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Néropolitains et Euro-Blacks de Tony Delsham: Imaginaires antillais et communauté transatlantique en devenir

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Abstract: L'écrivain martiniquais Tony Delsham qui jouit d'une forte popularité aux Antilles a jusqu'à présent été très peu étudié par la critique universitaire. Nous proposons dans cet essai de familiariser le lecteur avec une partie de l'œuvre de cet auteur à travers l'étude de *Néropolitains et Euro-Blacks* publié en 2000. Alors que la diaspora antillaise de France compte désormais plus de représentants qu'il n'y a d'Antillais outre-mer, Delsham propose une réflexion sur les conséquences de ce récent "transbord" concernant les idées d'identité, d'appartenance, et de communauté antillaises.

Keywords: Tony Delsham – diaspora - imaginaire antillais – Néropolitains - communauté transatlantique

Compte-tenu de la très grande popularité dont il jouit aux Antilles (Bongie 285-86), l'écrivain martiniquais Tony Delsham a jusqu'à présent été peu étudié par la critique universitaire¹. Se penchant sur les raisons de cette surprenante mise à l'écart, Chris Bongie explique que dans le champ littéraire de la littérature "antillaise" où l'esthétique d'une œuvre constitue le principal critère d'appréciation, Tony Delsham, à cause de ses textes fortement didactiques à la forme peu travaillée est considéré comme un piètre romancier (288). Les romans de

¹ Mis à part le travail de Chris Bongie sur lequel nous nous appuyons dans cette introduction, nous noterons l'essai de Françoise Naudillon intitulé "Mythographies d'Afrique dans le roman populaire antillais. *Filiations* de Tony Delsham" ou, plus proche de notre thématique, l'article "Odyssey of a Double Consciousness: Commonalities and Disjunctions in Contemporary French Caribbean and Réunionese Novels" dans lequel Priscilla Maunier analyse "how the commonalities in the experience of exile that bind the Antilles and the Mascarenes have shaped the characters' ways of thinking and being, and informed the narrative body of the texts studied" (169). Si *Néropolitains* fait partie de l'analyse comparative de Maunier, les références y sont malheureusement peu nombreuses. Notons que la perspective de l'exil de choisie par Maunier (le narrateur étant selon elle en situation de "temporary exile in Paris" (173)) nous semble problématique comme nous le verrons au cours de cet essai.

Delsham sont ainsi délaissés par la critique au profit de ceux de Patrick Chamoiseau ou de Raphaël Confiant qui possèdent des qualités littéraires mondialement reconnues. Au cours de sa discussion sur le futur des études postcoloniales francophones et la direction que celles-ci pourraient prendre à l'avenir, Chris Bongie, s'appuyant sur le travail de Robert J. C. Young sur la question², souligne les limites de la tendance actuelle inspirée des travaux des grandes figures de la théorie postcoloniale et en particulier son fondateur non-officiel, Edward Said. Cette tendance est caractérisée selon Bongie par la pratique d'un textualisme dépolitisé appliqué à une production littéraire élitiste, déconnectée des expériences du quotidien et des réalités géo-politiques (289). Si Robert J. C. Young questionne radicalement la pertinence de la littérature et son apport potentiel aux études postcoloniales, Bongie milite pour l'adoption d'une approche qui permettrait de conserver la critique littéraire comme outil d'analyse tout en tenant compte des dérives mises en avant par Young. L'approche préconisée par Bongie implique le besoin de reconsidérer la pertinence de la littérature dite populaire (ou "lowbrow"), jusqu'à présent jugée inapte, dont la réhabilitation, pourrait fournir un nouveau point de départ productif aux études postcoloniales. Les réflexions de Bongie confèrent donc au travail de Tony Delsham une toute autre dimension: utilisée principalement comme véhicule, la forme romanesque offre tout de même une liberté et des possibilités supérieures à celle de l'essai par exemple³, et permet à l'auteur d'articuler une pensée engagée émanant de son interprétation des réalités de l'expérience antillaise. Par conséquent, si la forme ne présente pas d'intérêt particulier, le fond du travail de Delsham ne devrait pas être négligé comme il l'a été jusqu'à présent. Nous proposons dans cet essai de familiariser le lecteur avec une partie de l'œuvre de cet écrivain à travers l'étude de *Négropolitains et Euro-Blacks*⁴ publié en 2000. Nous organiserons notre étude autour de plusieurs thèmes proposés par l'auteur qui découlent tous d'une réflexion sur les conséquences de la forte migration antillaise vers la métropole, migration qui a marqué la fin du XXe siècle. Nous nous pencherons donc sur: le travail sur l'imaginaire – en tant que poétique ou "manière de se concevoir, de concevoir son rapport à soi-même et à l'autre et de l'exprimer" comme le définit Glissant (*Introduction* 135) – que chaque Antillais "de France"⁵ (Audebert 14) doit accomplir, sur l'évolution de l'idée d'identité et d'appartenance antillaises liée au développement d'une diaspora désormais plus importante que la population antillaise d'outre-mer, et sur le thème de la communauté antillaise en devenir.

² Voir *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* de Young.

³ Sur le plan esthétique, seul le fait que le récit soit composé des rêves du narrateur est significatif.

⁴ Nous ferons désormais référence au roman par le diminutif *Négropolitains*.

⁵ Français d'origine antillaise (ayant au moins un parent antillais) nés dans l'Hexagone. Claude-Valentin Marie privilégie l'appellation "originaires des Antilles" ("Les Antillais en France").

Imaginaire diasporique antillais et identité antillaise évolutive

Robert, le narrateur de *Négropolitains*, est un psychiatre d'origine martiniquaise d'une quarantaine d'années qui vit depuis sa naissance à Paris. Le roman qui débute *in medias res* en Martinique est articulé autour de son étrange relation avec une jeune femme d'origine martiniquaise nommée Corinne. Cette dernière aborde le narrateur lors d'un voyage en Martinique et se comporte avec lui comme s'ils étaient amants depuis plusieurs années. Robert est convaincu de ne pas connaître Corinne mais décide de jouer le jeu en entrant dans la peau du personnage que la jeune femme lui impose. Il multiplie ensuite les rencontres avec des personnes qui semblent faire partie de sa vie sans qu'il ne les reconnaisse et commence à sérieusement douter de sa santé mentale. Robert tente alors de comprendre les raisons de ce qui est pour lui une incroyable méprise. Comme nous l'avons précisé le roman débute *in media res* en Martinique au moment de cette "rencontre". Le lecteur n'a ainsi aucun moyen, jusqu'au réveil du narrateur quelques pages avant la fin du roman, de comprendre que le récit est en fait la retranscription des rêves de Robert suite au délire dans lequel il a sombré pendant trois jours d'inconscience.

Robert et Corinne sont des Antillais de France en situation de crise identitaire imputable à une relation complexe et mal négociée vis-à-vis de leurs racines martiniquaises. Corinne, dont le nom de famille est Bumidom⁶, est caractérisée de manière archétypale par Delsham comme une Antillaise assimilée qui ne se considère pas noire et qui a intériorisé ce que Frantz Fanon appelle "le mythe du nègre" au cœur d'une idéologie coloniale fondée sur l'idée de hiérarchie raciale et culturelle. Corinne fait référence aux Antillais comme étant les "tarés de compatriotes" (39) de Robert, et non les siens. Elle qualifie la Martinique de "pays de merde" (40) et lorsque Robert l'invite à l'accompagner à la communion d'un membre de sa famille, la jeune femme répond qu'elle ne se rend jamais dans "des repères de nègres" (73). Delsham s'appuie sur l'analyse de Fanon dans *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) afin d'insister sur les cas d'aliénation et de dépersonnalisation qui peuvent affecter certains Antillais et qui sont, comme le rappelle ironiquement Robert, les conséquences de la "merveilleuse réussite du colonialisme français" (53). Nous retrouvons ainsi dans le cabinet du narrateur tous les symptômes liés à l'intériorisation des discours coloniaux racistes décrits par Fanon: des Antillais qui consultent Robert afin de comprendre les raisons qui les ont conduits à détester les Noirs, ou ceux qui cherchent à se blanchir la peau à la javel ou à se marier avec des Blancs ou des Mulâtres afin d'éclaircir celle de leurs futurs enfants.

⁶ En référence à l'organisme du même nom (acronyme de Bureau pour le développement des migrations dans les départements d'outre-mer) créé en 1961 par Michel Debré qui a organisé le départ pour la métropole d'environ 80 000 Antillais entre 1963 et 1981 pour combler les besoins du marché du travail français et solutionner la crise sociale antillaise (Voir Ndiaye 188-97 et "Migrations antillaises en métropole" de Stéphanie Condon).

Si Robert ne souffre pas d'une aliénation aussi totale que celle de Corinne ou de certains de ses patients, Delsham insiste sur le fait que l'imaginaire du narrateur présente également des failles témoignant d'un processus de construction identitaire au cours duquel l'acceptation de ses multiples appartenances et l'indispensable hybridation des différentes composantes qui composent son identité n'ont pas été réalisées. Le narrateur précise qu'il se considère "Euro-Black" mettant en évidence sa volonté de se distinguer des Antillais d'outre-mer⁷ qui n'inscrivent pas nécessairement leur destin dans l'Hexagone, et qui ont donc "d'autres préoccupations, d'autres objectifs" que les siens (130). Cédric Audebert voit dans l'utilisation du terme "Black" un symptôme de "l'émergence d'identités fantasmées que la mondialisation culturelle est capable de susciter via la circulation densifiée des idées et des images" (9). Il considère surtout cette auto-labellisation comme étant "uniformisante par la négation de l'héritage culturel et de la complexité identitaire de populations d'origines diverses" (9)⁸. Si, au contraire de Corinne, Robert assume son identité noire, il réalise qu'il ne s'est pas approprié la partie antillaise de sa subjectivité: la Martinique est pour lui une référence héritée et muette, une origine stérile vouée à un effacement progressif face à l'hégémonie de la culture française radicalisant progressivement par la même occasion son imaginaire. Ainsi, suite à une réflexion raciste de Corinne, Robert est choqué mais avoue qu'il pense pareillement... (43). Cette réalisation intervient lors de son premier séjour en Martinique pendant lequel il découvre "que [s]on pays d'origine n'était pas le socle solide dont la référence constante [l]'avait aidé à résister au racisme parisien" (17)⁹. Ce constat est dû au fait que les réalités de l'île – problèmes écologiques, violence et racisme – brisent la vision idéalisée de l'origine, nourrie en partie par les discours "distorted by the effects of distance and nostalgia" (Maunier 173) de ses parents, qu'il entretenait jusqu'alors: une vision "doudouiste"¹⁰ basée sur les charmes exotiques et autres clichés "cartes postales" qui caractérise l'imaginaire collectif métropolitain. Robert repart alors en métropole plus "perturbé que jamais" (16). Une fois rentré à Paris, il constate que les Euro-Blacks parisiens "fréquentent des Africains, des Arabes, des Polonais, des Russes, des Turcs, tous fiers de leurs origines. Ceux-là ne renient pas leur passé, ne tentent pas de se fondre dans la culture de l'autre" (54). Sans être en mesure de pouvoir l'articuler, Robert, qui

⁷ Antillais nés aux Antilles, qu'ils habitent toujours dans l'archipel ou qu'ils aient migré en métropole. Cette distinction est dictée par Delsham qui base son roman sur la fracture entre Antillais nés de part et d'autre de l'Atlantique.

⁸ Comme le souligne Harry Goulbourne, le facteur racial n'entrera peut-être bientôt plus en compte dans l'identité antillaise: "just as today Jewishness displays a range of racial types, Caribbean racial types will continue to be diverse, and ethnic identification may become more significant than racial identity" (18). Aujourd'hui déjà, être antillais ne signifie pas être noir.

⁹ A l'instar de Chamoiseau par exemple, Delsham utilise le terme "pays", acte de résistance face à l'assimilation de l'île en tant que département d'outre-mer.

¹⁰ Comme l'explique Patrick Chamoiseau dans *Écrire en pays dominé*, à la fin XIX^{ème} et début du XX^{ème} siècle, les poètes antillais, généralement mulâtres, présentaient alors des visions paradisiaques de leur île qui reproduisaient le regard des voyageurs occidentaux (51).

jusqu'alors“ ne [s]’intéressai[t] absolument pas aux Antilles” (164), éprouve un manque dont il prendra véritablement conscience et qui sera comblé lors de son second voyage en Martinique.

