evaluations of the Republican government: e.g., "And that in part has to do with an economic philosophy that says that regulation is always bad". In contrast,

[5] Rubalcaba's lack of credibility with the electorate was due to his position as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs in the Socialist party during the financial crisis.

[6] Numerous headlines and decks of newspapers in the aftermath of the debate show Rubalcaba's failing strategy, such as "Rajoy presidente. Rubalcaba trató a su rival como futuro inquilino de La Moncloa" ["Rajoy president. Rubalcaba treated his rival as the future occupant of the Moncloa Palace"] (*La Razón* 2011, n.p.).

[7] Obama's strategy of standing as the anti-Bush candidate and linking McCain to the Bush administration is also commented on in various newspapers after his victory: "He could easily position himself as the anti-Bush candidate in a way Mr. McCain struggled to do. […] Mr. Obama's relentless campaign message was that John McCain had voted with him 90% of the time" (Lister 2008, n.p.).

McCain mostly uses RECOMMENDATIONS with the following aims: to cut and control the Government's spending, except in relation to defense; to lower people's taxes and give them credits; and to maintain the private healthcare system. And yet, McCain's strategy is not successful, mostly because he is never able to free himself from the grip of the previous Republican government and their failing policies and, thus, his spending control RECOMMENDATIONS ring hollow after an era of Republican deregulation.

Closer examination further reveals that both the American and Spanish debaters use impersonalized statements as a rhetorical strategy to try to beat their opponents. Indeed, all the politicians not only present their statements as FACTS—e.g., "Es evidente que…" ["It's evident that"] (Rubalcaba)—and as RECOMMENDATIONS that resemble objective duties—"Hay que hacer X…" ["X should be done"] (Rubalcaba)—but they also use AVERRED NON-SOURCED statements: 31.22% in the Spanish debate and 22.71% in the American. These statements are INTERPRETATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS and FACTS that are presented as unquestionable truths, which are not, however, backed up by a credible source since they are averred by the speakers themselves—see example (28):

(28) This isn't the beginning of the end of this crisis (McCain). [INTERPRETATION: AVERRED/NON-SOURCED]

Although the Press, both in the US and Spain, point out that there is no undeniable winner in the debates in question, the truth is that both Rajoy and Obama win their respective elections overwhelmingly, and the debate must have contributed to winning over swing voters to their side. What, then, made Obama and Rajoy appear more persuasive than their opponents Rubalcaba and McCain? When comparing either the two election "winners" or the two "losers" (Obama vs. Rajoy or McCain vs. Rubalcaba), the following are the features shared by each pair: the quantitative results that do not differ significantly between winning or losing pairs.[8]

Regarding WORLD-CREATING devices, winners do not show significant differences in their use of HYPOTHETICAL statements (see figure 7), while for losers the feature that they have in common is their use of ASSUMPTIONS (see figure 8). As for WORLD-REFLECTING mechanisms, winners use a similar number of FACTS (see figure 7), while losers behave the same in regard to ASSUMPTIONS (no significant difference is found, see figure 8), and show only a weak difference ($p<0.10$) in their use of ASSESSMENT. All in all, therefore, winners can be said to coincide in their use of HYPOTHESES and FACTS, while losers make similar use of ASSUMPTIONS and mostly of ASSESSMENT. In general, ASSUMPTIONS are taken-for-granted truth, which is more subjective than HYPOTHESES,

[8] In statistical terms, the similarities between the winners and losers of the elections should be based on the statements from the respective pairs that are not significantly different: H_0 = same behavior, H_1 = not the same behavior; RH_0 = significant differences; AH_0 = non-significant differences. Moreover, a $p<0.10$—i.e., 90% coincidence—is considered weak significance, or even not significant in social science (Dörnyei 2007, 210).

guesses usually based on observation; likewise, ASSESSMENTS (i.e., opinions) are more subjective than FACTS. The ethos of winners thus seems more reliable than that of losers. Concerning SOURCE, both winners and losers present similar rates of emphasized SELF and NON-SOURCED AVERRED statements.

FIGURE 7. Results of election winners

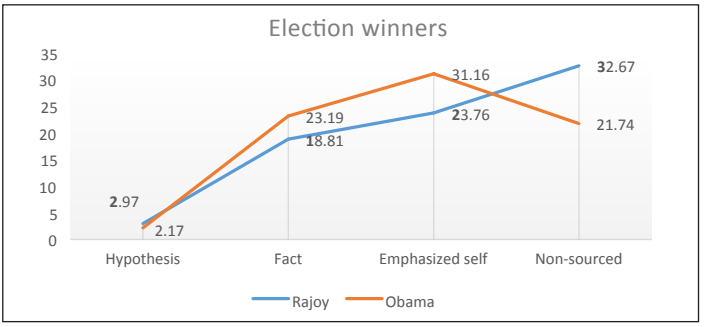
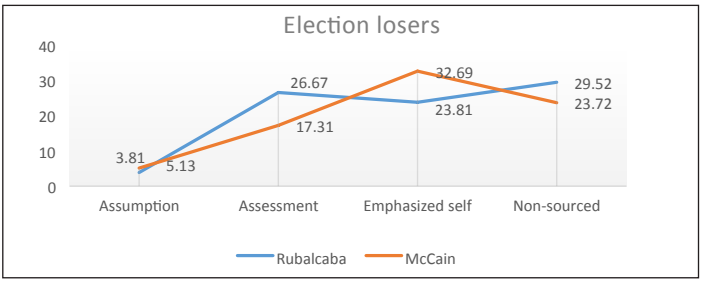


FIGURE 8. Results of election losers



These results suggest that the self-attributed HYPOTHESES and FACTS used by Obama and Rajoy must have sounded more convincing to the audience, than the self-attributed ASSUMPTIONS and ASSESSMENTS of McCain and Rubalcaba, the latter implying more subjectivity than the former. Winners seem to have a more reliable ethos than losers, principally because they mention FACTS regarding incumbent government that the audience is knowledgeable about and HYPOTHESES about situations that cannot be tested unless they themselves become President or Prime Minister. In the case of the election losers, they both make ASSUMPTIONS regarding the prospective positions of President or Prime Minister: McCain makes ASSUMPTIONS about his own presidency, were he to be elected, and Rubalcaba, in the case of his opponent becoming Prime Minister, which contributes to conjuring up an image of Rajoy as the new Spanish Prime Minister. Losers also use ASSESSMENTS, but the Spanish and American candidates use them differently: while McCain often criticizes his own government,

led by President Bush, and implies that he would do things differently, Rubalcaba criticizes his opponent, at the time in opposition, accusing him of a hidden agenda full of unpopular measures, were his party to get into office. All this suggests that the audience is more willing to give credit to an untested candidate representing change than to the "new" candidate of a well-known, unsuccessful government in times of crisis. Thus, the audience believes more in the winners' facts relating to past actions than in the losers' promises or warnings about future actions.

7. Conclusions

The present study attempts to answer three research questions regarding the evaluation of status—i.e., how the world is presented—in two pre-electoral debates by politicians whose main aim in the texts analyzed is, as is usually the case with politicians, to win voters. A highly influential factor in persuading their audience is how debaters project their ethos, as a result of both their words and their personal circumstances: character, political ideology, the party to which they belong and represent, their public self, among other things. After analyzing and counting examples of the different types of statements identified by Hunston's categorization of status (2000; 2008) for these two debates, the conclusions below can be drawn.

The results indicate that both the Spanish and the American debaters mainly resort to WORLD-REFLECTING statements—FACT/EVENT, INTERPRETATION and ASSESSMENT—rather than WORLD-CREATING ones—ASSUMPTION, HYPOTHESIS and RECOMMENDATION. That is, each of the politicians prefers propositions that fit the world rather than a made-up world in an attempt to be seen by the audience as taking an objective and down-to-earth position, even when it is not backed up with evidence. Close attention reveals different tendencies in the two debates: American politicians adopt a more directive and practical stance (FACTS/EVENTS and RECOMMENDATIONS), while that of the Spanish representatives is more interpretative and theoretical (HYPOTHESES and ASSESSMENTS).

In terms of source, the results suggest that all the candidates, both Americans and Spaniards, are interested in communicating certainty by self-attributing their propositions. However, while the American politicians favor hiding the attribution by mainly using general attributions (i.e., impersonal agency to avoid responsibility), their Spanish counterparts prefer to take responsibility for what is averred.

When dealing with the issue of the persuasive power of their interventions, we find a certain correspondence between political success and rhetorical strategies used by analyzing two frequent types of statements in verbal confrontations between politicians: RECOMMENDATIONS for future courses of action and ASSESSMENTS of what should or should not be done, particularly by their opponent. While each candidate focuses their RECOMMENDATIONS on different issues, there are some common trends: Spanish contenders focus their criticism on each other, while only Obama does so

in the American debate since McCain prefers self-criticism of his own party and a promised redemption if he were to win the presidency. Assuming that winning their respective elections so decisively is partly due to their participation in the debate under study, we examine what it is that Rajoy and Obama do to win over their audience in comparison to their opponents.[9] The results indicate that statements by Obama and by Rajoy are more objective (HYPOTHESES and FACTS) than those of McCain and Rubalcaba (ASSUMPTIONS and ASSESSMENTS). Thus, the winners' ethos is more reliable than the losers'; no doubt, the subjectivity of the latter's propositions is diminished by the fact that they are each presenting themselves as alternative leaders to replace an unsuccessful incumbent President or Prime Minister from their own party. Most probably, more swing votes are won by reflecting a negative world—criticizing the government in office—than by creating a positive one based on electoral promises. This conclusion may be self-evident and, thus, be an expected outcome; however, this study provides empirical quantitative evidence to support it.

Future studies could determine whether it might be possible to extend these conclusions to more recent elections and populist candidates—Donald Trump in the US, Marine Le Pen in France, Geert Wilders in The Netherlands, Nigel Farage in Britain or Pablo Iglesias in Spain. Indeed, one might expect that these politicians would show an interest in WORLD-REFLECTING statements in order to be seen as objective by the audience, who they claim to represent (Breeze 2018, 2). Also, they would show a preference for RECOMMENDATIONS, putting forward proposals for future action that fit, so they would claim, "the people's will" (Müller 2016, n.p.). Finally, as regards source, such populist candidates might prefer averral over attribution to others, in an attempt to convince voters that they are the only candidates that care for the people since they represent "a political logic that challenges accepted norms" (Breeze 2018, 2).

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[9] To a certain extent, pragmatically we are here dealing with the illocutionary force of the statements and their perlocutionary effect.

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Mercedes Díez-Prados is an Associate Professor at Alcalá University (Spain). Both her teaching and research are mainly concerned with Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Her most significant publications tackle the issues of cohesion, evidentiality and evaluation in written English by native and non-native writers, both expert and novice, including from a gender perspective. Of late she is conducting contrastive research (English-Spanish) on evaluation devices and metaphors used in political language, and on persuasive devices in business discourse.

Address: Departamento de Filología Moderna. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Universidad de Alcalá. Colegio S. José de Caracciolos, Trinidad, 3. 28801, Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain. Tel.: +34 918854441.

Ana Belén Cabrejas-Peñuelas is an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Valencia (Spain). She investigates the cognitive processes involved in second or foreign language writing, in particular the revision process and the use of the mother tongue, although she is also interested in Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Her most important publications deal with L2 writing processes and evaluation, metaphor and metonymy in political language from a contrastive perspective.

Address: Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana. Facultad de Filología, Traducción y Comunicación. Universitat de València. Blasco Ibáñez, 32. 46010, Valencia, Spain. Tel.: +34 963864254.