Pour ce second voyage, Robert est accompagné de ses parents qui, symboliquement, retournent sur leur île afin de s’occuper d’une affaire d’héritage familial. Durant ce séjour, Robert le narrateur part à la recherche de l’autre Robert, l’homme qu’il pense être celui que Corinne connaît et avec lequel elle le confond. Ce faisant, le narrateur part en réalité à la recherche de lui-même. Malgré la disparition progressive de la culture traditionnelle martiniquaise illustrée par le vol successif du bakoua de son père et du collier-choux de sa mère (chapeau et bijou traditionnels antillais), ce voyage permet au narrateur de découvrir une Martinique gardant des “traces de son empreinte”, c’est-à-dire une différence irréductible liant passé et futur qui subsiste encore et toujours sous la forme d’“une ambiance, une manière d’être, un art de vivre, une lutte permanente contre l’histoire imposée” (90). Cette reconquête identitaire se fait donc sur une modalité de recomposition culturelle qui nous renvoie au concept glissantien de pensée de la trace qui s’oppose à la pensée des systèmes, une “errance qui oriente” (*Traité* 18), qui fertilise l’étant tout en mettant en Relation. L’errance de Robert l’amène à rencontrer une jeune femme nommée Aiyoko qui personnifie son île d’origine, et avec laquelle Robert s’unit dans une scène d’amour figurant la communion entre le narrateur et ses racines créoles et pendant laquelle il affirme avoir l’impression “de naître” (122). Cette scène fait d’ailleurs écho à l’union physique de Robert avec le lieu Martinique rapporté lors de son premier voyage. Alors que Robert s’était endormi au pied d’un fromager, arbre représentant “la mémoire de ce pays” (18-19), une “étrange vision” (33) se présente à lui. Un homme sans âge surnommé papa Edwar, “le nègre de mémoire”, entreprend la reconstruction de la mémoire collective martiniquaise et offre ainsi au narrateur “an opportunity to experience Martinique’s past in order to understand its present” (Maunier 177) et la possibilité de commencer à combler ce “vide perturbant” (60) dans les fondations de son identité antillaise¹¹. Si papa Edwar ne réapparaît pas lors de ce second voyage, l’état d’esprit de Robert lui permet de se souvenir de tous les récits lus et entendus amenant “la mémoire antillaise” à courir “dans [s]es veines comme un sang vivifiant” (96).

Selon Stuart Hall, les identités des individus migrants sont définies par “the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*” (“Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 235). Hall précise également: “They must learn to inhabit at least two

¹¹ Le thème de la mémoire collective est au cœur du projet des auteurs de la créolité tels Patrick Chamoiseau et Raphaël Confiant. Nous verrons un peu plus tard la façon dont Delsham se distancie de ce mouvement. Nous pouvons déjà noter que le discours de papa Edwar contient une forte critique du rôle de la femme antillaise dans le processus d’aliénation identitaire antillaise, une position qui tranche avec les portraits de “dignes mères martyres” (de Souza 823) que l’on retrouve dans les romans de Chamoiseau et Confiant.

identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them” (‘Question’ 310). Dans *Négropolitains*, Delsham insiste sur la complexité de ce processus d’apprentissage pour les générations suivantes. L’auteur s’attache à répondre aux interrogations des jeunes Antillais de France qui “regardent [les adultes] les yeux agrandis d’interrogations” (77), tirillés entre la volonté d’appartenir pleinement à la nation française et celle de ne pas renier leur héritage créole – cette “difference-within-sameness” (Murdoch 122) – entrant en conflit avec le modèle républicain d’intégration basé sur le principe d’homogénéité culturelle. Delsham adopte le concept glissant de Détour qui implique de revenir “au point d’intrication, dont on s’était détourné par force . . . là [où] il faut à la fin mettre en œuvre les composantes de la Relation” (*Discours* 57), et insiste sur l’importance du voyage identitaire pour les Antillais de France —qu’il soit physique ou, insistons sur ce fait, imaginaire, le récit constitué des rêves du narrateur nous rappelant l’importance de l’“act of imaginative rediscovery” que Stuart Hall pose comme un des piliers de la constitution de l’identité culturelle (“Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 224)¹². Delsham propose aux Antillais de France un modèle hybride et émancipateur qui transcende la dimension raciale sur laquelle se concentre Fanon¹³ qui ne se penche pas “de façon spécifique sur les colonisés des Antilles française” (*Négropolitains* 36). Ce modèle se base sur la réappropriation de l’origine selon ses propres termes et de façon critique. Delsham réinscrit donc les Antilles au centre d’un processus performatif privilégiant créolisation et hybridité, processus dans lequel le legs culturel antillais, aussi différent qu’il puisse être pour chaque individu diasporique¹⁴, représente non pas un enfermement mais une assise culturelle non-absolue et le point de départ d’un système relationnel permettant de concilier de manière productive ses appartenances française et antillaise: réussir à “être Antillais hors des Antilles” (Marie, 36).

Personnage mineur à première vue car ne faisant qu’une apparition furtive, la caractérisation d’Aiyoko mentionnée ci-dessus est importante. La jeune femme refuse “d’être fondue dans l’autre au point de lui ressembler, au point d’être lui, dans ses prétentions et dans son exaltation de l’unicité” (175). Elle incarne une Martinique à la fois fantasmée et réelle résistante à l’assimilation culturelle française, et fournit également l’explication de l’étrange situation que vit Robert dans son rêve. Le narrateur constate ainsi que Corinne lui impose un passé qui n’est pas le sien, le vide de sa

¹² Lorsque le narrateur se réveille à la fin du roman, il décide de se rendre aux Antilles pour la première fois, sur les traces de son “vrai passé” (185). Delsham brouille les frontières entre rêve et réalité, entre imagination et imaginaire à travers un roman à la structure et au récit confus, à l’image de l’imaginaire de Robert.

¹³ Sachant que l’argument principal de l’essai demeure sans aucun doute le besoin d’effectuer le travail nécessaire à la réalisation et l’acceptation de sa condition d’homme noir, puis son dépassement afin de sortir d’un monde manichéen déterminé par la couleur de la peau.

¹⁴ La culture antillaise étant, comme toute autre culture, dynamique et composée de multiples facettes. Ce travail sur l’origine dépendra donc de modalités individuelles et concernera des aspects culturels spécifiques propres à chacun.

personnalité pour la remplacer par une autre (67). Robert indique également qu'il avait le sentiment qu'on le pousse à adopter les pensées et réaliser les actions de quelqu'un d'autre (137). Il est ainsi possible d'interpréter ce qui arrive à Robert comme un phénomène de dépersonnalisation, autrement dit une reproduction à l'échelle individuelle de l'aliénation imposée au peuple antillais pendant la colonisation puis l'assimilation de l'île en tant que département d'outre-mer: la "domination invisible" dénoncée par Patrick Chamoiseau entre autres¹⁵ que l'on retrouve aussi bien aux Antilles qu'en métropole.

Ce travail de dénonciation de l'oppression culturelle métropolitaine et de "réappropriation d'un bien longtemps délaissé" (*Négropolitains* 124) s'apparente au projet d'exploration du vécu réel antillais exalté par les auteurs de la créolité. Mais le roman de Delsham élude certaines des dérives associées à ce projet. Comme le souligne Pascale de Souza, "on ne peut faire abstraction de certaines tendances normatives dans leur discours" (824), et l'élaboration de modèles "contraignants tant d'un point de vue géographique qu'historique ou thématique" (825). Selon de Souza¹⁶, les romans de Patrick Chamoiseau ou de Raphaël Confiant présentent certaines contradictions avec les idéaux d'ouverture énoncés dans leurs travaux théoriques tel *Éloge de la créolité* (1989). Chamoiseau et Confiant auraient tendance à articuler un modèle normatif faisant des dépositaires de l'identité antillaise les "petites-gens" de la frange paysanne, descendant d'esclaves, enracinés dans une île formant un cadre spatio-temporel fixe et confrontés à une modernité menaçante. Dans *Négropolitains*, Delsham refuse ce modèle essentialiste et se rapproche du concept d'Antillanité élaboré par Édouard Glissant – dont la créolité se réclame malgré les constats énoncés ci-dessus qui ont poussé Glissant à prendre ses distances avec ce courant littéraire¹⁷. Ainsi, Delsham insère plusieurs références à Glissant dans les pages consacrées à la réappropriation de son origine par Robert qui, alors qu'il développe la forme d'osmose avec son environnement dont nous avons discuté, fait deux fois allusion à "la rivière" qui "se remettrait en place" (90, 98). Cette "fameuse rivière détournée et pleurée par le poète" (90) est celle autour de laquelle est construit le récit de *La Lézarde* (1958) de Glissant, roman fondateur de l'Antillanité. Comme le rappelle Mylène Priam, l'Antillanité de Glissant "defends the need to elaborate a poetics of proximity to Caribbean reality . . . that would go beyond Négritude" (81). Priam rappelle également que "associated with *antillanité* is the notion of relation" (81), "the desire to comprehend Martinican reality, not in an isolated, episodic, manner, but relationally, in the region and to the world" (81-82). Glissant théoriserait par la suite, à partir de *Poétique de la Relation* (1990), ses concepts de Relation et du Tout-monde lequel est basé sur l'idée d'un imaginaire d'ouverture entièrement

¹⁵ Voir notamment *Écrire en pays dominé* de Chamoiseau, mais aussi *Le discours antillais* d'Édouard Glissant.

¹⁶ Ou Patrick Corcoran, voir l'introduction de la partie consacrée à la Caraïbe dans *The Cambridge Introduction to Francophone Literature*.

¹⁷ Voir Corcoran, *ibid.*

délésté des notions de territoire et de racine et dans lequel la pensée de l'errance joue un rôle prépondérant: "de[s] projections vers la totalité-monde et de[s] retours sur soi alors qu'on est immobile, alors qu'on n'a pas bougé de son lieu" (*Introduction* 88). En conservant la primauté de l'origine dans le processus de construction identitaire tout en refusant la corrélation exclusive avec le territoire pour privilégier les projections transnationales par l'imaginaire, Delsham combine ces deux projets glissantiers et adapte cette dialectique aux réalités socio-démographiques de la population antillaise. Alors qu'Alain Anselin parlait dès 1990 de "troisième île" (*L'Émigration antillaise en France*), le nombre d'Antillais vivant en France continue de croître et représente aujourd'hui plus de 1% de la population française¹⁸. Delsham met en évidence le fait qu'avec une diaspora métropolitaine – Antillais d'outre-mer ayant migré et Antillais de France assumant et revendiquant leur hybridité culturelle¹⁹ – qui compte dorénavant autant de membres qu'il y a d'habitants dans les îles de la Martinique et de la Guadeloupe, l'identité antillaise doit être repensée. Celle-ci était, dans le projet des auteurs de la créolité, intrinsèquement associée à une relation physique avec le lieu qui était sujet à un processus de réappropriation complexe et continu en tant que cadre de vie²⁰. Delsham fait des Antilles un espace culturellement distinct, mais il refuse aux Antillais d'outre-mer l'exclusivité d'une identité culturelle²¹, et son corollaire d'appartenance, qui est avant tout selon lui une question de "positioning" (Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 225), de négociation personnelle de son origine et de son hybridité qui transcende la composante géographique et passe de plus en plus par l'imaginaire.

"Natifs-natals"²² et Antillais de France: identité antillaise en mouvement et communauté en devenir

Dans *Néropolitains*, Delsham délaisse l'analyse verticale basée sur les relations de pouvoir majorité-minorité pour l'approche "horizontale" préconisée par Françoise Lionnet et Shu-mei Shih en se concentrant sur le discours relationnel entre Antillais²³: la réflexion de l'auteur transcende la perspective individuelle pour aborder la dimension

¹⁸ Réjane Ereau fait état de 600 000 Antillais en région parisienne.

¹⁹ Comme l'explique Adlai Murdoch, le concept de diaspora prend une tournure particulière dans le contexte caribéen: "the history of the Caribbean and its people does not conform to traditional diasporic patterns of exile, dispersal and return" (23). Murdoch cite Brent Hayes Edwards qui précise qu'il faudrait concevoir cette diaspora "as a frame of cultural identity determined not through 'return' but through difference" (24).

²⁰ Travail qui demeure indispensable, notamment pour les jeunes générations. Voir l'analyse d'*Un dimanche au cachot* de Chamoiseau intitulée "Archéologie du cachot" de Lydie Moudileno.

²¹ Aussi plurielle, protéiforme et abstraite que puisse être cette notion, Stuart Hall nous rappelle qu'elle est "something - not a mere trick of the imagination" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 226).

²² Antillais nés aux Antilles.