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EFL Grapho-Phonemics: The "Teachability" of Stressed Vowel Pronunciation Rules

Enrique Cámara-Arenas
Universidad de Valladolid
ecamara@fyl.uva.es

Despite the existence of a vast and solid heritage supporting their validity and reliability, pronunciation rules that assist the phonemic interpretation of graphemic structures are not usually taught in the EFL classroom at any level. Since a likely reason for this absence might lie in the intrinsic complexity of the English writing system, a convenient reduction is presented in the form of ten basic rules for the interpretation of vocalic graphemes in stressed syllable. These rules are understood within an EFL oriented conceptual frame that introduces distinctions between oxytone, paroxytone and proparoxytone structures, as well as systemic/specific, post-nuclear/pre-nuclear and adjacent/distant grapho-phonemic contexts. With this approach, I attempt to generate the kind of grapho-phonemic knowledge that might be useful within the EFL context. The reliability and representativity of these rules have been tested against a wordlist of 5,000 frequent English words. Notions of what to teach and in what order can be derived from the findings. A rich array of results is presented that might be further explored and discussed by EFL instructors.

Keywords: English orthography; English pronunciation; phonics; grapho-phonemics; reading; EFL teaching

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La grafo-fonémica en el entorno ILE: sobre la fiabilidad de las reglas de pronunciación de vocales acentuadas

A pesar de la amplitud y solidez de los conocimientos que a día de hoy validan las reglas de pronunciación que rigen la interpretación fonémica de las palabras inglesas, dichas reglas no son generalmente enseñadas en el ámbito del inglés para extranjeros, en ningún nivel. Dado que una posible razón de esta ausencia radica en la complejidad del sistema ortográfico

inglés, en el presente estudio presentamos una conveniente simplificación en forma de diez reglas básicas para la interpretación de grafemas vocálicos en sílaba acentuada. Estas reglas se enmarcan dentro de un tejido conceptual sensible a distinciones entre palabras agudas, llanas y esdrújulas, así como a distinciones con respecto al carácter genérico/específico, post-nuclear/pre-nuclear y adyacente/distante de los indicadores grafo-fonémicos. Con ello pretendemos generar el tipo de conocimientos que pueda ser de utilidad en el contexto ILE. La fiabilidad de estas reglas se ha puesto a prueba en una lista de 5.000 palabras frecuentes del inglés. De este modo se derivan nociones con respecto a qué resulta oportuno enseñar, y en qué orden. El estudio incluye abundantes resultados que podrán ser libremente explorados por los profesores de inglés.

Palabras clave: ortografía inglesa; pronunciación inglesa; método *phonics*; grafo-fonémica; lectura; enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera

1. Introduction

Any EFL teaching method that at some point relies on the written word very soon has to face the challenges posed by grapheme/phoneme correspondences in English. Grapho-phonemic training is, nevertheless, blatantly absent from most EFL handbooks to this day. When Charles W. Kreidler discussed such absence as early as 1972, he argued that "[w]e don't teach the elementary student about English orthography because we really don't understand the nature of our spelling system" (4). However, English grapheme/phoneme correspondences had already been studied quite thoroughly by a number of scholars prior to his comment (Wijk 1966; Venezky 1970). Further effort was invested during the 1970s and 1980s into discerning the systematics of English orthography at the grapho-phonemic level. Extensive corpora were examined and the predictability of phoneme-to-grapheme and grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences were empirically calculated. Uninterrupted, though increasingly sparse, research looked into the processes of accessing the mental lexicon through printed words (Frederiksen and Kroll 1976), the cognitive aspects of native and non-native dealings with orthography (Schwartz, Kroll and Diaz 2007), and the possibility of automatic grapheme-to-phoneme and phoneme-to-grapheme conversions (Daelemans and van den Bosch 1996).

Concern with orthography within EFL teaching has been rather marginal as a whole, although a few scholars, like H. D. Brown (1970), S. Schane (1970) and C. W. Kreidler (1972) have tackled the issue. More recently, specialists have argued that EFL teachers need to "understand the correspondences between English phonology and English orthography" in order to teach learners "to predict the pronunciation of a word given its spelling" (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996). Celce-Murcia and her colleagues build upon the work of Wayne B. Dickerson (1984; 1987; 1994), which is remarkably revealing in relation to the prediction of stressed-syllable location, and also, collaterally, in the prediction of the value of vocalic graphemes in the stressed position—the latter, mostly when it is a matter of choosing between the so-called lax and tense pronunciations.[1] Stressed letter <a> in a monosyllabic word, for example, will be /æ/ when closed by a single consonant, *rat*, and /eɪ/ when closed by consonant plus silent <e>, *rate*. Axel Wijk's (1966) and Richard L. Venezky's (1970) rendering reflected a far more complex panorama where stressed <a> regularly predicts other values in stressed position: /ɑ : / in *spa*, *schwa*, *ah*, *wad*, *wan*, *art*, *car*, *smart*, etc.; /ɔ : / in *war*, *quartz*, *ward*, *dwarf*, etc.; /ɒ : / in *all, salt, bald*, *talk*, etc.[2]

A simplified rendering of grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences is, however, common procedure among EFL specialists: when incorporated into EFL programs, pronunciation rules for vowels are often reduced to the CV, CVCe and CVVC rules that predict long pronunciation as in *be*, *Pete* and *seed*; and CVC predicting short

[1] Many approaches to grapho-phonemics focus on this distinction, as if vocalic letters were to have mainly two regular values: the long/tense/free—depending on the author—and the short/lax/checked.

[2] All examples in this study are given for General American pronunciation.

pronunciation as in *wet* (Olshtain 2001, 209). Anne M. Ediger additionally deals with the Vr/CVr environment that guides predictions in the case of *art*, *car* or *her*, but she overlooks another known, relevant and regular context that involves <r>: *care*, *here*, *fire*, *pure*, which contrast with *car*, *her*, *fir* and *purr* (2001, 157).

In any case, despite the rich theoretical and empirical background available to assist EFL instructors in their dealings with grapho-phonemic issues, there seems to be a gap between orthography researchers and teaching specialists. A very small and general part of what is known about English orthography occasionally finds its way into EFL teaching practice. This might be partly due to the predominance, since the early 80s, of communicative and meaning-focused approaches to EFL. A situation that is beginning to change as reliable evidence mounts, suggesting that form-focused interventions tend to facilitate learning (Long and Robinson 1998; Lan and Wu 2013). Recent research shows that learners naturally extract statistic regularities from written language, and that such statistic learning can be enhanced through specific training (Doignon-Camus and Zagar 2014). Mere exposure to orthography, on the other hand, has been shown to have a positive effect on the development of phonological awareness (Cheung et al. 2001; Escudero, Hayes-Harb and Mitterer 2008). Explicit teaching of phonics and letter-to-sound correspondences seems to improve learning results not only in relation to EFL pronunciation (Rangriz and Marban 2015) but also in reading comprehension and literacy (Martínez Martínez 2011). The time seems ripe for a reconsideration of the role of grapho-phonemic training in the EFL classroom.

A second reason for the general neglect of grapho-phonemic competence in the EFL classroom has to do with its intrinsic complexity. Book-length studies on the subject such as Donald Wayne Cummings's description of American spelling (1988) and Timothy Bozman's handbook for students of phonetics (1988) cannot be introduced into the EFL arena without adequate reduction and adaptation. The cumulative nature of these and other fundamental works is far from EFL-friendly. The system encompasses rules overriding rules, and exceptions that seem to be regular in their own way, only to have further exceptions that conform to the initial rules, etc. However, these rules are rarely presented within a pedagogical hierarchy distinguishing between essential and complementary rules, or determining logical sequences of overriding. We know very little about each rule in particular—the relative amount of words that they regulate, for example, with more or less regularity.

A third reason for the paltriness of EFL grapho-phonemic training might be the lack of direct applicability of much of the existing empirical research, which is almost entirely concerned with measuring the consistency of English orthography. Paul R. Hanna, Jean S. Hanna, Richard E. Hodges and Edwin H. Rudorf's exhaustive exploration of phoneme-to-grapheme correspondences, uncovering an 80% consistency within a corpus of 17,310 English words, has resulted in no pedagogical applications (Hanna et al. 1966). In 1987, Rita Sloane Berdnt, James A. Reggia

and Charlotte C. Mitchum reversed the data in Hanna et al.'s analysis in order to determine grapheme-to-phoneme consistency; this has remained, over the years, mostly anecdotal. As Berdnt and her colleagues pointed out, the probabilities that they calculated were independent of context and therefore, as the authors themselves admitted, "[they] provide a conservative estimate of the extent to which particular letters and letter clusters are pronounced as particular phonemes in English, but they provide no information about the rules responsible for the derivation of these correspondences" (Berdnt et al. 1987, 1). Teachable rules are, after all, what EFL teachers would demand.

More recent research (Stanback 1992; Treiman et al. 1995; Kessler and Treiman 2001; 2003) incorporates a remarkable sophistication of statistical procedures, and continues to add to a perceived need to convince teachers—particularly teachers of L1 English—that English spelling is much more consistent than it seems. However, such calculations of consistency are often derived from a consideration of monosyllabic words. Polysyllabic words are conveniently avoided because they "raise difficult questions of where syllable boundaries lie," and because they "have much higher proportions of foreign, Latinate, and technical words" (Kessler and Treiman 2001, 593).

After decades of increasingly sophisticated research, there can be no doubt today that the English grapho-phonemic system is consistent. Paradoxically, most specialists also agree that it *seems* chaotic. The famous 80% consistency of the system seems to have worked as an excuse for not teaching pronunciation rules: since the system is consistent, simple exposure to it will in the long run build up the necessary competence in our EFL students. That said, the 20% of recalcitrant words, apparently hiding just about anywhere within the system, may be quite dissuasive. In relation to exceptions and teaching, Axel Wijk wrote: "Since a large number of the irregular spellings are found among the commonest words in the language, it is obvious that there would not be much sense in foreigners making any systematic study of the rules of pronunciation when they begin their study of the language" (1966, 11). His suggestion for incrementing the EFL students' competence is the one that has been strictly followed by most textbooks: "to learn the pronunciation of each new word that they come across, by itself, [...] without much reference to any rules for the pronunciation of the various letters or combinations of letters of which the words are made up" (11). From such a perspective, there is little hope that grapho-phonemic correspondences may ever become part of an EFL training program. As far as I know, Wijk did not fully substantiate his assertion about irregularity at the basic level; a claim, on the other hand, that contradicts Kessler and Treiman's findings already mentioned (2001). One way or another, we are told by important orthographists about the overall consistency of large corpora, but we do not know much about the regularity or frequency of most rules, or about rule-regularity and rule-frequency within particular groups of words, or within smaller samples like the glossary of

a coursebook for beginners.[3] If we managed to shed some light on such issues, we might be able to offer a more enticing panorama to our EFL teachers. We might, for example, base our choice of a particular reading material on its grapho-phonemic characteristics and the kind of rules that are present in it. A specifically EFL-way of looking at pronunciation rules is required. This would imply the use of a conceptual frame that could help us discern between rules and organize them into a pedagogical hierarchy.

2. Basic Rules for the Interpretation of Stressed Unigraphs

A pronunciation rule is a hypothesis about the predictive properties of a particular graphemic environment in relation to the phonemic value of the letters affected by it.[4] A very well-known pronunciation rule establishes, for example, that a stressed unigraph in an oxytone structure followed by a single consonant and closed by a silent <e> is to be pronounced with the long version of that particular unigraph (Venezky 1970, 104; Bozman 1988, 13).[5] The long version coincides with the name of the unigraph, and this rule—often expressed as VC<e># or similar—allows us to predict values /eɪ, iː, aɪ, oʊ, (j)uː/ for the stressed vowels in *pale*, *scene*, *Mike*, *hose* and *rude*, respectively, and in any other words with the same structure. A rule that, incidentally, fails to predict the pronunciation of *have*, *allege*, *police* or *move*.