²³ Voir l'introduction de *Minor Transnationalism*.

collective de l'expérience antillaise. Le thème de la communauté sous-tend le roman, mais Delsham ne fait usage de ce terme ("communauté") que deux fois dans le texte: la première ironiquement lors d'une énième anecdote concernant les dissensions entre Antillais, et la seconde dans le cadre métropolitain pour signaler le besoin qu'éprouve Robert de s'écarter de son atmosphère nocive due aux problèmes identitaires discutés dans la première partie. L'auteur hésite à employer un terme appliqué de façon trop générale et automatique et qui s'avère être prématuré dans le contexte antillais. Ainsi, deux passages en particulier illustrent le fait que les conditions indispensables sur le plan de l'imaginaire à la formation d'une communauté – la capacité et le désir de maintenir des contacts et la reconnaissance de ses affinités en tant qu'individus culturellement liés (Gowricharn 6) – ne sont pas remplies. Par conséquent la communauté antillaise, envisagée par Delsham de façon transatlantique en accord avec la spatialité fluctuante de l'univers antillais, demeure un projet en devenir.

L'attitude des Martiniquais envers Robert lors de son premier voyage (rêvé) aux Antilles est peu accueillante. Robert suscite "l'intérêt amusé et souvent condescendant des locaux" (14) chez qui son accent parisien et ses tentatives de parler créole provoquent systématiquement des moqueries. Partout où il se rend les quolibets "négropolitain"²⁴ et "negzagonal"²⁵ l'accompagnent. Lors du second voyage, l'expérience du narrateur est comme nous l'avons vu nettement plus productive. Mais le terme "négropolitain" lui est pourtant directement adressé pour la première fois (112). Ces sobriquets "péjoratif[s] avec volonté d'humilier" (119) visent à instaurer une séparation nette entre les Antillais d'outre-mer et de France, particulièrement les individus nés en métropole comme Robert dont l'hybridité est considérée comme une trahison, un reniement de leur identité antillaise originelle. Delsham critique cet essentialisme identitaire dont font preuve certains Antillais dans une scène faisant figurer une femme censée incarner cette créolité pure. Alors que Robert et Corinne sont à l'aéroport et s'appêtent à repartir vers la métropole, une femme demande à Robert de bien vouloir prendre une de ses valises afin qu'elle n'ait pas à payer de surplus de poids. Le narrateur hésite et Corinne en profite pour intervenir avec l'une de ses nombreuses tirades racistes: "Écoutez, madame, c'est justement pour ne pas emmerder les autres que nous ne tringalons pas des valises pleines de fruits-à-pain, de mangots, de rhum, de dachine, de piments, de ti-nin, toute cette bouffe de nègre que finalement on trouve à Paris" (43). Robert intervient et tente de calmer la situation en acceptant de prendre la valise car "il faut bien s'entraider" (43). La femme lui rétorque alors, en créole, qu'il n'est qu'un "Négropolitain" et qu'elle préfère s'adresser "à un vrai nègre des Antilles" (43). S'étant initialement adressé à lui en français, le passage au créole marque la distance qu'elle souhaite instaurer entre elle et Robert par l'intermédiaire d'un repli sur un élément culturel symbolique sensé signifier à ce dernier sa "non-antillanité". Les

²⁴ Contraction de nègre et métropolitain désignant les Antillais nés en métropole.

²⁵ Injure similaire, contraction de nègre et hexagonal en référence à l'Hexagone métropolitain.

conséquences de cette exclusion subie par Robert sont multiples. Le jeune homme se retrouve en situation de double marginalisation car le refuge imaginaire que constituait la Martinique face au racisme qu'il affronte en métropole vole en éclats²⁶. En plus de le priver de cet héritage culturel indispensable à la réalisation de son identité, cette scène déconstruit les mythes de "solidarité active" (10) et de "grande famille" (9) que Robert pensait trouver aux Antilles. Delsham représente la fracture qui existe entre Antillais de France et d'outre-mer en mettant en avant une incapacité voire un refus d'imaginer une pratique collective de l'identité antillaise qui suggère un devenir communautaire encore hypothétique pour les deux groupes.

La scène de l'aéroport est reproduite de manière quasi-identique à Paris, Delsham insistant sur les tensions entre Antillais nés outre-mer et en métropole résultant de ce qu'Adlai Murdoch appelle des "competing hierarchies of belonging" (47). Lors du baptême d'un petit cousin de Robert, une altercation éclate entre Claude, le père de l'enfant dont le baptême est célébré, et son frère. Malgré le fait qu'ils habitent en France depuis vingt ans, Claude et sa femme manifestent un "refus total de l'immigration" (71) et restent accrochés "à leur Bakoua et collier-choux" (71) qui symbolisent leur attachement à la culture traditionnelle antillaise²⁷. Claude reproche en particulier à son frère de ne pas avoir éduqué son fils Alain selon les traditions antillaises et donc, implicitement, d'avoir trahi ses origines et d'avoir fait de l'adolescent un "négropolitain". La dispute entre les deux frères n'est pas présentée comme portant à conséquence. Le narrateur nous explique que ces éclats sont en grande partie dus aux frustrations ressenties par les Antillais victimes en France d'un racisme qui se manifeste à travers "les contrôles policiers dans le métro" (77), "les regards condescendants des collègues de bureau (77), "le refus des racistes de [leur] louer un appartement" (77). Ce mélange d'impuissance et de colère ne pouvant être dirigé envers ceux qui perpétuent ces actes de peur de "leur arsenal répressif" (77), c'est sur leurs compagnons d'infortune que l'amertume rejaillit. Delsham propose à travers Claude un exemple de ce que Patrick Weil nomme un processus de "désidentification" (62) où la volonté d'appartenir à la nation finit par disparaître face aux multiples actes de marginalisation subis. Ce repli identitaire effectué par Claude s'accompagne de la sublimation et de l'essentialisation d'une identité culturelle antillaise mise en opposition avec celle métropolitaine à laquelle les Antillais de France sont associés. Dans cette scène, le créole est encore utilisé

²⁶ Priscilla Maunier identifie également cette double marginalisation qu'elle qualifie de "from within since he experiences rejection from the Martinican people and from outside because he cannot find his place in Paris", inversant l'"ordre" des appartenances de Robert attribué par Delsham. C'est notamment ici que la perspective de l'exil choisie par Maunier, qui explique que son but "is not to distinguish between exile, expatriation or emigration" (169), est problématique. Si la distinction entre ces termes, comme le souligne Mireille Rosello que cite Maunier, n'est peut-être pas nécessaire dans le cadre des Antilles (l'Afrique représentant désormais une origine lointaine), Delsham souligne à travers les différents imaginaires qu'ils représentent qu'elle devient significative dans un contexte transatlantique Antilles-France métropolitaine.

²⁷ Leur caractérisation est donc similaire à celle de la femme de l'aéroport.

comme élément de différenciation et de distanciation, cette fois-ci à l'encontre d'Alain qui se voit refuser l'accès à un élément culturel qu'il estime pourtant être aussi sien: "vous êtes toujours en train de parler créole entre vous, vous vous moquez de moi quand j'essaie de parler cette langue que vous dites celle de vos ancêtres, vous ne voulez pas que je la parle, vous voulez la garder pour vous" (74). Le père d'Alain renchérit, en faisant référence à son fils:

Deux fois déjà, il est parti aux Antilles, deux fois il en est revenu en larmes et complètement perturbé, vous ne l'avez même pas accueilli comme vous accueillez les zoreyes²⁸ que pourtant vous prétendez haïr, cela a été pire: vous l'avez rejeté, lui, votre frère ! Ici, à Paris, chez lui, il vient dans ce qu'il croit être sa famille et vous le rejetez également. (75)

Le comportement de Claude illustre ce que Michel Giraud appelle "l'inversion du stigmaté", la valorisation de la différence cause du rejet (Giraud 45). Giraud présente cette affirmation identitaire comme pouvant soit motiver un rassemblement communautaire autour d'une identité "emblématique" (Giraud 46), soit mener à un "enfermement ethnitaire" (47). Giraud, sans utiliser le terme, met en garde contre les potentielles dérives communautaristes auxquelles ces attitudes peuvent mener. Delsham propose une vision opposée en représentant une expérience antillaise, similairement à ce que Christine Chivallon²⁹ avait constaté dans le contexte britannique, "amputée du dynamisme collectif à l'œuvre chez les autres peuples diasporiques" (Chivallon 782).

Delsham ne fait pas abstraction du climat de racisme latent qui caractérise selon lui la France contemporaine. Ce climat forme le contexte dans lequel évoluent les personnages et n'est pas étranger aux tensions entre Antillais. Mais là encore Delsham se démarque des perspectives habituelles: il choisit d'aborder le thème de la communauté à travers une réflexion sur les imaginaires antillais transnationaux plutôt qu'un travail territorialement restreint qui se cantonnerait à une déconstruction du principe d'universalisme et ses corollaires d'assimilation et d'homogénéité culturelle rendant difficile, car soi-disant antirépublicain et menaçant pour l'unité nationale, la constitution de toute communauté sur le sol français³⁰. Delsham se focalise sur les difficultés de cohésion entre Antillais envisagées dans le contexte actuel de l'idée évolutive d'identité et d'appartenance antillaises: difficultés liées à l'imaginaire de certains Antillais de France, "arbres sans racine" (*Négropolitains*168), concernant le

²⁸ Terme désignant les Français métropolitains.

²⁹ Qui s'appuie sur le travail d'Alain Médam.

³⁰ Le racisme populaire latent est par contre au cœur d'un autre roman de Delsham, *Paris, il faut que tu saches...* publié quelques années plus tard (2007). Les événements du début des années 2000 — montée du Front National, émeutes dites "des banlieues" et loi sur les aspects positifs de la colonisation de 2005, etc... — semblent avoir poussé Delsham à engager ces thèmes de manière frontale.

processus complexe de réappropriation de l'origine dont nous avons discuté, et celles liées à l'imaginaire caractéristique de certains Antillais d'outre-mer qui s'arrogent l'exclusivité de l'identité créole au nom d'une pureté identitaire utopique – ce “centre dur ayant le monopole de l'identité” (Chivallon 786) qui remettrait en cause la possibilité et le bien-fondé d'une construction communautaire pour les Antillais.

Delsham présente les conséquences de ces clivages comme responsables de la “bouffée délirante” qui a envahi Robert pendant trois jours. Frantz Fanon développe dans *Peau noire, masques blancs* les origines des troubles identitaires qui affectent les Antillais en métropole et qui peuvent se traduire par “un écroulement du Moi” (Fanon 125). Concernant Robert, cette phase n'est pas arrivée lors du contact avec le monde blanc dont parle Fanon, le narrateur ayant grandi en métropole, mais au moment où “le terme néropolitain est apparu dans le vocabulaire des Antillais” (183). Ce rejet de la part de ses “propres frères” (183) qui l'ont “enfermé dans un concept” (183) a précipité la confusion mentale de Robert qui a été elle-même alimentée par les “fantômes” (184) de ses patients et leurs problèmes identitaires respectifs. C'est à ces raisons que Robert impute sa perte de connaissance et les étranges rêves/cauchemars qui l'ont hanté pendant ces trois jours d'inconscience.

Répondant indirectement à Christine Chivallon qui s'interroge sur la nécessité de penser l'identité antillaise à travers “l'idée de continuité et d'unité communautaires” (782), Delsham fustige le manque de solidarité qui caractérise les interactions entre Antillais en posant la réalisation d'une communauté antillaise comme un acte indispensable sur le plan premier, loin de toute stratégie de formalisation et d'institutionnalisation communautaire hâtive même si impérative dans un futur proche, de l'équilibre identitaire. À travers deux scènes clés situées de chaque côté de l'Atlantique et représentant des interactions problématiques entre Antillais de France et d'outre-mer et les conséquences de ce déchirement sur Robert, la connivence autour du facteur arbitraire mais décisif de l'origine commune est posée comme étant nécessaire à des individus formant de part et d'autre de l'océan des diasporas “flottantes” et “en voie de stabilisation” (Médam 59-60) pour qui l'importance du vecteur communautaire dans l'affirmation de soi est primordiale. Robert résume cela sous la forme d'un rappel qui sonne également comme un avertissement: “Déracinés d'Afrique pour former les Antilles ou déracinés des Antilles pour former les Euro-Blacks, nous sommes de la même famille. C'est cela l'important, dans une famille il peut y avoir des branches, mais il ne doit pas y avoir de cassure, jamais” (76).

Je regarde un pays comme Haïti... il y a l'île d'Haïti et puis toute la diaspora haïtienne. [...] on s'aperçoit qu'Haïti est éclaté sur le monde. Il y a à la fois la carte géographique et la carte de l'imaginaire et les Haïtiens sont partout. Haïti est déjà une méta-nation. (Chamoiseau et Chinién)

Négropolitains de Tony Delsham requiert la volonté– ou la capacité – de ne pas se focaliser uniquement sur l’aspect engagé du texte mais de s’ouvrir également à son côté engageant: quarante ans après son premier roman³¹, Delsham continue d’inviter le lecteur à partager son regard intérieur, mélange de chroniques et de réflexions théoriques aussi bien que personnelles, sur l’évolution accélérée des sociétés antillaises. Delsham part du constat que si la réalisation de l’inscription et de l’unité du peuple antillais dans le lieu demeure une intention tout juste esquissée, les Antilles deviennent pour la première fois de leur histoire une terre d’émigration. Claude-Valentin Marie souligne à ce propos que le second “transbord” initié par le BUMIDOM qui a inauguré la troisième phase de l’histoire antillaise appelle inévitablement à l’élaboration d’un nouveau projet identitaire fondé sur la capacité à “se penser d’ici et de là-bas” (36). A l’instar d’Haïti et de son importante diaspora (le “11^{ème} département”³²) qui privilégie l’idée d’une communauté imaginée de façon transnationale où le facteur territorial s’est progressivement dilué à la suite des vagues d’exils engendrées par les dictatures des Duvalier³³, Delsham prend acte de l’évolution de l’idée d’identité et d’appartenance antillaises en tant que concepts se déterritorialisant au fur et à mesure que la diaspora grandit. *Négropolitains* appelle par conséquent les Antillais à articuler des imaginaires en adéquation avec les réalités d’une identité culturelle labile et en mouvement, condition préalable à la réalisation d’une communauté antillaise qu’il représente comme nécessaire et dont le principal défi s’avère(ra) être sa capacité à se penser de façon transatlantique.

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³¹ *Le Salopard*. Paris: Presses de la Circe, 1971.

³² Le territoire d’Haïti est officiellement divisé en 10 départements.

³³ François Duvalier de 1957 à 1971 et Jean-Claude Duvalier de 1971 à 1986.

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Les pratiques de mendicité et le genre picaresque dans *Le Seigneur vous le rendra* de Mahi Binebine

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Abstract: Cet article a un double objectif. Le premier est d'examiner, à travers la narration du roman *Le Seigneur vous le rendra*, les pratiques de mendicité de la mère qui utilise son nourrisson pour demander l'aumône. La question est aussi de savoir ce qu'au Maroc représente l'aumône (*zakat*) qui constitue le quatrième pilier de l'Islam. Le deuxième objectif est de démontrer que *Le Seigneur vous le rendra* (2013) de Mahi Binebine, de narration "homodiégétique" (Genette), raconté du point de vue du mendiant nourrisson, bébé, enfant puis adulte, s'inscrit dans le genre de la littérature picaresque. L'auteur utilise un discours littéraire subversif pour distinguer les pratiques de mendicité basées sur la déformation visant à émouvoir de celles sur la mise en scène ou la performance dont le but est de distraire. Le narrateur, surnommé P'tit pain, met en cause l'ordre social établi et maintient sa détermination de survie.

Keywords: Mendicité – mère – nourrisson – religion – littérature picaresque – le Maghreb – Mahi Binebine

Dans *Cannibales* (1999), *Les étoiles de Sidi Moumen* (2010) et *Le Seigneur vous le rendra* (2013), Mahi Binebine¹ est souvent du côté des pauvres, des démunis et des moins que rien. Ce sont ces rejetés de la société qui habitent son esprit et le poussent à la création. Partout dans ces écrits, l'injustice sociale est la toile de fond, comme si chez l'auteur il ne pouvait y avoir de paix sans justice et cela donne à son œuvre, enracinée au Maroc, une portée universelle.

Pour écrire *Le seigneur vous le rendra*, une expression que les mendiants utilisent quand ils reçoivent une aumône des passants, Binebine s'inspire d'une histoire entendue dans les cafés de la grande place de Marrakech.² L'auteur part d'une source de nature

¹ Mahi Binebine est un artiste peintre et écrivain. C'est aussi le frère d'Aziz Binebine, l'un des survivants du bagne de Tazmamart que Tahar Ben Jelloun a interviewé pour l'écriture de son roman *Cette aveuglante absence de lumière*.

² Pour plus de détails sur ce que dit l'auteur de sa propre création littéraire et artistique, voir son entretien dans http://www.telquelonline.com/archives/414/interrogatoire_414.shtml

orale qu'il transcrit. La narration est à la première personne du singulier, "homodiégétique" (Genette 80). La plupart du temps, elle se passe dans la ville même, au milieu de la grande place³ où chaque soir se forment des cercles humains autour de leur conteur préféré. Cela donne aux lecteurs l'impression d'être sur cette place en train d'écouter le narrateur en personne raconter son histoire. Ce jeu subtil transcrit et transmis sous forme d'oralité donne à cette histoire une dimension de conte populaire. Par un jeu d'accumulation narrative (Al-Musawi 339) joué par tout à chacun, l'histoire commence sur la grande place, fait le tour de la médina, tombe dans l'oreille attentive de Binebine et devient un roman qui se lit, mais qui surtout s'entend, tout comme dans *Les mille et une nuits*.⁴

L'histoire dont il s'agit est hors du commun. Le narrateur raconte que dès sa naissance, sa mère l'emmailote, de jour comme de nuit. Elle le fait sur plusieurs années, avec le seul but de s'en servir dans sa mendicité, le plus longtemps possible. L'auteur se sert du phénomène de la mendicité des mères avec leurs enfants et raconte le Maroc invisible, effacé, oublié, au moment même où cette situation est très visible. Ces mères demandent l'aumône à plusieurs coins de rue, à la sortie de certaines mosquées, surtout aux portes des cimetières et dans des marchés grands ouverts. Peut-être aussi Binebine écrit-il métaphoriquement pour faire allusion aux peuples économiquement démunis et maintenus dans des états de dépendance économique continuelle.

Dans la relation mère-enfant, l'auteur fait le portrait d'une mère qui joue le rôle inverse. Elle cherche à maintenir son nourrisson bébé. Pour ce faire, elle l'emmailote et le momifie dans des bandelettes qu'elle serre fortement sur son petit corps. Elle contrôle son alimentation pour éviter toute croissance. Cette fixation de la mère sur la déformation du corps de l'enfant semble avoir comme origine la mort de son mari qui a sauté "sur une mine au Sahara" (Binebine 17). Veuve, enceinte, sans aucune économie, vivant dans un logement insalubre avec cinq enfants à charge, elle ne peut joindre les deux bouts. La pension qu'elle reçoit pour la perte de son mari est dérisoire. Elle décide de générer des revenus en forçant ses enfants à travailler.⁵ Les deux filles Hind et Naoual sont placées comme "domestiques chez des nantis des beaux quartiers" (Binebine 18). Elle achète à Tachfine une boîte de cirage à chaussures. À Omar et à Ali qui sont jumeaux, elle demande d'être prêts à tout faire en trainant sur la grande place

³ Il s'agit de la place de Jemaa el fnaa de la médina de Marrakech. Dans *jemaa*, qui est un terme arabe, il y a la racine du verbe réunir, un acte qui peut se faire aussi sur une place et dans *el fnaa*, il y a la racine du verbe annihiler. Les deux termes réunis peuvent signifier la place de l'annihilation, de la destruction totale, de la fin du monde.

⁴ L'origine des *mille et une nuits* remonte à un roi hindou : le développement et la transcription en arabe en forme de tablette a commencé au dixième siècle à Bagdad (Muhsin J. Al-Musawi, 339).

⁵ Dans le quotidien *Anjourd'hui* daté du 13/06/2013, Leila Zerrouar, dans son article sur "Les mesures légales contre le travail des enfants au Maroc," rappelle que le pays a ratifié deux conventions internationales qui interdisent le travail des enfants, la convention 138 et 182. Elle ajoute que le code punit "d'une amende de 25.000 à 30.000 DH tout employeur qui engage un salarié mineur de moins de 15 ans."

de Jamaa el fnaa. Quand le nouveau-né arrive, elle l'emmailote des pieds au cou et soit le met dans son giron pour demander l'aumône, soit le loue aux autres femmes à la journée.⁶

Cette pratique de mendicité répond à l'appel lancé aux croyants de pratiquer la charité,⁷ la *sadaka*, et surtout l'aumône, la *zakat*, qui constitue le quatrième pilier de l'Islam. Le terme veut dire purifier ou augmenter selon des calculs précis et des procédés de distribution explicites. La *zakat* est différente de la charité la *sadaka* qui, elle, est spontanée et occasionnelle (Ed van Hoven 74). Au Maroc, la *zakat* n'est pas institutionnalisée comme elle est au Soudan ou au Pakistan. Les individus sont libres de donner ou non (Benthall 29) et la *zakat* doit être faite à ceux qui sont dans le besoin, discrètement. "Une mère avec un bébé dans les bras compose un tableau attendrissant. Il y a du sacré là dedans" (Binebine 62), souligne le narrateur.

L'aumône tout comme la charité sont des dons qui n'impliquent aucune dette. "Ô vous qui croyez ! Faites l'aumône des meilleures choses que vous avez acquises"⁸ (Coran 2.267). De plus dans un Hadith, où Allah parle par la voix du Prophète, Allah dit : "Je n'accepte la prière que de celui . . . qui est compatissant envers le pauvre, le nécessiteux, la veuve et l'homme éprouvé"⁹ (Al-Bazzâr). Les pratiques de mendicité de la mère transgressent la loi pénale marocaine, mais sont en harmonie avec ses croyances religieuses. Pour faire l'aumône, il faut les nécessiteux. La boucle est bouclée. Le cercle vicieux, où le narrateur se trouve, se complique en s'élargissant. Les autres mères mendiantes s'arrachent les services de ce faux nourrisson que sa mère loue "quarante dirhams la journée" (Binebine 15) au lieu de vingt. Mais ce plan macabre est menacé parce que le nourrisson ne peut rester nourrisson à vie. Alors la mère le serre de plus en plus fort, non dans ses bras, mais dans des bandelettes élastiques des orteils au cou, en épargnant les mains.

Si les pratiques de mendicité ont un sens dans le cadre religieux, ce que la mère fait subir à son fils relève du pathologique. Invisible, la mère devient soudainement visible. Elle choisit la déformation de son nourrisson pour émouvoir les passants et surtout pour se faire remarquer. La société paie sa dette de façon indirecte envers la mère oubliée par tous y compris par l'état. Dans ce contexte de misère affolante, au lieu d'adoucir le choc de l'arrachement que le nouveau né subit à la naissance, la mère l'accentue. Au lieu d'apporter les premiers soins nécessaires à son bébé, elle fait tout

⁶ Le code pénal marocain stipule des peines d'emprisonnement d'un à six mois contre "quiconque, ayant des moyens de subsistance ou étant en mesure de se les procurer par le travail ou de toute autre manière licite, [qui] se livre habituellement à la mendicité, en quelque lieu que ce soit ." La loi est plus sévère avec ceux qui utilisent les enfants (Ali, Siham, *Magharebia*, 17/08/2009)

⁷ Le même appel est aussi présent dans le judaïsme ainsi que dans la chrétienté.

⁸ Cité par Mohammed Yacine Kassab, dans *Recueil des traditions de Sahib d'el Bokhari*, tome 2 p, 5 en ligne.

⁹ Rapporté par Al-Bazzâr, dans *Les piliers de l'Islam et les principes de la morale*, sajidine.com.

pour le déformer. Elle bloque son développement en l'emmaillotant. Privé de toute affection, le nourrisson est à peine nourri. La mère ne s'interdit que de le tuer.

Selon René Girard, "les interdits ont une fonction primordiale; ils réservent au cœur des communautés humaines une zone protégée, un minimum de non-violence absolument indispensable aux fonctions essentielles, à la survie des enfants" (Girard 323). Le nourrisson survit dans un maximum de violence. Le désir de la mère d'attirer l'attention sur elle et sur sa situation précaire est similaire au désir du nouveau né de grandir. Elle, tout comme lui, cherche la même chose, mais dans cette situation de mimétisme, la réalisation du désir de la mère passe par le maintien de son enfant dans un état inachevé. Elle ne veut pas l'anéantir, mettre fin à sa vie, mais elle veut le déformer pour s'en servir dans sa pratique de mendicité. Il s'agit d'une relation mère-enfant violente et chaotique, vidée de toute douceur,¹⁰ barbare, où le parent agit de façon violente totalement consciemment.