If we are to generate useful knowledge about pronunciation rules, the first thing to do is to isolate and describe as strictly as possible a comprehensive set of such rules. The panorama is more complex than that registered by Olshtain (2001) or Ediger (2001), mentioned above, and yet, it is important to reduce the detailed complexity described in Venezky (1970) or Cummings (1988) to manageable terms. It is not easy to navigate through all the different pronunciation rules on offer. We have rules for the interpretation of consonant-letters—like <c> before <o, u, a>—and for the interpretation of vowel-letters; rules for the location of primary, secondary or tertiary stresses; rules for the interpretation of stressed and unstressed syllables; etc. Our first task is to isolate a particular set of rules, governing a particular aspect of orthography,

[3] When characterizing a rule in terms of frequency, I will be considering the number of words within the corpus used in this work to which a particular rule is applicable; it implies an estimate of how frequently our students will have to apply it. A particular word-type—i.e., a group of words that follow the same rule—has a high or low presence depending on whether the corpus contains many or few instances of it, respectively.

[4] Notice that in talking about "prediction" we are already siding with the EFL student, who lacks a priori grapho-phonemic competence in English, and is constantly facing new words in the written format whose pronunciation is not to be identified, as in the case of natives, but rather guessed. Instead of prediction, most experts outside EFL talk about phonological decoding or even phonological translation (Aro and Wimmer 2003).

[5] Words stressed on the last syllable constitute oxytone structures—like *bet*, *attack*, *introspect*, etc. A paroxytone structure has the primary stress on the penultimate syllable—like *manner*, *indulgent*, *condemnation*, etc. Words stressed on the antepenultimate syllable or before are proparoxytones—*enemy*, *indiscriminate*, *ceremony*, etc. Although experts do not usually make this distinction, I believe that there is much to be gained in terms of discrimination power by incorporating them, as I will later show.

such that a minimum of them is able to cover a maximum of occurrences. I will therefore focus on rules that assist the interpretation of single vowel letters—unigraphs—located at the stressed syllable of any English word. For the sake of pedagogical efficiency, we need to isolate the kind of rules that could be applied to as many English words as possible—instead of only to those that have <c> or <y>, for example—provided that they are sufficiently effective in predicting pronunciation. Table 1 represents the set of what I call the ten basic general-systemic rules for stressed unigraphs in American English; a comprehensive set of rules that can be applied to all the words that have a unigraph in their stressed syllable, without exception.

A "general systemic rule" is one that is capable of predicting the value of at least four of the five vocalic unigraphs. The above mentioned VC<e># rule belongs to this category, but there are pronunciation rules—I will call them *domain-specific*—that are only applicable to one or two unigraphs, or domains; Olshtain mentions one such rule (2001, 210). In my own terms, adjacent post-nuclear <ll> has predicting power in relation to the stressed unigraph <a> but not in relation to <e, i, u>.[6] Notice that *bet* and *bell*, *bit* and *bill*, *dust* and *dull* are subject to the same general systemic rule—PR2.1—while the contrasts *bat~ball*, *tan~tall*, *mad~mall*, etc. point to adjacent post-nuclear <ll> as a domain-specific context affecting <a> quite regularly, and <o> in a less regular way—*rot~roll*.

The pronunciation rules in table 1 constitute a development of Bozman's general rules for the spelling of long and short pronunciations (1988, 14-15). All of them, without exception, will also be found in the works of Wijk (1966), Venezky (1970) and Cummings (1988). There are, however, a few aspects where I depart from the traditional positions. Apart from the technical terms and descriptions used above, there is the subdivision into oxytone, paroxytone and proparoxytone structures, the value that PR1 assigns to <a>, and the boxes marked with NA for domains where a particular rule is "not applicable." A word like *al**u**minum*, for example, which would fit into the PR6 type will be interpreted according to PR3.2 because PR6 is not applicable to the <u> domain (Bozman 1988, 48).

Table 1 represents basic grapho-phonemic competence in General American. An RP version would be almost identical; in standard British English the value for <o> in PR2 and PR6 would be /ɒ/, and words like *sorry*, *current* and *oracle* would fill the NA boxes in PR2.2 and PR6. On this occasion, our calculations of rule reliability and presence have been made for American English, but our guess is that with slightly different measures in some marginal cases, the overall results would be quite similar for RP.

[6] In the English system there are also adjacent pre-nuclear grapho-phonemic contexts—like onset <w-, qu-> before <a, o>, as in *and~wand*, *horse~worse*—and distant post-nuclear contexts—all the suffixes explored by Dickerson (1984)—that tend to determine both where the primary stress is located and how the nuclear vowel is to be pronounced.

Table 1. American English General Systemic Rules

	PR-1	<a>, /ɑ:/	<e>, /i:/	<i>/<y>, /aɪ/	<o>, /oʊ/	<u>, /(j)u:/
	…V#	*spa*	*me*	***I**, my*	*go*	*gn**u***
	PR2.1	<a>, /æ/	<e>, /e/	<i>/<y>, /ɪ/	<o>, /ɑ:/	<u>, /ʌ/
a.	…VC#	*cat*	*bet*	*pin*	*hot*	*mud*
b.	…VCC#	*back*	*belt*	*myth*	*block*	*lung*
c.	…VCCC#	*match*	*fetch*	*bitch*	*blotch*	*gulch*
d.	…VCC<e>#	*lapse*	*ledge*	*bridge*	*lodge*	*budge*
	PR2.2	<a>, /æ/	<e>, /e/	<i>/<y>, /ɪ/	<o>, /ɑ:/	<u>, /ʌ/
a.	…VCCv…	*happen*	*question*	*issue*	*office*	*number*
b.	…VCCC…	*android*	*entry*	*hindrance*	*cockle*	*buckle*
c.	…V<rr>v…	*narrow*	*merry*	*mirror*	NA	NA
	PR3.1	<a>, /eɪ/	<e>, /i:/	<i>/<y>, /aɪ/	<o>, /oʊ/	<u>, /(j)u:/
	…VC<e>#	*make*	*Pete*	*time*	*home*	*incl**u**de*
	PR3.2	<a>, /eɪ/	<e>, /i:/	<i>/<y>, /aɪ/	<o>, /oʊ/	<u>, /(j)u:/
a.	…VCv…	*paper*	*Peter*	*final*	*open*	*human*
b.	…VC<r>v…	*patriot*	*secret*	*micron*	*copra*	*nutrient*
c.	…VC<l>v…	*able*	NA	*title*	*noble*	*bugle*
	PR4.1	<a>, /ɑ:/	<e>, /ɝ:/	<i>/<y>, /ɝ:/	<o>, /ɔ:/	<u>, /ɝ:/
a.	…V<r>#	*car*	*her*	*fir*	*for*	*fur*
b.	…V<r>C#	*part*	*term*	*girl*	*report*	*return*
c.	…V<r>CC#	*arch*	*perch*	*birth*	*scorch*	*burnt*
d.	…V<r>C<e>#	*large*	*serve*	*dirge*	*horse*	*nurse*
	PR4.2	<a>, /ɑ:/	<e>, /ɝ:/	<i>/<y>, /ɝ:/	<o>, /ɔ:/	<u>, /ɝ:/
a.	…V<r>Cv…	*party*	*service*	*virtual*	*important*	*surface*
b.	…V<r>CC…	*partner*	*interpret*	*myrtle*	*northern*	*purchase*
	PR5.1	<a>, /er/	<e>, /ɪr/	<i>/<y>, /aɪ/	<o>, /ɔ:/	<u>, /ʊr/
	VC<re>#	*care*	*here*	*fire*	*more*	*ensure*
	PR5.2	<a>, /er/	<e>, /ɪr/	<i>/<y>, /aɪ/	<o>, /ɔ:/	<u>, /ʊr/
	V<r>v…	*parent*	*period*	*virus*	*story*	*jury*
	PR6 Proparoxytones	<a>, /æ/	<e>, /e/	<i>/<y>, /ɪ/	<o>, /ɑ:/	<u>, /ʌ/
a.	…VCv…	*family*	*president*	*significant*	*policy*	NA
b.	…V<r>v…	*charity*	*American*	*miracle*	NA	NA
c.	….VC<r>v…	*African*	*integrity*	*fibrillate*	*Socrates*	NA

PR: Pronunciation rule; NA: Not applicable

3. Research Questions

The general idea is that EFL teachers could make use of table 1, and teach it either completely or partially to their students. Before that, however, it is necessary to put these contents to the test and provide an answer to the following research questions:

RQ1. How exhaustive is this particular set of rules in relation to the interpretation of American English stressed unigraphs? Would we need additional rules?

RQ2. How do these rules differ in terms of frequency and regularity? Are there any word-types that feature as particularly (in)frequent and/or (ir)regular?

RQ3. Are there areas of special difficulty that EFL teachers might consider avoiding?

RQ4. Are there significant differences at the different levels (beginners, intermediate, etc.)? How could the teaching of rules be distributed across the different levels?

4. Method

4.1. Data

Using Excel 2010 and the statistical package SPSS 20, I have checked the reliability and frequency of each of the ten general-systemic rules against Mark Davies's 5,000 wordlist containing the most frequent words in American English (2015). The corpus has been conveniently reduced by filtering away words with stressed digraphs and trigraphs, which are not covered by the rules whose reliability I am trying to assess (see table 2). The original wordlist also contains a number of repetitions. The word *work*, for instance, appears in rank 117 as verb, and then again in rank 199 as a noun. I have computed this and all repeated items only once whenever I found exactly the same grapho-phonemic correspondences. Where pronunciation changes along with function, the items have been treated and computed separately—*protest* for example, has been computed as a PR2.1 type with stressed <e> when functioning as a verb and as a PR3.2 type with stressed <o> when functioning as a noun.

Table 2. Reduction of Davies's wordlist

Total words	**5,000**	
Special words, acronyms, repetitions, non-computed derivatives, compounds, etc.	1,066	
Computed words (ref.)	**3,934**	**100%**
Words with stressed unigraph	3,005	76%
Words with digraphs or trigraphs	929	24%
Regular stressed unigraph words	2,514	64%
Irregular stressed unigraph words	491	12%

Special words like *mm-hmm* (rank 2,966) and acronyms have also been discarded. Compound words have been separated into their components and reintroduced in the database. The grapho-phonemics of, for example, *understand*, comprises that of *under*—a regular PR2.2-type—and that of *stand*—a regular PR2.1-type. There are few compounds that break this rule. In fact, the corpus only contains three cases: *gentleman*, *freshman* and *businessman*; the words *gentle*, *fresh* and *business* are already present in the corpus. In most cases, in fact, reintroduced items were found to constitute repetitions not to be computed. As a result of this process of filtering out the irrelevant items for the sake of maximally reliable results, I obtained 3,005 frequent English words against which to test the ten basic rules presented above (see table 2).

4.2. Procedure

For each of the words contained in the final list, I have registered information concerning the grapheme—<a, e, i/y, o, u>—found in its stressed syllable, the applicable pronunciation rule in each case—PR1, PR2.1, etc.—and a yes/no tag depending on whether the applicable rule works or not. For the process of tagging each item with their respective PR type I have taken as a reference the American English transcriptions from *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, edited by John C. Wells (1990). When more than one possible pronunciation was offered, I have only considered the first and most standardized one. In the case of function words with strong and weak forms, the strong form has been considered.