Cette relation est par ailleurs parfaitement intégrée, non seulement au déséquilibre psychique de la mère, mais surtout à ses affaires de mendicité. L'un se nourrit de l'autre. Pour elle, l'enfant n'est qu'un corps, un moyen pour arriver à ses fins. À trois ans, toujours ficelé, sa tête n'est "guère plus grosse qu'un pamplemousse" (Binebine 26). Cela donne l'impression aux passants qu'il s'agit d'une anomalie venant de Dieu et dont ils peuvent se protéger en faisant la charité. Dans ce don où le passant n'attend rien de la mère, il s'attend à quelque chose en retour du seigneur. Selon cette croyance, les relations entre les mendiants et les donateurs sont des relations d'affaires à la fois hors et dans ce monde. L'ensemble est renforcé par des formulations langagières précises qui renvoient à la puissance du seigneur et à son paradis éternel. Pour chaque donneur, "ma mère provisoire intervient, débitant toute une tirade sur les récompenses qui l'attendent au paradis, implorant Dieu de préserver ses enfants d'un sort semblable au mien" (17), dit le narrateur.

Dans *Le seigneur vous le rendra*, les rapports humains sont aussi durs que tendres. L'auteur remplit la métaphore du corps momifié d'éléments réels. Elle est constituée de plusieurs histoires, toutes au service de cette relation pathologique entre la mère et son enfant. C'est dans cette réalité confuse, absurde que l'auteur crée en cherchant du sens. Bien que métaphoriquement la nation puisse remplacer la mère, le peuple l'enfant, l'oppression l'emmaillotage, il serait simpliste de réduire les complexités des enjeux entre les nations et au sein des nations à la métaphore du corps momifié. En revanche, il est possible de souligner que dans les sociétés monothéistes, il y a une incitation à faire l'aumône, une tradition de la charité, qui ne peut se justifier que s'il y a des mendiants. À travers les donations, voire les dettes, se construisent les relations de domination, se

¹⁰ Anne Dufourmantelle, dans *Puissance de la douceur*, souligne que "La douceur vient avec la possibilité de la vie, avec l'enveloppe utérine qui filtre émotions, sons et pensées, avec l'eau amniotique, avec le toucher à l'envers de la peau, avec les yeux fermés qui ne voient pas encore, avec la respiration encore protégée des agressions de l'air. Sans la douceur de ce toucher originel nous ne serions pas au monde" (133). Peut-être cette douceur-là va-t-elle sauver le narrateur ?

renforcent les rapports aux moyens d'existence au sein de la production, au sens le plus large du terme, et se maintiennent des paix sociales relatives.¹¹ Chez les individus qui agissent et interagissent entre eux, les ruptures avec un passé individuel ou collectif peuvent l'emporter sur les continuités. Chez l'auteur, le narrateur subit et construit son histoire en même temps.

Même s'il est emmailloté, voire momifié, le bébé est déterminé à pousser. Il affirme : "envers et contre tout je me développais. Et plus Mère m'observait, plus l'angoisse de me voir grandir la tenaillait" (Binebine 26). À quatre ans, lors d'une procédure de momification, alors que le narrateur ne parle toujours pas, il lance : "tu me fais mal, Maman !" (35). La mère secouée n'arrive pas à le croire, mais elle ne dit rien et le narrateur ajoute dans un langage parfaitement clair et articulé : "Desserre un peu, je n'arrive plus à respirer" (Binebine 35). Pour la mère, le développement du langage chez son fils menace son commerce de mendicité, elle décide que "la tétine ne devait en aucun cas quitter mes lèvres" (36), dit-il.

Le narrateur momifié est maintenant loué à la journée qu'il passe dans le giron de sa mère temporaire. Avec son "visage aux traits affirmés" (Binebine 37), mais dans le corps d'un bébé, il réussit à émouvoir les passants. De plus, il invente un spectacle en jonglant par un simple mouvement de tête d'une tétine à l'autre, toutes attachées à un collier qu'il porte "en sautoir" (Binebine 36). Le numéro plaît aux enfants, aux adultes, à "une télévision étrangère en tournage sur la Grande-Place" (37) et même à un photographe de grande renommée. L'expression selon laquelle les malheurs des uns font le bonheur des autres trouve ici tout son sens. Toutefois, elle dissimule la durée des deux sentiments qui sont opposés en les plaçant sur un même registre temporel, or le temps des malheurs est lent – il dure longtemps -- alors que le bonheur ne se vit qu'un instant.

Les affaires de l'écran couleur, de l'image à sensation, tournent bien pour la mère. Mais à l'âge de cinq ans les "gens ne pouvaient plus soutenir la vue de cette image, devenue rebutante" (Binebine 46), souligne le narrateur. Le spectacle de la tétine d'un bébé/enfant dans le giron de la mère arrive à sa fin, c'est la crise. Il faut donc innover, inventer quelque chose d'autre. Selon la mère, quelqu'un lui veut du mal, lui jette un mauvais sort. Entrent en jeu alors les marabouts, les sorciers, un faux griot et bien qu'ils ne soient pas la raison directe du dénouement de la situation, ils y sont pour quelque chose. L'un d'eux prescrit une sorte de portion magique qui s'avère dangereuse pour la vie du narrateur. Il perd du poids et s'approche de la mort. La mère qui le veut vivant le libère temporairement des bandelettes, de la momification et se met à le nourrir. Un jour, il lui dit : "montre-leur ce qu'ils n'ont jamais vu...Tu m'entends : nous avons de l'or caché sous ces bandes !" (Binebine 53).

¹¹ Ces rapports sont aliénés parce qu'ils sont basés sur de fausses représentations, sur le reflet des ombres comme dans la caverne de Platon.

La mère achète un fauteuil roulant au marché aux puces, place le narrateur dedans et confie la mission à son autre fils, Tachfine. Sur la Grande-Place, le narrateur, ayant une liberté de mouvement, met en scène un redoutable numéro centré sur sa relation à la tétine. Cette fois-ci, pour passer d'une tétine à une autre, il fait jouer ses orteils. Cela plaît: une nouvelle existence où affirme-t-il, il devient "un centre d'intérêt admiré, respecté" commence (Binebine 58). Le narrateur passe de l'école de sa mère où la mendicité est essentiellement basée sur la déformation et l'émotion à celle où la déformation est mise en scène dans un spectacle étrange.¹² Le tout se passe dans un monde où sévit la violence. Un jour, Tachfine se fait violer. Un autre, Omar écope de cinq ans de prison pour avoir saigné d'un coup de couteau le violeur de son frère.

Si la violence de l'extérieur a un sens, celle subie à l'intérieur n'en a aucun. Quand un jour la mère surprend le narrateur en train de marcher, au lieu de le "prendre avec effusion dans ses bras" (Binebine 79), se souvient-elle, elle bat Tachfine pour l'avoir laissé en liberté, pour l'avoir aidé à marcher. Encore une fois, la mère perçoit, après le langage, l'apprentissage de la marche de son enfant comme une menace envers son commerce de mendicité. Elle veut l'enfant à jamais inachevé, déformé. Mais cet enfant veut grimper l'échelle de la vie et sortir de la situation dans laquelle celle censée le protéger est en train de le détruire. Par beaucoup d'aspects, le roman s'inscrit dans le genre picaresque. Beaucoup d'ingrédients de ce genre y sont mis à profit.

Le genre picaresque raconte l'histoire du désordre social et de la désintégration psychique (William Granara 41-46). Le désordre social dans ce roman est provoqué par la mort dans une guerre d'un père soldat laissant derrière lui une femme et six enfants que l'état ne prend que très partiellement en charge. La mère, dans sa relation avec son nouveau-né, représente toute la désintégration psychique qui s'en suit. La narration homodiégétique du point de vue du personnage central est poussée à l'extrême. Le nourrisson est en charge de son histoire qui commence à sa naissance. Il dit tout au début du roman: "Aucun avorton loué en médina n'était aussi lucratif que moi" (Binebine 9). D'emblée le lecteur est en immersion totale dans le point de vue du narrateur que les artisans de la place où il se sent "choyé" surnomment "P'tit-pain" (90).

Le lecteur ressent et perçoit ce que le narrateur raconte à la manière d'une autobiographie pure, comme chez Mohamed Choukri dans *Le pain nu*,¹³ mais c'est ici une autobiographie fictionnelle. L'une comme l'autre sert à distinguer le protagoniste picaresque des autres personnages de l'histoire. "P'tit-pain" n'agit pas, il parle ou plutôt, il agit en parlant (Ignacio F. Rodeno Iturriaga 167). Il occupe la place centrale jonchée de crises. Il en résout une pour être aussitôt confronté à une autre. Il est à la fois dans l'improvisation et dans l'anticipation. De son contexte de momifié et de ce qui en découle comme déformation physique, il identifie les opportunités qu'il transforme en

¹² Albert Cossery, dans *Mendiants et orgueilleux* et en partie dans *Les couleurs de l'infamie*, abordent les différentes pratiques de mendicité.

¹³ *Le pain nu* est aussi sur le chaos social et la désintégration psychique.

possibilités. Il est en permanence en train d'innover dans sa pratique de mendicité. Il réussit à être rentable pour sa mère, à donner un sens à ses propres actions et à rester relativement maître de son histoire.

Comme les protagonistes picaresques, P'tit-pain vit dans la rue où il construit son histoire d'initiation à la vie. Il la narre de façon sarcastique dominée par la dérision, mais fortement articulée (Ignacio F. Rodeno Iturriaga 167). Il déclare qu'il se sent sur son fauteuil roulant come un "roi sur son trône. Le roi des manchots, des béquillards, des aveugles et des éclopés, le roi de la lie de la Grande-Place" (Binebine 54). En ville, il respire, dit-il "l'air délicieusement polluée de la médina" (54). Sur son frère Tachfine, il ironise qu'il s'occupe de "la comptabilité" (89) de son frère Omar, qui organise sur la Grande-Place des paris entre boxeurs d'un instant. Pour se donner à ce travail de comptable, Tachfine laisse le narrateur non loin du ring en lui annonçant qu'il part au "bureau" (90). Quand il n'est ni comptable, ni au bureau, il occupe "le titre prestigieux de chauffeur !" (54) du narrateur, qui est toujours engoncé dans son fauteuil roulant.

P'tit pain utilise dans le même paragraphe des mots tels que "le roi," "le comptable," "le bureau," "le chauffeur," "le fauteuil roulant," mais il les charge de connotations dérisoires, ridicules. Le décalage ainsi obtenu retient l'attention du lecteur, lui donne plusieurs perspectives imagées et lui permet de contraster. L'utilisation de ce langage, autant articulé qu'ironique, donne au narrateur la force de surpasser le dilemme de sa vie. Il expose ainsi, dans des mots familiers, ce que les responsables de l'ordre social établi ne veulent guère voir. Dans cette double mission, le narrateur est d'autant plus efficace qu'il peut passer "du baragouin de bébé à un langage d'adulte intelligible et sensé" (Binebine 74). Cela ne peut passer inaperçu.

De plus, dans le genre picaresque, le narrateur varie son langage selon la circonstance. Il est direct quand il parle de Hadda, "ce petit bout de femme" (Binebine 60), qui fume "du kif" (61) et qui boit de "l'alcool à brûler" (61) sur la Grande-Place, qui est "la première à nous adopter" (61), annonce le narrateur. Elle l'initie à la dureté de la vie dans la rue. Elle le protège. Ba Blal, le vieil esclave vendeur "de bottes de persil et de coriandre entassées devant lui" (90), l'initie quant à lui à la mémoire et à la sagesse populaire. "Ne maudis jamais tes malheurs, il se peut qu'ils te soient bénéfiques" (Binebine 149), lui dit-il.

L'initiation la plus noble, à la lecture, à l'écriture et aux beaux arts vient de M. Salvador, un professeur espagnol, homosexuel,¹⁴ retraité à Marrakech, avec qui habite Ali, le frère du narrateur. Sous forme de dialogue qui sert à avancer la narration plutôt qu'à donner une représentation sur un événement ou une situation, Ali annonce au narrateur : "M. Salvador se propose de s'occuper de toi deux à trois heures par jour" (Binebine 107). "Il voudrait t'apprendre à lire, écrire et compter" (107), précise-t-il. De

¹⁴ Ce thème d'homosexualité est présent dans *Partir* de Tahar Ben Jelloun. Le roman a aussi tous les ingrédients du genre littéraire picaresque.

sa situation d'analphabète, P'tit pain mesurant quatre-vingt centimètres, annonce : "En un temps record, j'appris à lire et à écrire" (115). Sa vie bascule. Maintenant, il se retrouve dans "une vie de schizophrène où la richesse flirtait avec la misère, l'ignorance crasse avec la haute culture" (117).

A quatorze ans, il reçoit son premier cadeau à son premier anniversaire fêté. M. Salvador lui offre un cahier qui se ferme par un cadenas. Il lui dit : "ceci est un journal intime, tu pourras y consigner tes secrets en toute sécurité" (Binebine 121). Si Hadda initie le narrateur à la vie de la rue, Ba Blal lui apprend la culture populaire et M. Salvador lui donne l'accès au savoir écrit. Les trois initiateurs déconstruisent l'ordre social établi, ils poussent les frontières, ils créent de nouveaux seuils de tolérance, ils inventent un nouvel espace où chacun peut vivre avec sa différence innée ou acquise.

Malgré toute la fixation de la mère pour garder son enfant inachevé, immobile, le narrateur acquiert par le biais de M. Salvador la mobilité physique et surtout mentale. Comme auparavant, il transforme la nouvelle opportunité en possibilité. Il innove dans sa pratique de mendicité. Maintenant, il se sert d'une redoutable rhétorique qu'il maîtrise. Il est certes toujours une "boule de chair disproportionnée avec une tête de la taille d'un gros melon" (Binebine 127), mais au lieu de mettre en scène sa déformation, il lit dans un français éloquent : "Les souffrances du jeune Werther de Goethe, ou bien les lettres à un jeune poète de Rilke" (127). P'tit pain est à la marge et dans la société. Les touristes de la grande place se massent autour de lui. Il trouve une issue à la crise. L'argent tombe à flot, Tachfine s'en occupe au moment même où, pour des histoires de paris non tenus, Omar disparaît.

La narration du roman picaresque est aussi fortement marquée par l'oralité (Ignacio F. Rodeno Iturriaga 170). Dans *Le seigneur vous le rendra*, cela commence avec la genèse même de l'histoire. Elle est entendue dans les cafés de la grande place et elle est en grande partie située sur la même place d'où le narrateur raconte. Au niveau syntaxique, le protagoniste utilise des répétitions et revient souvent, dans sa relation à sa mère, sur la méthode qu'elle adopte pour le momifier. Aussi, réitère-t-il sa technique de mendicité, son effet sur les donateurs et son plan avec Tachfine de ne donner à la mère qu'une partie de l'argent reçu. De plus, le narrateur se sert de mots familiers, tels que "balafre" (Binebine 84), "gaillard" (85), "en grande pompe" (87), "roulant des mécaniques" (112). Enfin, il raconte avec une gestuelle et une imagerie souvent décalée. "Ici, Bébé savant : cinq dirhams pour une photo" (128), annonce la pancarte le concernant. Les touristes de la grande place, abasourdis, n'en croient pas leurs yeux.

Si les individus construisent leur histoire dans des situations déterminées, cela n'empêche pas pour autant l'apport du hasard. Après M. Salvador, arrive enfin dans la narration Mounia que le narrateur mentionne comme en abyme tout au début de l'histoire. Leur rencontre a lieu juste avant la fête du trône. Le roi prévoit de se rendre à Marrakech. Le gouverneur décide de peindre à la chaux tous les murs, de faire miraculeusement pousser des tas de fleurs et surtout de mettre en place dans toute la ville "une rafle générale" (Binebine 138). P'tit pain et Tachfine se retrouvent à la

périphérie de Ben Guerir dans “une sorte de caserne en ruine” (139). Là, avec des centaines d’autres, le narrateur annonce après son premier repas : “Je commençai à trouver l’endroit sympathique” (140). C’est dans cette caserne qu’il prononce pour la première fois son vrai prénom et son nom, non au cours d’un interrogatoire, mais pour tout simplement répondre à Mounia. “Mimoun ben Abdellah” (141), lui dit-elle. C’est aussi paradoxalement dans ce lieu qu’il reçoit son premier vrai baiser de la part de Mounia.

Une fois en liberté, ils repartent ensemble en direction de Casablanca sans Tachefine. L’espace narratif éclate. Il retrouve la grande mobilité. Son corps se libère. Il ressent toutes les sensations. Mounia, âgée de seize ans et qui est à peine un peu plus grande que lui, l’initie à l’amour, à la vie. Elle lui retire ses tétines, lui apprend à marcher, l’aide à décrocher son premier vrai contrat de travail et cohabite avec lui. Désormais, ils forment un couple qui dispose des mêmes atouts de souplesse pour être de redoutables contorsionnistes-humoristes. Ensemble, ils inventent pour le cabaret de l’Hôtel des arts “la rose, la princesse et le clochard” (Binebine 162). Il s’agit d’un numéro de sauts périlleux, de chorégraphie, mêlant “acrobaties et humour” (162). Il comprend la sagesse de Ba Blal de ne jamais maudire ses malheurs. Il vit heureux. Son corps se développe et pousse. Bientôt il dépasse Mounia de taille.

Maintenant il voit, comme dans les tragédies grecques apprises avec M. Salvador, que “l’inéluctable destin était en marche pour lui voler ses rêves et le broyer ensuite comme un insecte” (193). Si le savoir et le hasard sont à l’origine du changement de la destinée initiale du narrateur, le développement de son corps va mettre un terme à ce qu’il a de plus précieux. Il perd Mounia, celle qui l’a initié à l’amour et à la vie. Il est transformé et cette perte lui permet de découvrir son humanité. Il veut revoir sa mère après vingt ans d’absence.

À Marrakech, sa mère est mourante. “Un petit cri d’oiseau s’échappa de ses lèvres” (Binebine 199). Par sa présence, le narrateur adoucit un peu la mort pour sa mère, sans pour autant le faire complètement, car il ne met point d’eau sur “ses lèvres sèches quand elle ferma les yeux” (199). La narration se termine avec la mort de la mère, comme si dans cette histoire, il s’agissait autant d’elle que de la vie du narrateur. Les deux sont d’ailleurs fortement liés à travers une relation trouble, qui ne peut ni se comprendre, ni s’oublier. Mimoun est enfin libre de commencer une nouvelle vie, sans la mère, sans sa présence, sans son emprise. Certes, sa mort ne va pas effacer d’un coup de baguette magique tous les traumatismes qu’il a subis. Il ne peut oublier ce qu’il veut, et se souvenir du reste, car l’oubli est avant tout un acte inconscient. Mais il est capable d’arranger les émotions liées aux événements passés et de rebondir comme auparavant.

En définitive dans *Le seigneur vous le rendra*, Mahi Binebine, artiste peintre et écrivain, livre un portrait très imagé sur les mères qui utilisent leur nourrisson dans la mendicité. Il le fait par le biais d’une écriture picaresque et selon une narration homodiégétique livrée du point de vue de la victime, surnommée P’tit pain. Le narrateur parle de sa vie dans la rue, des activités de débrouille de ses frères, de ce qu’il apprend

de ses divers initiateurs, de sa rencontre avec M. Salvador et de sa relation d'amour avec Mounia. Le lecteur lit le discours qu'il entend et voit les contours du portrait de P'tit pain qui passe du faux nourrisson en train de jouer avec ses tétines, au bébé savant avec une tête disproportionnée par rapport à son corps, au contorsionniste humoriste qui gagne dignement sa vie. Mimoun raconte presque trente cinq ans de sa vie. Dans les quinze premières années, il est emmailloté, sous le contrôle total de la mère, dans le cercle infernal de la mendicité. Par la suite, il est, grâce à M. Salvador et à Mounia, maître de son destin, libre dans ses mouvements, en rupture avec sa vie antérieure. Il retourne à Marrakech pour renouer avec son lieu de naissance, son passé et pour pouvoir se reconstruire, se réinventer. Le discours est autant subversif que porteur d'espoir. C'est une critique du désordre social et de la désintégration psychique qui en résulte, mais c'est aussi une formidable histoire d'amour, d'humanisme et surtout de résilience.

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Echoes of Poetic Realism in Matthieu Kassovitz's *La haine*

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Abstract: American mass culture and cinema exerted a decisive influence on Matthieu Kassovitz's *La haine* (1995). However, the importance of French cultural intertexts for this film has been less appreciated. I argue that 1930s French poetic realism provides a model for understanding Kassovitz's idiosyncratic approach to cinematic realism and to his representation of social tensions in the banlieues. I compare *La haine* to a subset of poetic realist films that include Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko* (1937), Marcel Carné's *Quai des brumes* (1938), and Carné's *Le jour se lève* (1939).

Keywords: Matthieu Kassovitz – *La haine* – poetic realism – banlieue cinema – mass culture

Commentators of Matthieu Kassovitz's *La haine* (*Hate*, 1995) have often remarked upon the impact of American and African-American mass culture and cinema on the look and feel of the film. Kassovitz's transatlantic influences include Hollywood directors Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Brian de Palma, Quentin Tarantino, John Singleton, and Spike Lee, as well as American rap music and hip-hop culture (Vincendeau, *La haine* 73–74; Higbee, *Mathieu Kassovitz* 76–79; Doughty and Griffiths 122–23). Kassovitz's American references are both ubiquitous and self-conscious, but he also brings a series of French cultural intertexts into play. While most critics mention the influence of the French New Wave, particularly Godard, on *La haine*, Kassovitz's film also recalls art forms linked to early twentieth century working-class popular culture, such as the *chanson réaliste* [realist song] and French poetic realism.¹

In this article, I argue that *La haine* draws on the stylistic resources of a subset of poetic realist films, namely Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko* (1937) and Marcel Carné's *Quai des brumes* (*Port of Shadows*, 1938) and *Le jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939). While the poetic realist corpus includes many more films, these three in particular cite and rework American films about early twentieth century immigrants, including 1930s gangster

¹ Ginette Vincendeau and Dayna Oschweritz have suggested the connection between *La haine* and poetic realism without exploring it at length (Vincendeau, *La haine* 75; Oschweritz 108).

movies, as part of their drive to explore the fate of the French working class in a modernizing world. Poetic realism's emphasis on feeling and affect allows its directors to treat social problems forcefully but obliquely, and it is this very obliqueness that inspires Kassovitz in *La haine*. The film uses a hip-hop-inspired aesthetics of sampling and layering to integrate French and American cultural styles both past and present, one that both does and does not mirror the use of working-class popular song in poetic realist films. *La haine*'s famous scratching scene, in which DJ Cut Killer mixes "Nique la police [Fuck the police]" with Édith Piaf's "Non je ne regrette rien [No, I regret nothing]," makes a gesture similar to the interpolation of the *chanson réaliste* in Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko*. *La haine*'s treatment of space and masculinity, meanwhile, both aligns and does not align with films like *Pépé le Moko*, *Quai des brumes*, and *Le jour se lève*. Kassovitz's stylized use of cinematic space echoes the aesthetics of poetic realism, and his depiction of the banlieues contains important echoes of Duvivier's representation of a proto-banlieue space like the Kasbah. All four of these films examine the meanings of tough-guy masculinity through images circulating in American cinema. Finally, *La haine*'s melancholy, tragic story arc suggests a connection to the suicides that often ended poetic realist films. While Kassovitz's borrowings from early twentieth century French working-class culture are not as overt and self-conscious as his American references, they are nevertheless essential to the film's representation of the social problems confronting the banlieues.

Hip-hop meets the *chanson réaliste*

The aesthetics of hip-hop is fundamental to the Franco-American hybridity of Kassovitz's film. Rather than thinking about hip-hop in terms of ethnicity, race, or national belonging, in this article I will explore its compositional strategies. Cultural and legal theorist Richard Schur has criticized Anglo-American hip-hop scholarship because it "downplays [hip-hop's] production to focus on the violence, misogyny, or cultural nationalism of its lyrics" (46). For Schur, hip-hop as a form of music and performance art is based on sampling, the layering of samples, the flow and rupture of rhythms created through layering, and a use of parody and irony (43). Sampling and layering are modes of creative recontextualization that seek to transform and comment on pre-existing source materials without destroying the pleasures of listening to a song or dancing to a beat. Discussions of the impact of American hip-hop on *La haine* tend to concentrate on Kassovitz's use of rap, soul, and funk music in the soundtrack and his selection of recognizable visual markers from hip-hop culture, including B-boy clothing, graffiti/tagging, and breakdancing (Vincendeau, *La haine* 30–31; Tarr, *Reframing Difference* 63–64; Higbee, *Mathieu Kassovitz* 76–85). However, I would argue that Kassovitz's hip-hop aesthetics is fundamentally about the sampling and layering of cultural borrowings from both American *and* French popular culture.