Table 3. Tagging sample

Frequency (rank)	Item	Unigraph	Type	Reliability
5	a	a	PR1	n
6	in	i	PR2.1	y
7	to	o	PR1	n
8	have	a	PR3.1	n
10	it	i	PR2.1	y
11	I	i	PR1	y
12	that	a	PR2.1	y
13	for	o	PR4.1	y

The tagging of derivatives has been quite challenging. It seems obvious that once you have tagged and computed a word like *color* as a PR3.2 type, the word *colorful*, also registered in the original list, looks very much like a repetition. If treated as such, the word *colorful* should not be computed, and all suffixed words should then be subjected to the same consideration. However, not all suffixed words lend themselves so nicely to that treatment. Many common words like *protective*, *defendant* or *evidence* would not be computed with such a procedure, and the corpus would have been drastically impoverished.

My solution here has been rather practical. I have discarded as repetitions those words consisting of a root already existing in the database plus affixes *-ly*, *-ing*, *-ed*, *-ful*, *-ness*, *-ment*, *-less*, *-ship*, *-wise*, *-hood*, *-th* (in ordinal numbers), *un-*, and plural *-s*. These common and frequent affixed words could be easily treated in grapho-phonemic training through a simple elimination strategy: when faced with a word like *gathering*, students could be instructed to eliminate the *-ing* ending and consider the predictability of *gather*.

When a word with any of these affixes was found whose root was missing from the database, it is the root itself that has been tagged and computed. So, the word *frankly* has been tagged and computed as if it was *frank*—i.e., as PR2.1 rather than PR2.2—because *frank* itself was not in the database. The rest of the derivatives, with affixes

other than those listed above, have been computed according to their corresponding type as whole words: *director* as a PR2.2 type, *performance* as PR4.2, *racism* as PR3.2, etc.

Still, a further complication arises when dealing with derivatives. A word like *additional*, for example, would be categorized as a regular PR6 type. However, regularity here might not be due to the PR6 context, but to the fact that it derives from *addition*, which actually breaks PR3.2. Inversely, a word like *favorable* breaks PR6, but it does so in order to preserve the recognition of *favor*, a regular PR3.2 type. It is not convenient, then, to compute *additional* as a confirmation of PR6, nor to treat *favorable* as an exception to that same rule, since both words are actually subjected to yet another rule: a principle of preservation of etymological traceability (Venezky 1970, 120; Cámara-Arenas 2010, 78).

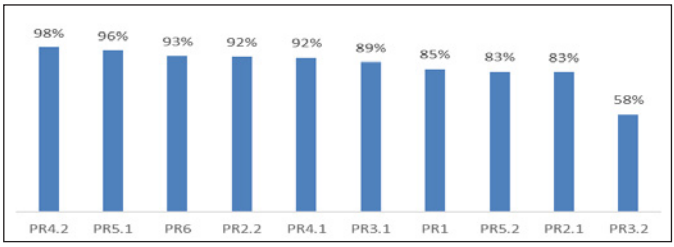
Another practical solution was then felt to be in order: derivatives which confirm their rules—as *additional* confirms PR6—have been computed only when their roots also confirm their own rules; derivatives which break their rules—as *favorable* breaks PR6—have been computed only if their roots also break their own rules; and they have not been computed otherwise. In this way, a word like *global* has been computed as confirming PR3.2 because *globe* also confirms PR3.1; *fully* has been computed as breaking PR2.2 because *full* also breaks PR2.1. But neither *additional* nor *favorable* have been computed as either confirming or breaking PR6. In this way, I did not boost the reliability of PR6 with words like *additional*, *clinical*, *columnist* or *developer*; nor did I undermine it with words like *agency*, *behavioral*, *educational* or *frequency*. All these examples owe the phonemic value of their stressed vowel to their root. In most cases, the respective roots—*addition*, *clinic*, *behavior*, *education*, etc.—were in the list and were tagged and computed accordingly, the only exceptions being *theoretical*, *tropical* and *practitioner*. These last three have not been computed in any way; if they had been, they would have, however, added to the reliability of PR6.

For operational purposes, I have further divided the words into five levels. Level one contains the most frequent 601 words, which would be ideally taught to beginners, with successive levels incrementing 601 words each until reaching the final amount of 3,005 words at the end of level five. This procedure has allowed me to consider rule regularity and presence from a progressive point of view. Teachers of EFL for beginners might be more interested in rule regularity and frequency at levels one and two than at later levels.

5. Results

A total of 2,514 items were found to be predictable from the application of the rules. This rendered a general predictability of 83.6%, out of the 3,005 stressed-unigraph words. The mean regularity of pronunciation rules is 87%—derived from the values presented in figure 1. As we can see in this figure, the only value that stands out is that of PR3.2, which registered significantly lower regularity.

Figure 1. Rule regularity, percentage. Ranking display



When considering regularity across levels, results show an average of 81%. Rules are less regular at level one (76%), with a clear tendency to increase their regularity as the amount of computed words increases. At level two, with 1,202 words, regularity is 80%. This percentage increases to 82% at level three (1,803 words), and rises above 83% at levels four and five (2,404 and 3,005 words respectively). The more words we include, the more regular the set becomes. As can be seen in figure 2, this seems to be the case for all rules, except PR5.2. The five bars for each rule in figure 2 represent, from left to right, levels one to five.

Figure 2. Rule regularity across levels

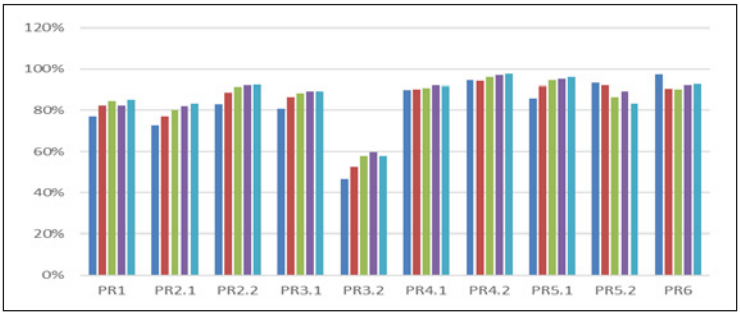


Figure 3 represents the presence of each of the rules within the sample. Frequency data shows more dispersion than regularity data. The average presence was 10%, with a standard deviation of 9%. Values beyond 19% stand out as particularly relevant—PR2.2 and PR2.1. Values around 1%—PR5.1, PR1—point to a rather incidental presence. Taken together, 86% of the processed words were found to belong to PR2, PR3 and PR6.

Figure 4 represents the presence of word-types at the different levels. For each rule, the five bars indicate from left to right the percentage values of levels one-to-five I have identified word-types whose presence decreases, like PR1, PR2.1, PR3.1 and PR4.1; word-types whose presence increases, like PR2.2, PR3.2 and PR6; and word-types, like PR4.2, PR5.1 and PR5.2 whose presence neither increases nor decreases in any significant way.

Figure 3. Frequency of rules, percentage. Ranking display

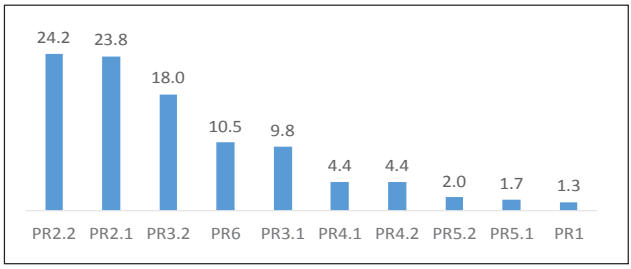
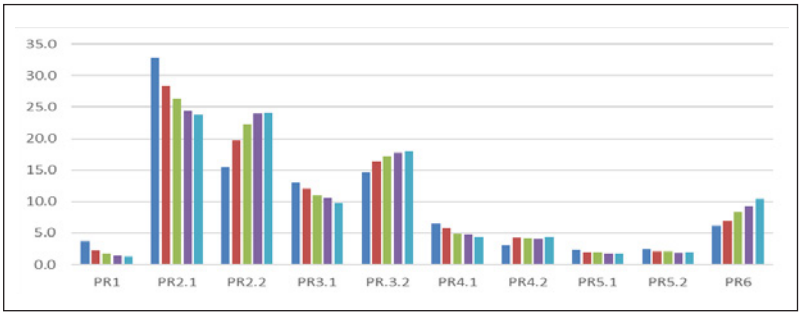


Figure 4. Frequency of rules across five levels



If we compare figures 1 and 3, a number of facts stand out: some rules are very regular, but have very little presence—e.g., PR5.1; one rule, PR3.2, has a rather high frequency but low regularity; and there are some, like PR2.1, PR2.2 and PR.6 that feature as both frequent and regular.

A final set of significant results has to do with the regularity of the function words in the list. We can now reconsider Wijk's claim that the most frequent words in English, which happen to be function words, are mostly irregular (1966, 11). Our study allows for a contrastive analysis of regularity in function words at levels one (beginners) and five (whole corpus). The results for both levels show similarities. At level one, only articles (92%), prepositions (90%) and conjunctions (80%) show significant regularity. Similarly, at level five, the most regular are, again, articles (92%), prepositions (84%) and conjunctions (80%), as well as interjections (88%). At the initial level, as far as function words are concerned, PR2.1 (80%), PR4.1 (100%), PR4.2 (100%), PR5.2 (100%), PR6 (100%) are regular. At the highest level, these rules remain similarly regular, except for PR5.2, which drops to 50%. At this final level PR2.2 also reaches regularity (80%). At both levels, PR3.2 registers significantly low regularity: 30% at level one and 17% at level five. Despite these similarities, the average regularity of function words is significantly lower at level one (69%) than at level five (77%). These low percentages are related to the irregularity, at both levels, of pronouns, numbers and demonstratives.

6. Discussion

Concerning the possible "teachability" of our ten basic pronunciation rules, there are at least two fundamental variables to consider: regularity and frequency—or presence. Of these, regularity is clearly a *sine qua non*: any rule that had (almost) as many exceptions as regulated cases should no longer be considered a rule. Frequency, on the other hand, raises issues of pragmatism: we might be interested in teaching a rule only insofar as our students are likely to encounter many chances to apply it. An infrequent rule, however, would still be a rule. The teachable character of four of our ten basic rules seems unquestionable inasmuch as they are both regular and frequent: PR2.1, PR2.2, PR3.1 and PR6, which regulate words like *not*, *letter*, *fine* and *animal*.

The consideration of regularity is by no means a simple matter. It is not easy to determine how many exceptions a given rule might be permitted to have before it turns into a case of anecdotal regularity. It is probably the EFL teachers faced with the results of this study who must decide whether a given regularity threshold is acceptable for them or not. Should this threshold be set at 90%, only half the rules—PR2.2, PR3.1, PR4.1, PR4.2, PR5.1 and PR6—would turn out to be teachable. If the threshold is lowered to 80%, only PR3.2, regulating words like *nation*, *even*, *final*, *over* or *student* would be left out.

Quite clearly, the greatest challenge for teaching our ten adjacent post-nuclear general-systemic indicators is posed by PR3.2. A reliability of 58% for a set of 540 items actually allows us to question PR3.2 as a general-systemic rule, despite its somewhat larger reliability in the <a, u> domains—see appendix. So, while it is clear that a stressed unigraph followed by CC is predictable, the same unigraph followed by Cv is not predictable to a comparable extent. All I can say, at best, is that the long version—PR3 phonemic value—in these cases is slightly more frequent than the short version—or PR2 phonemic values. That is, words like *lemur* are somewhat more frequent than words like *lemon*.

This has technical implications for teaching. While pairs like *mat~mate*, *pet~Pete*, *pin~pine*, *cod~code* and *cut~cute* could be used to take pedagogic advantage of the contrast between PR2.1 and PR3.1, the same procedure would be misguiding in the case of PR2.2 and PR3.2; not because conforming pairs like *matter~mater* or *saddest~sadist* cannot be found, but because PR3.2 is not fully reliable. Still, a reliability of 58% might be worth taking into account somehow, and before rejecting any application of the pattern, one should see if the group of exceptions might possibly be reduced through the application of domain specific rules.

With a reliability of 30%, PR3.2 for the <i> domain stands out as the most unreliable sub-rule. However, many of the seventy-four words that do not follow PR3.2 here actually follow other easy and reliable domain specific rules. For example, we know that stressed <i> retains pronunciation /ɪ/ despite a VCv environment when it fits the description VCvv, as in *condition*, *civilian*, *continue*, *efficient*, *suspicious*, *widow*, etc. (Wijk 1966, 20). A total of forty-one of the seventy-four supposedly irregular words are actually subject to this domain specific rule.

Table 4. Pronunciation Rule 3.2

PR3.2				
Domain	**Item**	**Regular**	**Irregular**	**Ratio**
<a>	193	140	53	72%
<e>	69	31	38	44%
<i>	106	32	74	30%
<y>	3	2	1	66%
<o>	100	51	49	51%
<u>	69	57	12	82%
Totals	540	313	227	58%

Furthermore, twelve of the seventy-four irregular PR3.2 words are actually predicted by known distant post-nuclear contexts—such as the suffixes *-ish*, *-ic* or *-it*—which tend to fix stress on the previous syllable and to predict the short value of the unigraph (Bozman 1988, 48). Words like *clinic*, *diminish* or *explicit* break PR3.2, but do so in order to follow this overriding rule. The application of other known rules finally reduces the seventy-four supposedly irregular words to only five: *casino*, *city*, *consider*, *prison* and *sibling*. Not all groups of exceptions, however, allow such consistent and intensive reduction, although there can be no doubt that the general total reliability of 83.6% for the rules presented here would increase if domain specific rules were also included.

Another challenge concerning regularity is the confirmation of Wjik's claim that irregularities tend to abound within the most basic vocabulary (1966, 11). A portion of this basic vocabulary is constituted by function words, which have, as we have seen, an average regularity of 69% at level one. In general, the average regularity of the rules when applied to the first 601 words falls below 80%. However, on more detailed inspection we see that PR2.2, PR4.1, PR4.2, PR5.1, PR5.2 and PR6 each achieve a regularity well above 80% even within this first level—see table 5.

Table 5. Regularity at level one

	Level 1		**Level 1**
PR1	77%	PR4.1	90%
PR2.1	73%	PR4.2	94%
PR2.2	83%	PR5.1	86%
PR3.1	81%	PR5.2	93%
PR3.2	47%	PR6	97%

The strong form of some of the function words—articles, prepositions and conjunctions—has proved to be rather regular at both level one and five. Although function words are most frequently pronounced with their weak form, common items

like *there*, *of*, *were*, *to*, *whom*, etc. may add to the perception of a chaotic system. In fact, Wijk's perception of irregularity among common words, both functional and lexical, is confirmed by the results. However, his subsequent conclusion that pronunciation rules are not to be taught at beginner levels should be reconsidered in light of these findings. With the enhanced discrimination that our procedure permits, we see that there is much within basic vocabulary that remains regular and teachable at level one.

In relation to rule presence, stressed-unigraph words are much more frequent in English than stressed-digraph and stressed-trigraph words. Up to seven out of ten words that students encounter during their English training will be of the kind to which one of our ten basic rules is applicable. Of these, however, PR1, PR4 and PR5 are alarmingly infrequent. In the case of PR1, for example, there are merely forty words, to be taught over the five levels. One actually wonders whether PR1—referred to by other authors as the CV rule—actually exists at all. If we move beyond the 5,000 wordlist, we would certainly find more cases, but they would have to be considered relatively infrequent, and their usefulness for non-advanced EFL students would thus be rendered debatable. Furthermore, the reliability of PR1 is only beyond 80% in the <e, y> domains, which instructors might choose to teach as domain-specific rules, if at all—see appendix.

The situation with PR5.1 and PR5.2 is very similar. The frequency of these words here seems insufficient, and if we consider it a fundamental condition for "teachability," the convenience of investing effort in the teaching and learning of these rules becomes questionable, to say the least. That said, they do actually constitute a very reliable set of pronunciation rules. If an EFL instructor decides they are worth teaching, the best strategy would probably not be waiting for the words in question to come up, but rather to confront their teaching explicitly, and be ready to work with not so frequent words or even pseudo-words. The same could be said about the PR4 type, where presence, though still limited, is larger than in PR5, and, what is more, reliability is the highest of the entire set.

An interesting aspect that emerges upon analyzing our results—see figure 4—is that there is an inverse correlation between presence and level in the case of oxytones, and a direct correlation in the case of paroxytones and proparoxytones. Words like *can*, *cane*, *car* or *care* are in general less frequent than words like *manner*, *vapor*, *party* or *Mary*, but they are more frequent at level one. This is related, in part, to the fact that the strong forms of many frequent functional words are mostly oxytones. Still, figure 4 suggests a possible order in the teaching of pronunciation rules: PR1, PR2.1, PR3.1, PR4.1 and PR5.1 might be taught in the first levels. Chances for practicing PR2.2, PR3.2, PR4.2, and PR5.2, by no means scarce at level one, will only increase in subsequent levels.

7. Conclusions and Further Research

The first conclusion that we can draw from our study is that there is, in fact, a reduced number of pronunciation rules that may help our EFL students to interpret the phonemic value of the stressed unigraph in most cases. We should not underestimate

the relevance of this fact. Although books on English orthography are usually lengthy and complex, a small set of ten basic rules has proved to be extremely exhaustive. We must assume that the reason why these rules are not usually taught in EFL courses has little to do with their reliability or their applicability. Further domain specific rules would increase our perception of consistency, but they would actually cover a much smaller number of cases.

Orthographic structures like those present in *manner* (PR2.2), *pet* (PR2.1), *enemy* (PR6) and *cone* (PR3.1) are, in this particular order, the most frequent in everyday American English, and they regularly allow the prediction of a particular vowel phoneme in the stressed syllable. On the other hand, orthographic structures like those present in *rely* (PR1), *car* (PR4.1), *person* (PR4.2), *mire* (PR5.1) and *hero* (PR5.2) are much less frequent, but they tend to be even more reliable in the prediction of the phonemic value of any unigraph in their stressed syllable. While research into the best ways of teaching pronunciation rules is still to be carried out, it seems reasonable to think that for rules that have limited presence but high regularity, explicit teaching would be appropriate.

Word-type PR3.2 is extremely problematic in grapho-phonemic terms. It stands as the third most frequent structure in English. At the same time, the predictability of the phonemic value of its stressed unigraph is only slightly above 50%: we have *vapor* but *manor*, *Peter* but *second*, *icon* but *idiot*, *odor* but *body*, *Cuban* but *punish*. One of the most frequent structures in English is also the most irregular. Any EFL instructor minded to teach pronunciation rules should probably either discard PR3.2 or, preferably, be ready to give it special treatment—making room, perhaps, for some domain specific rules.

The fact that words like *can*, *cane*, *car* and *care*—oxytone structures—tend to be relatively frequent among the first 601 items of our list suggests that the oxytone rules PR1, PR2.1, PR3.1, PR4.1 and PR5.1 might be best taught at the first levels. Paroxytone and proparoxytone rules might be quite profitably dealt with at later stages.

The present study has some limitations. Although some parts of the processing have been made automatically, word-type tagging and information on rule regularity had to be manually completed. This has made it impossible to work with a larger corpus, which would have been very desirable. Nevertheless, the amount of words processed, having been selected with a view to EFL applicability, is neither insufficient for consolidating reliable knowledge, nor particularly small when compared with previous research. Venezky (1970) dealt with 20,000 words and Stanback (1992) with 17,602, but Kessler and Treiman (2001; 2003), also using both automated and manual procedures, made important contributions by processing smaller carefully selected corpora (1,329 and 914 words respectively). Relatively small corpuses, compiled following strict criteria, may lead to strong conclusions about specific aspects of English orthography—monosyllabic words, rhymes, vocalic unigraphs, etc. On the other hand, careful selection is not necessarily incompatible with a larger corpus. I am currently working on the design of scripts and automatic protocols that will hopefully increase

automatic processing and allow me to explore the "teachability" of a larger battery of rules—domain specific rules, overriding principles, unstressed syllables, digraphs, etc.—within a much larger corpus.

For the time being, we may hold with the conclusion that the ten basic post-nuclear general-systemic rules constitute, as a whole, teachable material; at least in terms of their frequency and regularity. However, ten basic rules might still be too many for instructors who are legitimately interested in the development of effective communicative skills rather than in the unveiling of peculiar fine-grained aspects of the English language to their students. Some of the research reviewed above points to possible unexpected advantages to grapho-phonemic training and this is a matter that requires further study. Would grapho-phonemic training aid vocabulary memorization and recall? Would it build up confidence in EFL students? Would it have a positive impact on the assimilation of the English phonological system? Would the development of grapho-phonemic competence correlate with an improvement in listening skills? Or oral skills? These and other related questions must be left for future exploration.

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Appendix. Full Data Concerning Regularity and Frequency

	PR-1					PR-6			
Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio	Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio
<a>	2	1	1	50%	<a>	61	54	7	88%
<e>	7	7	0	100%	<e>	102	100	2	98%
<i>	3	2	1	66%	<i>	85	78	7	91%
<y>	17	17	0	100%	<y>	1	1	0	100%
<o>	11	7	4	63%	<o>	66	59	7	89%
<u>	0	…	…	…	<u>	NA	NA	NA	NA
Totals	**40**	**34**	**6**	**85%**	**Totals**	**315**	**292**	**23**	**92%**
	PR-2.1					**PR-2.2**			
Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio	Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio
<a>	174	144	30	82%	<a>	163	149	14	91%
<e>	163	163	0	100%	<e>	217	214	3	98%
<i>	190	158	32	83%	<i>	148	141	7	95%
<y>	3	3	0	100%	<y>	8	8	0	100%
<o>	106	54	52	50%	<o>	105	80	25	76%
<u>	81	74	7	91%	<u>	83	76	7	91%
Totals	**717**	**596**	**121**	**83%**	**Totals**	**724**	**668**	**56**	**92%**
	PR-3.1					**PR-3.2**			
Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio	Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio
<a>	92	90	2	97%	<a>	193	140	53	72%
<e>	14	13	1	92%	<e>	69	31	38	44%
<i>	98	85	13	86%	<i>	106	32	74	30%
<y>	2	2	0	100%	<y>	3	2	1	66%
<o>	65	49	16	75%	<o>	100	51	49	51%
<u>	23	23	0	100%	<u>	69	57	12	82%
Totals	**294**	**262**	**32**	**89%**	**Totals**	**540**	**313**	**227**	**57%**
	PR-4.1					**PR-4.2**			
Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio	Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio
<a>	44	37	7	84%	<a>	34	33	1	97%
<e>	22	22	0	100%	<e>	32	32	0	100%
<i>	12	12	0	100%	<i>	7	7	0	100%
<y>	0	…	…	…	<y>	0	…	…	…
<o>	41	37	4	90%	<o>	43	41	2	95%
<u>	13	13	0	100%	<u>	15	15	0	100%
Totals	**132**	**121**	**11**	**91%**	**Totals**	**131**	**128**	**3**	**97%**
	PR-5.1					**PR-5.2**			
Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio	Domain	Items	Regular	Irregular	Ratio
<a>	16	16	0	100%	<a>	9	6	3	66%
<e>	7	5	2	71%	<e>	17	13	4	76%
<i>	11	11	0	100%	<i>	6	5	1	83%
<y>	0	…	…	…	<y>	0	…	…	…
<o>	11	11	0	100%	<o>	18	17	1	94%
<u>	7	7	0	100%	<u>	10	9	1	90%
Totals	**52**	**50**	**2**	**96%**	**Totals**	**60**	**50**	**10**	**83%**

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Enrique Cámara-Arenas is a lecturer and researcher in the English Philology Department at the University of Valladolid who specializes in the grapho-phonemics of the English language and pronunciation teaching methodologies. He is the author of *La vocal inglesa: correspondencias grafo-fonémicas* (Valladolid, 2010) and has designed a Native Cardinality Method for teaching English pronunciation to Spanish students of EFL—*Curso de pronunciación de la lengua inglesa para hispano-hablantes* (Valladolid, 2013).