The DJ scene, which incorporates a *chanson réaliste* into a rap song, presents the best case study for Kassovitz's aesthetic project.² *La haine* appropriates, blends, and layers samples of many different kinds in order to figure a popular, transnational French culture appropriate to a diverse and changing France. Sampling explores and reinterprets the past in order to produce new, hybrid meanings. The performance in the DJ sequence reflects the collaboration between DJ Cut Killer (who is the person mixing on screen) and the French hip-hop group Suprême NTM (NTM stands for Nique ta mère [Fuck your mother]). Cut Killer is wearing a Cypress Hill t-shirt, which references a West Coast hip-hop group that formed in the early 1990s. The song itself, "Nique la police," is primarily a French-language cover of American rap group NWA's 1988 song "Fuck da police." Indeed, the French song's title is a literal translation of the American one. The DJ sequence incorporates two other samples, one from KRS-One's "Sound of Da Police" (1993) and one from Édith Piaf's iconic "Non, je ne regrette rien."

Kassovitz's use of Édith Piaf has multiple meanings. "Non, je ne regrette rien" is Piaf's most recognizable song both in France and abroad (Bret 122), and thus its use in *La haine* suggests a concern with international accessibility. Piaf sang and recorded it in late 1960 at the height of the Algerian War, when French citizens were grappling with the question of what France would look like without its vanishing colonial empire (Burke 194). Members of the Organisation de l'armée secrète [Organization of the Secret Army] reportedly sang the song instead of "La Marseillaise" as they returned to France at the end of the war (Crosland 209). The OAS was a subset of French Army Officers who committed acts of terrorism to slow the process of decolonization when it became apparent that then-President Charles de Gaulle favored Algerian independence.

However, the song and its singer signified more than the difficulties of the Algerian War. As Ginette Vincendeau points out, Édith Piaf looks back to, and indeed represents the culmination of, the French *chanson réaliste* from the early twentieth century as figured by an earlier generation of singers including Damia and Fréhel. Vincendeau notes that the *chanson réaliste* tradition and French poetic realism shared a common iconography of working-class neighborhoods with their rainy cobblestone streets, *bals musettes* [village dances], unassuming buildings, and accordions ("The Mise-en-scène of Suffering" 107–8). Keith Reader characterizes the *chanson réaliste* and French poetic realism as parallel phenomena, both nostalgic for a vanishing France. He interprets Kassovitz's citation of Édith Piaf's song in *La haine* as an ironic gesture to the tradition's obsolescence (207). In a similar vein, Phil Powrie argues with respect to contemporary French cinema in general that the use of French songs from "historical periods" serves to evoke nostalgia "for a lost way of life under the pressure of Americanization,

² Kelley Conway defines the French *chanson réaliste* [realist song] tradition as songs sung by "world-weary," "knowing," and sexualized women about "prostitution, urban poverty, and female desire." Active around the turn of the twentieth century, *chanteuses réalistes*, whom Conway characterizes as "ancestors" of Edith Piaf, were figures capable of uniting working-class communities (2).

nostalgia for the family that fragile ‘tribal’ communities are replacing” (“Soundscapes of Loss” 542).

I would suggest, however, that the presence of “Je ne regrette rien” in *La haine* marks not the *chanson réaliste*’s decadence or obsolescence, but rather its ongoing relevance for the late twentieth century as a model for how the affects and emotions of popular music and cinema can potentially model new forms of community and belonging. If the song were entirely obsolete, rap music would supplant it; rather, the opposite is true. The DJ’s performance begins with rap and Piaf’s song later takes over the foreground with the occasional “Nique la police” in the background. It is important to note that Kassovitz inverts the song’s associations from the Algerian War period. While it once was used to signify a lack of regret about the violence of the Algerian War and about the French colonial enterprise generally, in Kassovitz’s film, the generations of French citizens descended from France’s former colonial subjects suggest that they have no regrets about violent street riots as a form of social protest against a government and a dominant culture from which they feel excluded. Piaf’s song marks both their knowledge of French culture and situates their struggle within French history. Moreover, the presence of the *chanson réaliste* underscores the importance of emotion in *La haine*’s representation of social phenomena. Here, the song’s evident nostalgia comes into play. It is true that bleak modernist HLMs have replaced the pastoral iconography of working-class *faubourgs*, or working-class neighborhoods, familiar from poetic realist films like *Le jour se lève*, but the emotional tonalities of Interwar popular traditions nonetheless inform Kassovitz’s representation of the despair of late twentieth century France’s marginalized groups. With the interpolation of a sample from the *chanson réaliste* tradition, Kassovitz suggests an analogy between the historical struggles of the early twentieth century working class and those of the unemployed banlieue youth of the 1990s. Fundamentally, both groups share a lack of access to self-determination, solidarity, acceptable living conditions, and adequate employment in the wake of the alienating pressures of modernization, urbanization, and globalization.

The song also marks *La haine*’s complex Franco-American hybridity. Piaf’s song came out in 1960, a time of transition in French popular music. The *chanson réaliste* began to diminish in importance as jazz, rock, and the blues flowed to France from the United States. Johnny Hallyday, often called the French Elvis, said that he loved Édith Piaf and that her emotional style influenced him, even though her work seemed antithetical to the rock and jazz that were taking over pop music and that he himself was using in his songs (Burke 200–1). In an analogous manner, Kassovitz uses the song for its emotional mixture of melancholy and defiance. Poetic realist films from the 1930s like *Pépé le Moko* often incorporated *chansons réalistes* for the same reason.³ The staging of the DJ sequence in *La haine* suggests rap’s ability to link people and urban space through music, and

³ For an overview of the contact and overlap between *chanteuses réalistes* and Interwar French sound cinema generally, see Conway 4–8.

Kassovitz's DJ performs a similar function to the DJ in Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* (1989). However, the scene also harks back to Jean Gabin's musical number on the rooftops of the Kasbah in Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko*, which creates a sense of community among the Kasbah's inhabitants. The Édith Piaf sample, moreover, echoes the function of the other musical number in Duvivier's film, "Où est-il donc [Where is it now?]," performed by French music hall legend Fréhel. "Où est-il donc" offers a melancholic take on the competing attractions of the modern city figured by the emigrant dream and the American gangster and traditional French working-class neighborhoods figured by typical community spaces, street foods, and public festivals. Fréhel's number represents the suffering occasioned by historical change and economic exclusion, and its themes bleed into the tragedy of the film's plot.

"Où est-il donc"'s refrain has generated significant scholarly interest,⁴ as it evinces nostalgia for a long-lost past through a neighborhood version of the medieval *ubi sunt* trope: "Où est-il mon moulin de la Place Blanche / Mon tabac, mon bistrot du coin [Where's my windmill at Place Blanche / My tobacco shop, my corner bistro]."⁵ The first verse, which has been less studied, takes on the idea of emigration to America as a potential escape for the French working class:

Y'en a qui vous parlent de l'Amérique
 Ils ont des visions de cinéma⁶
 Ils vous disent quel pays magnifique
 Notre Paris n'est rien auprès de ça
 Ces boniments là rendent moins timide
 Bref, on y part, un jour de cafard...
 Encore un de plus qui, le ventre vide
 A New-York cherchera un dollar
 Parmi les gueux et les proscrits,
 Les émigrants au cœur meurtri;
 Il dira, regrettant Paris...
 [Some people talk about America
 They see it at the cinema
 They tell you how magnificent it is
 Our Paris just can't compare
 That kind of talk makes them bold
 When they're feeling blue, they leave

⁴ The best discussion of Fréhel in *Pépé le Moko* is Conway 95–101.

⁵ The translation of "Où est-il donc?" is based on the subtitles with the Criterion DVD release of *Pépé le Moko*, but I have modified it when I found it misleading. Translations of French sources in this article are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁶ American gangster films the likely reference point for Fréhel's "visions de cinema," which suggests another point of comparison to *La haine*.

Just one more who will, with an empty stomach,
 Go scrounging for dollars in New York
 Among the criminals and the outcasts,
 And the emigrants with broken hearts
 He will say, regretting Paris...]

Crucially, Fréhel listens to this first verse, associating it with mechanical reproduction and mass culture; she only begins to sing along when the nostalgic refrain begins. The play between voice and reproduction in *Pépé le Moko* evinces nostalgia for live performance (see Figure 1). In *La haine*, a similar dynamic is at work. In the DJ sequence, the strategic use of samples and the scratching together of songs and beats is itself a live performance that fosters community (see Figure 2). According to David Looseley, rap's sampling aesthetic was originally intended to allow would-be rappers to make music with minimal training and equipment (55). In this reading, sampling is a democratic musical form that does not require years of study in order to master instrumental, vocal, or compositional techniques. *La haine's* sample of Édith Piaf taps both into the *chanson réaliste's* perceived democratic nature and its nostalgia for "authentic" emotion communicated through performance.

While the Édith Piaf sample is an overt reference to the *chanson réaliste* tradition and to early twentieth century working-class culture, Kassovitz's layering of aesthetic techniques borrowed from poetic realism is more subterranean. "Poetic" elements are essential to the flow and feeling of Kassovitz's film, what I would call the film's deep rhythmic structure. *La haine's* way of treating the social obliquely, through style rather than substance, is the very essence of poetic realism. When I speak of "poetic realist cinema," I am referring to the body of working-class tragedies produced during the Popular Front era that immediately preceded World War II. These films have a chiaroscuro aesthetic and a pervasive sense of pessimism, and they are famous for their stylized reproductions of working-class spaces. They do not reflect working-class reality in any documentary sense; rather, they reconstruct it in studios and on soundstages for bourgeois as well as popular audiences. Jean Gabin is the tradition's most recognizable lead actor, and he meets his death in a number of tragic scenarios. In poetic realism, the past of France is always more attractive than its present, young love is doomed, and the working class lives in the shadow of annihilation. Whether the enemy is rich capitalists, the coming war, or industrialization, working-class protagonists struggle against forces much greater than themselves, only to be swallowed by the films' overwhelming bleakness.

Kassovitz brings some of this style and spirit to *La haine*. He gestures explicitly to the influence of Popular Front cinema on his work in a 1995 interview with the French magazine *Les Inrocks*: "Ce n'est certainement pas le cinéma américain qui a inventé le cinéma social, mais plutôt les Français, les Anglais, les Italiens... Ce ne sont pas les Américains qui auraient fait *La belle équipe* et tous les films sur le Front Populaire.

[It certainly wasn't American cinema that invented social cinema, but rather the French, The English, the Italians... It's not the Americans who would have made *They Were Five* and all the films about the Popular Front]" (Kaganski, Blumenfeld, and Kassovitz). Crucially, Kassovitz marks his interest in what he calls "the social" as French and European rather than American. His remark about the Popular Front is almost certainly a reference to poetic realism, as Duvivier's 1936 film *La belle équipe* [*They Were Five*], about a trio of workers who win the lottery and open up a *guinguette* [café, dance hall, and bar], belongs to the poetic realist corpus. For Kassovitz, the category of "social film" as developed in France includes the highly stylized yet critical approach of poetic realism.

Figural Realism and Cinematic Space in the Banlieues

The aesthetics of poetic realism offer the best way to understand Kassovitz's idiosyncratic take on realism in *La haine*, which has long proved difficult to classify with respect to historical trends in French cinema. While it was in response to this film that critics first began to refer to "banlieue cinema" as a film genre (Konstantarakos), *La haine* differs greatly from its predecessors in terms of style. Previous films about the banlieues (often made by second-generation French of North African origin) use what Carrie Tarr has called a "low-key social realism" (*Reframing Difference* 15). *La haine*, by contrast, is a virtuosic exercise in stylization and intertextuality. René Prédal, in his book on the young cinema of the 1990s, calls *La haine* unclassifiable because it mixes modes as diverse as the allegorical fable, the realistic official government report, anarchist agit-prop, and vaguely leftist humanism (116). Phil Powrie notes that government ministers watched *La haine* to "understand" the banlieues,⁷ but he cautions that the film is "not particularly representative of 'a return to the real'" (*French Cinema in the 1990s* 17).