Address: Departamento de Filología Inglesa. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Universidad de Valladolid. Plaza del Campus, s/n. 47011, Valladolid, Spain. Tel.: +34 983423747.

BOOK REVIEW ARTICLES

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Alliterative Metre and Medieval English Literary History. A Critical Review of

Eric Weiskott. 2016. *English Alliterative Verse: Poetic Tradition and Literary History*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. xiv + 239 pp. ISBN: 978-1-1071-6965-4.

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Rafael J. Pascual
University of Oxford
rafael.pascual@ell.ox.ac.uk

The years 2016 and 2017 have respectively witnessed the publication of two stimulating Cambridge University Press monographs on medieval English literary history: Eric Weiskott's *English Alliterative Verse: Poetic Tradition and Literary History* (2016) and Ian Cornelius's *Reconstructing Alliterative Verse: The Pursuit of a Medieval Meter* (2017). There is much that these two books have in common. They are both fashionably written, both have much to say about metre and, most importantly, they both take as their fundamental premise the notion of an uninterrupted tradition of alliterative poetry from the Old to the late Middle English period that excludes Ælfric of Eynsham's rhythmical-alliterative prose. In this regard, they run counter to the established opinion among literary historians, most of whom still adhere to the views set out by Norman Blake. In an influential essay published in 1969, Blake contended that fourteenth-century alliterative verse evolved not out of classical Old English poetry (which he believed to have died out soon after the Conquest), but out of the loose style of versification of early Middle English poets, the origin of which Blake in turn attributed to Ælfric's characteristic style. As several scholars have contended,[1] however, there are compelling lexical and metrical arguments both for a continuous tradition between Old and late Middle English alliterative verse, and for the exclusion of Ælfric's rhythmical prose from this tradition.[2] Scholars who find Blake's argument unconvincing, such as the present reviewer, will therefore welcome the opposition to that view presented by Weiskott and Cornelius.

[1] See, for example, Duncan (1992), Fulk (2004) and Russom (2004).
[2] On the categorisation of Ælfric's rhythmical style as prose rather than verse, see Pascual (2014).

Medieval English literary history is a field that interests many scholars, and yet there are few who are ready to undertake the arduous study of alliterative metre, which is so necessary for the successful practice of that discipline. Weiskott and Cornelius are to be praised for taking the bull by the horns and putting alliterative metre at the core of their literary-historical endeavours. Thus, the central argument that they both deploy in support of a continuous alliterative tradition is of a metrical nature. In particular, they argue that the metre of early Middle English poems of the thirteenth century—paradigmatically represented by La3amon's *Brut*—constitutes the intermediate evolutionary stage between classical Old English and fourteenth-century alliterative versification. Despite its chronological plausibility, this theory, which they have drawn from Nicolay Yakovlev's Oxford DPhil thesis (2008), is very problematic, mainly because of the strict metre and consistent alliteration of Old and late Middle English poetry, on the one hand, and the loose rhythms and irregular alliteration of works of early Middle English verse, on the other. There must certainly be a connection between classical Old English and fourteenth-century alliterative verse, but the idiosyncratic metrical style of La3amon's *Brut* and related works can hardly be the intermediate link between the two. Thus, laudable as their strong focus on metre is, Weiskott and Cornelius's commitment to Yakovlev's theory is, unfortunately, the source of major weaknesses in their argumentation. Before assessing these weaknesses in detail, however, it is worth providing a summary of what is unique to each of the two books under review.

Weiskott's book consists of an introduction and six chapters, amounting to 173 pages, plus a conclusion, three appendices, a useful glossary of technical terms, endnotes, bibliography and analytical index. Throughout the six chapters of his monograph, Weiskott alternates metrical analysis with the study of poetic style. His main claim about style is that poetry of the three periods concerned is characterised by adopting the same attitude towards the distant past (4). Taking *Beowulf* (chapter one), La3amon's *Brut* (chapter three) and *St. Erkenwald* (chapter five) as cases in point, Weiskott reaches the conclusion that what characterises alliterative verse of the three periods at a thematic level is the poets' deep interest for events far removed from the time when they were composing. This distinctive feature of alliterative verse, he contends, is substantiated by poetic prologues, which he regards as "exceptionally dense expressions of style" (4). He devises a typology of prologues to Old and Middle English poems (chapters two and four, respectively), identifying four main types for Old English verse (53) and another four for Middle English (108). Of these, the Old English "days-of-yore" and the Middle English "olde-tyme" prologues are especially pertinent to his argument. Since the chief concern of these two prologues is with the distant past, their presence in a significant number of Old and Middle English alliterative poems is taken to indicate not only that there is a continuous tradition of alliterative verse but also that fondness for the faraway past is its essential thematic feature (53, 117-118).

Weiskott's typology of prologues is a valuable contribution to the study of medieval English literature that furnishes a number of illuminating insights into the history of

alliterative verse. Late Middle English "olde-tyme" prologues to alliterative poems, for example, systematically use the word *sythen* ["since"], which is absent from the same type of prologue in non-alliterative works. The Old English ancestor of *sythen*, *siððan*, is regularly used in Old English verse, and so Weiskott, I think correctly, takes this regularity as an indication of the Old English origin of late Middle English alliterative poetry (117). It does not follow, however, that interest in events distant in time is the most distinctive thematic feature of the alliterative tradition. As Weiskott admits, the "olde-tyme" prologue, which he regards as the clearest indication of a poet's fondness for the faraway past, is more frequent in non-alliterative than in alliterative verse. He accounts for this difficulty as an instance of the influence of the alliterative tradition on non-alliterative poetry (117-118), but this explanation does not seem to be satisfactory. After all, Old English alliterative poems as prominent as *Guthlac A*, *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon* were composed not long after the events that they recount took place. It therefore seems to the present reviewer that Weiskott's characterisation of alliterative verse as essentially concerned with the distant past is motivated more by his desire to include Laȝamon, a historian, in the alliterative tradition than by a genuine willingness to capture a thematic reality of alliterative poetry. In fact, it would seem that the vast majority of oral-derived poetry in any language is primarily concerned with the distant past. Accordingly, interest in the distant past does not seem a particularly strong criterion for inclusion in the alliterative tradition.

Cornelius's monograph comprises an introduction and five chapters, which amount to 146 pages, plus an epilogue, endnotes, bibliography and analytical index. The author has accompanied the study of Old and Middle English metre with a chronological account of scholarship on English alliterative versification. He begins with a discussion of contemporary medieval references to alliterative metre, with particular emphasis on Gerald of Wales's twelfth-century comments on English poetry and Snorri Sturluson's thirteenth-century *Háttatal*, a description of Old Norse metrical forms (chapter one). He concludes that modern linguistics and philology furnish better frameworks for the analysis of alliterative metre than these medieval works. He then proceeds to discuss modern scholarly approaches (chapter two), with a special focus on the foundational work of Eduard Sievers, which has dominated the field since its appearance in the late nineteenth century (1885; 1893). Cornelius praises Sievers for the explanatory power that his theory brought to the study of alliterative versification, but he simultaneously criticises Sieversian metrics and its practitioners for overemphasising the role of prosodic stress in Old English metre. He urges that Sievers's outdated paradigm should be abandoned in favour of Yakovlev's new theory, according to which it is the morphological class of a given word, and not its degree of stress, that determines its metrical behaviour.

One corollary of Yakovlev's hypothesis is that differences in levels of stress—which have traditionally been accorded metrical significance—are irrelevant to Old English versification. A detailed critique of Yakovlev's theory would exceed the limits of this review, but readers of Cornelius's book should be alerted to the salient improbability of

Yakovlev's analysis. It has long been recognised that resolvable words evince different metrical behaviours depending on whether they receive primary or secondary stress. Words like *sele* ["hall"] and *draca* ["dragon"] always undergo resolution,[3] thereby occupying a single metrical position, if they receive primary stress, as in *Beowulf* 81b, *sele hlīfade* ["the hall towered"] (81b) and *draca morðre swealt* ["the dragon died from the assault"] (892b).[4] Under secondary stress, however, they can occupy either one or two positions depending on the etymological length of their inflectional endings.[5] Thus, in a verse like 715a, *goldsele gumena* ["golden hall of men"], *sele* undergoes resolution and hence fills a single position because its ending *-e* is etymologically short (*sele*, an *i*-stem, descends from prehistoric Old English **sæli*, with a short thematic *-i*).[6] In a verse like 2273a, *nacod nīðdraca* ["bare, violent dragon"], on the other hand, *draca* occupies two positions because of its *-a* ending, which was long in prehistoric Old English (*draca* derives from **drakō*).[7] Thus, contrary to Yakovlev's analysis, the degree of stress on certain words must play a fundamental role in regulating their metrical behaviour.

The systematic correspondence between resolution and etymological length under secondary stress, commonly referred to as Kaluza's law, confirms beyond reasonable doubt that Sievers's theory is not the outdated paradigm that Cornelius claims it to be. Sievers posited the occasional suspension of resolution under secondary stress only to preserve the integrity of what he considered to be the most basic rule of Old English poetic composition, the so-called four-position principle—according to which, a verse is metrical if it contains no more and no less than four positions. The verse *goldsele gumena* would consist of five positions if *sele* did not undergo resolution, and, complementarily, *nacod nīðdraca* would consist of only three if resolution of *draca* were not suspended.[8] Thus, etymological length was absent from Sievers's original formulation. It was only a few years after the publication of Sievers's work that Max Kaluza (1896) observed that whenever resolution must be invoked to preserve Sievers's scansion, a short ending is involved; and that whenever suspension of resolution is required, long endings

[3] Resolution is a process of syllabic equivalence whereby a short stressed syllable and its unstressed successor count metrically as a single long stressed syllable—that is, disyllables like *sĕle* and *drăca* can be metrically equivalent to monosyllables like *sǣl* and *dēor*. For dependable accounts of resolution, see Bliss (1962, 9) and Terasawa (2011, 30-31). Resolution can be understood as a way to render the rhythm of Old English verses less monotonous by breaking a monosyllabic lift into a disyllabic sequence: See the metrical section of J.R.R. Tolkien's prefatory remarks to C.L. Wrenn's revision of John R. Clark Hall's prose translation of *Beowulf* (1950, xxviii-xliii).

[4] All quotations from *Beowulf* are from the edition by R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (2008). These two verses scan / / \ x and / / x \, that is, types D1 and D4 respectively.

[5] For the etymological length of Old English inflectional endings, see Fulk (1992, 419-425; 2018, 79-87).

[6] The metrical structure of *goldsĕle gŭmena* is / \ / x, a type A2a with its half-lift realised by the resolved disyllabic sequence *sele*. The sequence *gŭme-* also occupies a single lift because of resolution.

[7] The verse *năcod nīðdrăca* scans / / \ x, a type D1 with the half-lift occupied by the unresolved short syllable *-dră-*. Note that the disyllable *năcod* is resolved and hence occupies a single position. For a full list of verses featuring either resolution or its suspension under secondary stress in *Beowulf*, see Bliss (1967, 27-30).

[8] That is, the metrical configurations of *goldsĕle gŭmena* and *năcod nīðdrăca* would respectively be / \ x / x and / / \ (both of them unmetrical) if resolution under secondary stress were not applied to the former instance and if it were not suspended in the latter.

are implicated in the process.[9] This can only mean, as R.D. Fulk first argued in *A History of Old English Meter* (1992, 26-27, 55-56, 60), that Sievers's assumptions about metrical variability under secondary stress must be correct, since they allowed Kaluza to detect an independent regularity that was not part of Sievers's original system.[10] It is regrettable that such a crucial insight into Old English metrical theory has simply been left out of consideration in Cornelius's discussion of the history of the discipline. Readers of his book should therefore take his account with a pinch of salt and be aware that new theories like Yakovlev's, which rejects Sievers's basic premise that stress levels possess metrical significance, cannot be correct. Sieversian scansion is demonstrably accurate, and so it remains the one valid paradigm for the study of Old English metre.[11]

The two books under review contain much that will command the attention of scholars specialising in the history of English alliterative metre. Weiskott, for example, adduces compelling metrical, syntactical and codicological evidence in support of the notion that fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century alliterating stanzaic poems like the *Awntyrs off Arthure*, which have been frequently considered to belong to the alliterative tradition, are not in reality part of that tradition (2016, 103-106). Cornelius carries out a detailed comparative analysis of the metrical styles of the formal and informal corpora of Middle English alliterative verse, taking *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as representative of the former corpus, and *Piers Plowman* B and *Piers the Plowman's Creed* as representative of the latter (2017, 104-129). He also accounts for the collapse of the alliterative tradition by arguing that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries audiences of alliterative poetry gradually reinterpreted it as featuring an anapaestic rhythmical structure (130-154). Most importantly, both books expound and elaborate on Yakovlev's theory of metrical evolution. As pointed out above, the kernel of this theory is that the metre of Laȝamon's *Brut* represents the intermediate stage between Old English metre and fourteenth-century alliterative versification. Of all the arguments advanced in these two books, this is the one that has the major implications for medieval English literary history. Accordingly, the remainder of this review will be concerned with assessing its reliability.

Both Old and late Middle English poetry evince the same regular pattern of alliteration across the line (Duggan 1986), and both of them strictly regulate unstressed syllables within the half-line (Cable 1988; Duggan 1988). Moreover, late Middle English verse possesses a rich inventory of poeticisms that are genetically derived from the poetic lexicon of Old English (Tolkien and Gordon 1967, 139). Early Middle English verse works, on the other hand, rely on alliteration only sporadically and do not regulate unstressed syllables in any conspicuous way—see, for example, Glowka (1984). Nor do they possess the large number of Old English-derived poetic words that can

[9] For more on Kaluza's law, see Neidorf and Pascual (2014).

[10] Fulk has also made this major point on several other occasions (1996, 6-7; 1997, 41-42; 2002, 335-341; 2007, 140-141).

[11] For recent work that corroborates the fundamental correctness of Sieversian metrics, see, for example, Neidorf (2016), Pascual (2013-2014; 2017a; forthcoming) and Terasawa (2016).

be found in fourteenth-century alliterative poetry (Fulk 2012, 132). For these reasons, some scholars hold the plausible theory that classical Old English verse evolved into late Middle English through an intermediate stage of oral composition that has left no written record behind—see, for example, Fulk (2004), Russom (2004) and Duncan (1992). From this point of view, the idiosyncratic prosody of the early Middle English works that have survived in writing is not representative of that lost mode of oral composition. Laȝamon and his contemporaries are best understood as literate innovators working outside the oral tradition of classical alliterative verse and relying on some of its most characteristic features, like alliteration, only occasionally (Pascual 2017b).

Weiskott and Cornelius both believe that early Middle English poetry has struck some scholars as idiosyncratic and non-traditional only because they have looked at it from the wrong perspective. Contrary to what past generations of metrists have maintained, they argue, building on Yakovlev's theory, that alliteration is not a structural feature of English alliterative versification. The inconsistent use of alliteration in the *Brut* and related works thus ceases to be an obstacle to the argument for their affiliation to the alliterative tradition. As Weiskott boldly claims, "[t]hroughout this study, I treat alliterative meter without reference to alliteration, which I regard as an ornament, not a metrical entity" (2016, 5). Although Cornelius puts it more cautiously—"I'm inclined to see alliteration as having a superficial relation to verse design" (37)—he nonetheless represents alliteration as a more or less optional marker of stress that is unrelated to metrical structure (59). This is an unwise stance for them to take, since alliteration is responsible for some metrical entities whose reality they explicitly acknowledge. One such entity is the long line, understood as a bipartite unit consisting of an on- and an off-verse. Given that Old English syntactic constituents are usually larger than poetic lines, it would have been impossible both for members of the audience and for modern editors of verse texts to ascertain the line's bipartite structure without the direction provided by its regular a(a)/ax alliterative scheme. Inasmuch as it is alliteration that gives reality to the line's bipartite configuration, it is plainly incongruous to accept the long line as a real entity of alliterative metre and simultaneously affirm that alliteration is unrelated to metrical structure.

Weiskott and Cornelius have also failed to notice that alliteration played a key role in determining the rhythmical possibilities of Old and late Middle English verses. The well-known rule of fourteenth-century alliterative poetry, according to which the second half-line must contain exactly one sequence of several unstressed syllables (or drop) immediately before or after the first lift, can be traced back to Old English practice. In classical Old English poetry, if a verse contains several unstressed syllables, these tend to accumulate in a single sequence either before the first alliterating lift of type B and C verses or immediately after the first lift of type A, in which case the second lift must alliterate (Duncan 1993). As a result, many Old English type A, B and C verses contain exactly one expanded drop immediately succeeded by an alliterating syllable. Why were expanded drops systematically placed before alliterating lifts? The simplest answer is that alliterating syllables, because of their heightened prosodic prominence, were able to

mitigate the diluting effect that several unstressed syllables would have had on the line had they not been clustered together immediately before them. Thus, the alliterative scheme of the line is to a large extent responsible for the rhythmical sequences adopted by Old English verses, and thus it is also ultimately responsible for the rhythms of late Middle English off-verses, which so clearly continue those found in Old English.

It is not difficult to see how verses with just one protracted drop became the norm in the second half of the line in late Middle English alliterative poetry. The increase in the number of function words that took place towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period must have had two direct consequences for poetic composition. First, the amount of type A, B and C verses with one expanded drop must have become significantly larger than it was in the poetry of the earlier period; and, second, it must have been impossible for traditional poets to avoid the composition of verses with new, non-classical rhythmical patterns. Because of the universal principle of closure, according to which the end of a metrical domain must be less complex than its beginning,[12] alliterative poets must have located the newer verse types in the first half-line, thereby displacing the recently increased number of canonical type A, B and C verses with one protracted drop to the second half. This means that traditional alliterative poetry of the early Middle English period must have evinced the greatest degree of asymmetry across the long line in the history of alliterative verse (Fulk 2004, 308). On the one hand, the on-verse accommodated rhythmical types that, on account of their innovative character, would not have scanned according to the rules of classical Old English poetry; while, on the other, the off-verse mainly featured rhythmical patterns with one protracted drop that, owing to the relative proximity in time to the Anglo-Saxon period, would have been almost identical to those found in classical eighth- and ninth-century Old English poetry.

La3amon's *Brut* and the other early Middle English verse works that survive in writing offer a very different picture. As Fulk has indicated (2004, 308), off-verses with more than one protracted drop are very frequent in other texts from the period, such as *The Grave* (16.7%), *The Soul's Address to the Body* (24%) and the *Brut* itself (16% in the first fifty complete lines of the text in MS Cotton Caligula A. IX). These figures are not very different from those for Ælfric's rhythmical prose (24%), which Weiskott and Cornelius correctly consider to be extraneous to the alliterative tradition. They try to overcome this difficulty by invoking the operation of resolution and the prefix licence—according to which, verbal prefixes and the negative particle *ne* are not counted by the metre. Their efforts are, however, unpersuasive. Some verses of the *Brut* with two expanded drops would certainly have only one if resolution is assumed to operate, but many others would lose their single protracted drop altogether, as Cornelius concedes (2017, 88-89).[13] To be sure, the prefix licence would slightly reduce

[12] See Hayes (1983, 373). For the operation of this principle in Old English verse, see, for example, Russom (1987, 49-50).

[13] The metre of the *Brut* is so irregular that it is in fact unlikely that either Weiskott or Cornelius could have conceived of the existence of resolution in La3amon's work were it not for its conspicuous and corroborated presence in Old English verse.

the number of verses with more than one protracted drop, but a considerable amount of them would still remain after its operation (90). This is not an insignificant obstacle to Weiskott's and Cornelius's argument, because off-verses with more than one expanded drop were prohibited in both Old and late Middle English poetry, and they must have been particularly disapproved of in the early Middle English period, when the second half-line became the obvious repository for the most traditional rhythmical types.

Thus, Weiskott's and Cornelius's commitment to Yakovlev's theory of metrical evolution renders their chronological account of English alliterative versification unreliable. As stated above, it is the long line's alliterative scheme that seems to be ultimately responsible for the readily discernible continuity of rhythms between Old English and fourteenth-century alliterative verse. Consequently, the sporadic and irregular use of alliteration in the *Brut* and related works, along with their concomitant rhythmically extravagant off-verses, is a clear indication that they do not belong to the classical tradition of alliterative composition. Readers of Weiskott's and Cornelius's books are therefore referred to the work of Fulk (2004) and Geoffrey Russom (2004) for a dependable account of the development of English alliterative metre. To end with a positive note, it should be mentioned that Cornelius's metrical analysis of the Middle English *Physiologus* points the way to potentially promising future research (2017, 96). He argues that this mid-thirteenth-century bestiary is characterised by an unusually high degree of rhythmical asymmetry across the line—precisely the feature that ought to have characterised the metre of classical early Middle English alliterative poetry. Remarkably, in an essay published in 1992, Edwin Duncan concluded that, owing to the rhythmical and alliterative affinities of the *Physiologus* to Old and late Middle English verse, this work should be considered a remnant of the otherwise unrecorded classical alliterative poetry of the early Middle English period. Scholars in search of the missing link between Old English and fourteenth-century alliterative versification would perform a valuable service to medieval English literary history by assessing the reliability of Duncan's theory—and they would do well not to neglect the relevance of alliteration to verse structure in the process.

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Rafael J. Pascual (PhD, Universidad de Granada, 2014) is a scholar of Old and Middle English language and literature. He is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Oxford. Before coming to Oxford, he was a Juan de la Cierva Research Fellow at the Universidad de Alicante and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Harvard University. He has published in journals such as *English Studies*, *Neophilologus*, *Studia Neophilologica* and *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*. He has contributed to the volume *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (Cambridge, 2014) and has coedited *Old English Philology: Studies in Honour of R.D. Fulk* (Cambridge, 2016).

Address: Faculty of English Language and Literature. St Cross Building, Manor Road. OX1 3UL, Oxford, England. Tel.: +44 1865 271055.

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The first page of each article must include a title plus a 100-200 word summary. The abstract should be written in an 11-point Times New Roman font, indented (0.5 cm) and positioned immediately before the body of the text. It should consist of one paragraph and contain no bibliographical reference in parenthetical form.

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Just after the abstract, append a list of up to six keywords, separated with semi-colons, so that your contribution can be accurately classified by international reference indexes. Do not use period at the end of the list of keywords.

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Manuscripts are to be submitted in English. Authors must consistently follow either British or American spelling conventions. A version or translation of the title, abstract and keywords in Spanish must be provided. For those contributors who do not handle Spanish the Editors will provide the translation.

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Address: Departamento de Filología Moderna. Facultad de Educación. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. Plaza de la Universidad, 3. 02071, Albacete, Spain. Tel.: +34 000000000; ext. 0000. Fax: +34 000000000.

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All manuscripts should follow the guidelines of the latest edition (now 16th edition) of the Chicago Manual of Style unless otherwise specified.

2.1. Format

The text should be submitted doubled-spaced. Use a 12-point Times New Roman font for the main text and an 11-point Times New Roman font for the abstract, footnotes and indented quotations.

The first line of each paragraph should be intended 0.5 cm (please use the indentation tool included in Word, not the tab key), with the exception of the first line in the first paragraph of each section. The first line of all footnotes should also be indented 0.5 cm.

2.2. Titles of contributions

Place them at the top and centre of the page on which the text begins. Capitalize only the first letter of the first word and all other significant words (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) as well as proper nouns. Always capitalize the last word. Do not use period after titles.

2.3. Textual divisions and headings
Section headings should be used with discretion. They must begin from the left margin, with no period at the end. Headings may be numbered. The use of Arabic numerals is recommended. If absolutely necessary, further division within a section should follow the same format used for section headings. They must be preceded by Arabic numerals separated by period (e.g., 1.1). Do not capitalize headings in full (only contents words should be in capital letters) and use small caps.

2.4. Tables, drawings and graphic items
Please avoid their proliferation, since it may result in an excessive number of pages. This could affect the eligibility of your work for publication. All tables and figures should be numbered consecutively and referred to by their numbers within the text (e.g., as we see in example/table/figure 1). Take into account that graphs must be clearly understood when printed in black and white.

2.5. Punctuation
All punctuation marks, except colon and semicolon, should precede closing quotation marks (e.g.,"the bookshelf," she replied).

Question marks (?) and exclamation marks (!) should not normally be used in scholarly writing unless they are part of a quotation.

Do not use commas (,) before "and" and "or" in a series of three or more. Never use a comma and a dash together.

Square brackets ([ ]) are used for an unavoidable parenthesis within a parenthesis, to enclose interpolations or comments in a quotation or incomplete data and to enclose phonetic transcription. Slash marks (/ /) are used to enclose phonemic transcription.

2.6. Numbers
Spell out whole numbers from zero to one hundred and numbers followed by *hundred*, *thousand*, *hundred thousand*, *million* or *billion*. Spell out all numbers beginning a sentence.

2.7. Dates
Centuries are spelled out and lowercased (the twenty-first century). Use standard dating (April 13, 1990). No comma is used between month and year when no day is given (May 1990).

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Use italics for emphasis or ironic sense (only when necessary), foreign words, technical terms and linguistic forms (words, phrases, letters) cited as examples or as subjects of discussion. Italicize titles of books, plays, periodicals, films, television and radio programmes, paintings, drawings, photographs, statues or other works of art.

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Double quotation marks (“ ”) are used to enclose quoted speech or writing when they are run into the text. They are also used for titles or articles, book chapters and poems. Do not use straight double quotation marks (" ").

For quotations within run-in quotations use single quotation marks (‘ ’).

2.11. Quotations

All quotations should correspond exactly with the originals in wording, spelling, capitalization and internal punctuation, indicating any change included—e.g., “this is for HER [my capitals] and you know it.” The italicizing of words for emphasis (use with discretion) or the modernizing of spelling should also be explicitly indicated. If the source contains a spelling error, insert the italicized word *sic* in square brackets ([*sic*]). Clarifications, as well as translations, must be enclosed in brackets—e.g., “He [Stephen Spender] is one of the finest poets Britain has ever produced.”

When using the author-date system, the reference of the quotation should always be placed at the end of the clause, before the punctuation mark—e.g., a “nice suggestion” (Russell 2016, 36).

2.12. Run-on and indented quotations

Unless special emphasis is required, prose quotations up to about 75 words should be run in the surrounding text. Longer quotations should be set off, indented (0.5 cm) and never enclosed in quotation marks. An 11-point font should be used.

Verse quotations of up to two lines should be run in, with the lines separated with a slash, leaving one space on either side (/). Longer verse quotations must be set off.

2.13. Ellipsis within quotations

Use three periods enclosed in brackets [. . .] to indicate that part of a quotation has been deleted. Avoid using this device to open or close quotations that are obviously complete syntactic fragments.

2.14. Em dash (—)
The use of em dash instead of parentheses is advised. Do not leave any space before or after them—e.g., haunting ghosts of the past—slavery and its legacy—to rest before a better future can be built.

2.15. Footnotes
These should be limited to authorial commentary that cannot be easily accommodated in the body of the text and their use is discouraged. They must not be used to give bibliographical references that can appear in parenthetical form within the text. They should be numbered, superscripted and placed after the closest punctuation mark. The first line of the footnote should be indented 0.5 cm.

2.16. Exemplification
If the author provides a list of examples including sentences they should be listed, indented (0.5 cm) and written in an 11-point font following the example:

(1) Hello my name is Charlie. My town is xxx. (S5b4P)
(2) Hello! Mr. and Mrs Edwards. I'm Julia and I live in xxx. (S210g5P)
(3) Hello family! My name is Berta and my surname is Santos. (S1g6P)

§ 3. Documenting sources
Do not forget to add to your list of works cited all the references you mention throughout the text. Bear in mind that specific page numbers must be provided for all quotations included.

Leave page numbers in full, not abbreviated. Do so for in-text citations—e.g., (Suedfell 1997, 849-861)—as well as for pages in the works cited list—e.g., *Political Psychology* 18 (4): 384-395.

Never use Latin reference tags (*op. cit.*, *ibidem*, etc.).

If you want to indicate that some information is missing you can use the following devices: n.p. for "no publisher"—where the publisher's name would appear in your entry—also for "no place of publication" and "no page"—e.g., online material without pagination. The use of n.d. is advised for "no date." If the author or editor is unknown, the entry should begin with the title of the publication.

Publishing company names are abbreviated in the list of works cited. Remove articles, business abbreviations (Co., Inc.) and descriptive words (Publishers and so on). Any university press will be abbreviated according to one of these two patterns: U of Miami P or Toronto UP.

Avoid giving initials for authors in your works cited. Full names should be provided when possible.

Two different types of documentation will be used: parenthetical in-text citations and a works cited list following the examples provided below. Other cases not included here must also follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (latest edition).

Books and book chapters

Books with single author:

Barnes, Julian. 1984. *Flaubert's Parrot*. London: Jonathan Cape.

(Barnes 1984, 38)

Several books by the same author (and same year of publication):

Samaddar, Ranabir. 1999a. *The Marginal Nation. Transborder Migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal*. Delhi: Sage.

—. 1999b. *Reflections on Partition in the East*. Kolkata: Vikas.

(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)

Burford, Barbara, Gabriela Pearse, Grace Nichols and Jackie Kay. 1988. *A Dangerous Knowing. Four Black Women Poets*. London: Sheba.

(Burford et al. 1988, 45)

Book by a corporate author:

American Cancer Society. 1987. *The Dangers of Ultra-Violet Rays*. Washington: ACS.

(American Cancer Society 1987)

Edited books:

Broadbent, John, ed. 1974. *Poets of the Seventeenth Century*. 2 vols. New York: New American Library.

If the same author appears as editor, list your references following the model:

O'Halloran, Kay. 2004. *Multimodal Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum.

—, ed. 2005. *Mathematical Discourse: Language, Symbolism and Visual Images.* London: Continuum.

Translations/editions:

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Translated by Michael Holquist and edited by Caryl Emerson. Austin: U of Texas P.

Second and successive editions:

Wiener, Martin J. 2004. *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Reprints:

Treharne, Elaine, ed. (2000) 2010. *Old and Middle English c. 890-c. 1450. An Anthology*. Reprint, Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell.

(Treharne [2000] 2010, 98)

Multivolume work:

Wiles, Rassele, ed. *The Complete Prose of Claus Rassele*. 9 vols. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

Rassele, Claus. 1959-1972. *The Eternal Fire. The Complete Prose of Claus Rassele*, edited by Randal Wiles, vol. 3. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

Book chapters or parts of a book:

Olsen, Tillie. 1977. "Tell Me a Riddle." In *Jewish-American Stories*, edited by Irving Howe, 82-117. New York: Mentor-NAL.

Berger, Samuel. 1983. Introduction to *International Terrorism*, by Morris Provis, xiv-xxii. Champaign: U of Illinois P.

Articles

Journal articles:

Pope, Marcel Cornis. 1990. "Poststructuralist Narratology and Critical Writing: A 'Figure in the Carpet' Textshop." *Journal of Narrative Technique* 20 (2): 245-265.

(Pope 1990, 247)

Journals consulted online:

Please DO NOT include any URL. Add, however, the date of access at the end. For example: [Accessed online on June 12, 2013].

Anderson, Jane. 2013. "Intertextual Strategies in Emma Tennant's *The Beautiful Child*." *Journal of Intertextual Studies* 76: 11-33. [Accessed online on November 25, 2015].

(Anderson 2013, 30)

Suedfeld, Peter. 1997. "Reactions to Societal Trauma: Distress and/or Eustress." *Political Psychology* 18 (4): 849-861.

(Suedfeld 1997, 860)

Newspaper articles/reviews:

Please DO NOT include any URL. Add, however, the access date [Accessed online on Month day, year] at the end followed by a period. If the web is no longer available, use [No longer available].

Banks, Sandra. 1986. "The Devil's on Our Radio." *People*, May 7, 72.

Smith, Ali. 2012. "Once upon a Life." *Observer*, May 29. [Accessed online on August 2, 2015].

(Smith 2012, n.p.)

Churchwell, Sara. 2012. Review of *Home*, by Toni Morrison. *Guardian*, April 27. [Accessed online on July 13, 2015].

Sorby, Angela. 2008. "A Woman in Saudi Arabia Chafes at Gender Restrictions." Review of *Songs of Ourselves: The Uses of Poetry in America*, by Joan Shelley Rubin. *American Historical Review* 113 (April 2008): 449-451.

Unpublished dissertations, theses and manuscripts:

Sandrei, Maria. 1990. "Life and Death in Eighteenth-Century Love Letters." PhD diss., University of Oviedo.

Vedrashko, Ilya. 2011. "Advertising in Computer Games." Master's thesis, University of Arizona.

Klein, Katherine. "Postmodern Literary Theory Revisited." Unpublished manuscript, last modified October 2, 2013, Microsoft Word file.

Lectures / papers presented at conferences:

Dunker, Patricia. "Salvage: On Writing Neo-Victorian Fiction." Lecture given at the AEDEAN Annual Conference, Málaga, November 2012.

Multimedia

Films, Cds, Dvds, Vhss:

Mehra, Rakeysh Omaprakash, dir. 2006. *Rang de Basanti*. ROMP and UTV Motion Pictures.

Cleese, John, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin. 2001. *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, special ed. DVD. Directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones. Culver City, CA: Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment.

Handel, George Frideric. 1988. *Messiah*. Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Chorus, Robert Shaw. Performed December 19, 1987. Ansonia Station, NY: Video Artists International. Videocassette (VHS), 141 min.

Online multimedia:

Please DO NOT include any URL Add, however, the access date [Accessed online on Month day, year] at the end followed by a period. If the web is no longer available, use [No longer available].

Pollan, Michael. 2007. "Michael Pollan Gives a Plant's-Eye View." Filmed March 2007. TED video, 17:31. [Accessed online on July 13, 2013].

Harwood, John. 2008. "The Pros and Cons of Biden." New York Times video, 2:00. August 23, 2008. [Accessed online on February 22, 2015].

Blogs:

Please DO NOT include any URL. Add, however, the access date [Accessed online on Month day, year] at the end followed by a period. If the web is no longer available, use [No longer available].

Flinders, Matthew. 2014. "Politics to Reconnect Communities." *OUPblog* (blog), April 2, 2014. [Accessed online on May 23, 2015].