Following Jean Mitry, Dudley Andrew has described poetic realism's aesthetics as one that "maintains contact with social experience analogously, not directly; it models social experience by means of a cinematic experience that chemically transforms whatever facts make up its climate" (15). Kassovitz uses similar analogic techniques, particularly in his stylized treatment of banlieue space. In contrast to poetic realist directors, whose elaborate studio sets became essential to the style, Kassovitz shot part of *his film* in a real cité, Chanteloup-les-Vignes (Vincendeau, *La haine* 15). Reconstructed locations afforded poetic realist directors maximal control over the image, allowing a selection and condensation of detail that maximized expressive effect. Kassovitz is able to achieve these abstract, expressive effects while shooting on location. In the film, Kassovitz never reveals the identity of the cité, allowing the images to become unmoored from geographic space and historical time. Kassovitz offers a generic iconographic typology of the French *banlieues*: HLM apartment buildings, courtyards,

⁷ On this point, see also Vincendeau, *La haine* 84–85.

playgrounds, deserted parking lots, a grocery store, a police station, and cramped apartment interiors. Even the aerial shot of the cité during the DJ sequence does not offer any terrain markers that would allow viewers to situate it in the geography of Paris' suburbs. Kassovitz's purported reason for this choice was that the town wanted no publicity about the shooting location (Vincendeau, *La haine* 15). However, by reducing the cité to set of striking architectural forms, Kassovitz enables the cité to stand for the *banlieues* and their social ills in general rather than a real place and time. *La haine* could be set in any French *banlieue*.

Taking inspiration from poetic realism, Kassovitz aestheticizes images of the *cité* rather than representing them as "real." He chooses not to use film stock with the characteristic grain and smaller contrast ratio of documentary film.⁸ In interviews, Kassovitz has said that he wanted to contest the rough and dirty images that had characterized the French *banlieues*, particularly on television. He wanted his film to be beautiful, and consequently he would only make *La haine* once he had secured a generous budget (Vincendeau, *La haine* 14). Furthermore, he chose to print the film in black and white, recalling the look of poetic realism and effectively abstracting the cité for a mid-1990s audience habituated to color film. French poetic realist directors accomplished a similar effect by adapting the chiaroscuro cinematography of German Expressionist films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920). Stylization in poetic realism comes from the framing, choreography, and play of light and dark in the images of otherwise "realistic" objects and locations. In a similar manner, Kassovitz stylizes a realistic location through cinematography and *mise-en-scène* in order to highlight the space's "poetry," which coexists with the characters' squalor, despair, and boredom. In a key moment early in *La haine*, the three main characters sit on stones in a public park while listening to a young boy recount an anecdote about the French version of *Candid Camera* (see Figure 3). The dialogue of this scene has no implications for the film's plot, but the framing and composition of the shot tie into *La haine's* key themes. In addition to being an arresting image, the oblique lines of the park's building obscure the sky and entrap the trio, suggesting their isolation in the *banlieue*.

Kassovitz also distances himself from documentary realism when he eschews handheld camerawork in favor of the lyrical sweeps that characterize Steadicam. In a particularly striking example from early in the film, Kassovitz cuts to a tracking shot of the French riot police in the foreground as they approach the trio through a narrow alley between HLM buildings. The characters talk about the riots while evading the cops. The vertical lines of the buildings and windows create a jail-like visual claustrophobia that serves as a metaphor for the sense of entrapment the police bring to the space. This scene and other long take shots in *La haine* are the lyrical equivalent of the extended crane or tracking studio shots in Carné's films *Quai des brumes* and *Le jour se*

⁸ As a counter example to Kassovitz's unconventional *banlieue* film aesthetics in *La haine*, Will Higbee discusses Jean-François Richet's hand-held camera and quasi-documentary style in *Ma 6-T va crack-er* (*My City is Going to Crack*, 1997). See Higbee, "Screening the 'Other' Paris" 204–5.

lève. For example, in *Quai des brumes*, when the colonial deserter Jean and the local ingénue Nelly walk the streets of Le Havre, Carné uses extreme wide shots that reveal as much about the docks as the characters. After an initial establishing shot that dwarfs the human figures in it, Carné cuts to wide shot of a freighter anchored next to the dock and then pans left to follow the mooring cables attached to the bollard. He ends the camera movement with a framing of Nelly and Jean sitting at the edge of the docks, talking. Thick ropes metaphorically suggest their entrapment (see Figure 4).

In poetic realism, style is the emotional conduit for the characters and their problems, and the carefully constructed images suggest a tragic melancholy that transcends the films' immediate social context. For example, the scene that introduces Jean Gabin's sandblaster character in *Le jour se lève* works on three independent but mutually reinforcing levels. First, at a literal level, it represents the everyday work of sandblasting, highlighting the full-body safety suit and the need to drink milk. Second, at a figural level, it likens François' working-class despair at the modern factory to the ill effects of inhaling sand. François, the metaphor suggests, is tainted. Third, at an aesthetic level, the image has been calculated so that layered grays stand out against the white of the milk. The same three levels are at work in *La haine*'s early scene in which Saïd and Vinz find Hubert at his burned-out boxing gym. Kassovitz leaves his camera on the far side of the parking lot as Vinz and Saïd cross a space devoid of cars. On the first level, the building looks very much like a dilapidated big box store. On the second level, Kassovitz accentuates the emptiness of the space by tracking Vinz and Saïd and then fixing his camera in space as if stuck in the adjoining gas station's pump. The camera stays wide, looking at the characters from the outside and transforming the parking lot into a metaphor for the social and economic devastation of the *banlieues*. No one in the *banlieues* is able to move, for lack of cars and gas. Third, Kassovitz composes the image with visually striking foreground and background elements that emphasize the distance Vinz and Saïd must cross. A mix of dark elements in the foreground and light elements in the background provide a visual contrast that is reminiscent of poetic realist technique.

La haine also freely mixes objective and subjective perspectives in a way that evokes the aesthetic of 1930s poetic realism. While *La haine* foregrounds a trio rather than a single protagonist as the point of identification, Kassovitz does focalize on individual members of the trio and juxtapose their inner and outer worlds. One of the ways in which Dudley Andrew defines poetic realism is as a "sensibility that opens the pores of the screen to allow free passage from the outer to the inner" (38). In *La haine*, Kassovitz's fluid, mobile camera and long takes blur the boundary between objective and subjective narration. Kassovitz used wide-angle lenses in the cité sequences to place the characters in the space of the banlieue (Konstantarakos 163), but it is the close-ups of the trio's eyes that anchor them to the spaces and link the expressivity of Kassovitz's *mise-en-scène* to the ways the characters feel about those spaces. One of the most salient examples occurs during the scene just after the opening riot footage sequence.

Framed in a wide shot, Saïd stands in front of the police station with his eyes closed as the camera pushes in on his face. On the soundtrack, viewers hear a low rumbling noise that codes for inner space. As the camera holds a close up of Saïd's face, he opens his eyes and realistic ambient sounds erupt onto the soundtrack. Kassovitz cuts to what looks like the matching reverse angle, a languorous tracking shot that reveals the CRS riot police guarding the cité's police station. Saïd's closed eyes suggest that he is attempting to shut out the reality of what is happening around him, a reading echoed by the film's ending, in which the camera again pushes in on Saïd as he closes his eyes and the sound of a gunshot explodes in the soundtrack. The contrast in the opening scene between the bucolic bird song on the soundtrack and the long line of riot police in the frame heighten the sense of disjuncture. As the camera inspects the officers and passes by a large van, the sound of a squeaking marker rises from the background. The shot ends by revealing Saïd writing "Fuck the police" on the rear door. What began as a classic point of view shot ends by retrospectively revealing a temporal ellipsis and returning to objective narration. Kassovitz's play with the movement between subjective and objective narration juxtaposes a sense of menace with Saïd's playful protest. This type of bait-and-switch ellipsis is also present in Carné's *Quai des brumes*. When Jean first arrives in Le Havre, the scene in which he meets a drunk in the streets contains a shift in which what was ostensibly a subjective POV shot turns out to be an objective shot with ellipsis. In both cases, the unexpected ellipsis indexes danger for the character.

There are other moments in *La haine* in which Kassovitz complicates the single point of view, offering a composite or shared subjectivity that gives the spaces in the film an affective charge. When Vinz and Hubert await Saïd's release from the police station, they stand inside as the camera makes a slow 360-degree tracking shot around them. The same rumbling sounds with a faint, intermittent heartbeat code for inner space, but this time the realistic sounds of the police station are overlaid with the inner sounds. Kassovitz slows down the tracking shot's image speed, creating a lyrical lethargy that codes for menace as the various police officers stare at the banlieue residents. The tracking shot begins tight on Vinz's eyes and ends on a similar framing of Hubert, suggesting that their dread is shared, not specifically tied to either character. Again, eyes link the emotions encoded in the *mise-en-scène* to the spaces in the film. Because these feelings are never definitively rooted in character, they circulate to the viewer. Kassovitz's purposeful lack of POV attribution represents certain feelings as shared, or even impersonal, responses to a difficult living situation. In this way, Kassovitz's camera, editing, and sound design freely pass between subjective and objective, imbuing space with affect through a visual and aural lyricism that echoes French poetic realism.

Kassovitz's *La haine* and poetic realist films also resemble each other in their focus on marginalized characters and spaces. The characters of poetic realist films are often workers, the urban poor, or criminals. The setting of *Quai des brumes* is the port city of *Le Havre*. Many of its scenes are set in the marginalized space of Panama's bar, where the down on their luck gather. *Le jour se lève* is set in a working-class apartment building

and surrounding neighborhood. Edward Turk explains that contemporary audiences mistook the studio location for the Parisian *working-class suburbs* (161). *Pépé le Moko* chooses another marginalized space to reconstruct in the studio, the Kasbah, the indigenous neighborhood of the colonial capital of Algeria. Duvivier depicts it as a struggling but diverse neighborhood in which Algerian Arabs, immigrants from all over the world, and French criminals live.

Duvivier's treatment of the Kasbah is particularly interesting when compared to *La haine*. Although ethnic Arabs must perforce be the majority in Algiers, the film represents them as a minority, separated by both physical barriers and culture from the modern, French-influenced parts of the city. The Kasbah is a proto-banlieue space both because of its isolation and because the colonial authorities, including the police, have little power within its confines. In her study of the cultural politics of architecture in colonial-era Algiers, Zeynep Çelik reproduces a 1930s aerial photograph of the Kasbah and the adjacent French neighborhood. The Kasbah is a dense, thick tangle of small buildings and barely discernable streets, whereas the French quarter contains wide boulevards bordered by tall buildings (3). Duvivier reproduces this labyrinthine geography both through a map in the police chief's office and in the claustrophobic framings of the Kasbah scenes. Much of the film's narrative concerns Pépé's desire to escape the Kasbah; it is a refuge for the gangster but also a prison. Pépé's escape ultimately fails. He is apprehended and commits suicide in the Marine Quarter, a space visually coded as "French" in its openness, modernity, and Gallic architecture. Like *Pépé le Moko*, banlieue films typically feature an attempted escape from the cité to another space, often central Paris (as in *La haine*) or the sea (as in Mehdi Charef's 1985 film *Le thé au harem d'Archimède* [*Tea in the Harem*]).

In *La haine*, Kassovitz keeps his cité visually separate from Paris, and his trio takes a train ride on the RER to reach the city center. The first image of Paris is a wide boulevard near the Montparnasse train station. The trio stands above the streets by a staircase in an image that evokes Pépé's descent down the Kasbah's stairs to Algiers' Marine Quarter (see Figures 5 and 6). While Duvivier's depiction of the Kasbah's medieval warren of streets contrasts with Kassovitz's evocation of modernist HLM buildings, Çelik explains that urban architecture in Algiers was in fact defined by large public housing projects from the 1930s on. These "grands ensembles" were designed to keep the Algerians separate from Europeans, but they also sought to modernize their living conditions (7). Çelik calls attention to the continuities between urban planning in Algeria and in the metropole (9), and it is possible that the modernist house projects in Algeria represent a dry run for the architecture of the 1960s and 1970s *villes nouvelles* [new cities] that have come to define the French banlieues. Duvivier's treatment of the architectural and cultural separation of the Kasbah from the French quarter represents an early version of the treatment of suburban space in banlieue films like *La haine*. The colonial space in *Pépé* and the neo-colonial space of the banlieues in *La haine* are marked

as economically marginalized, culturally distinct, and troublesome for the disciplinary forces of law and order.

The policing of borders between city center and periphery extends to culture as well as space. Both Duvivier and Kassovitz's films feature Arab characters that have chosen to work with the law, Slimane in *Pépé le Moko* and the plainclothes detective in *La haine*. Pépé's assimilation anxiety, moreover, parallels Vinz's uncertain positioning as a white Jew living in the banlieue. Yosefa Loshitzky has argued that Vinz's Jewishness raises important questions about the minority status of post-Holocaust Jews in contemporary France. Vinz represents a choice this community must make: they can either align themselves with the postcolonial ethnic minorities (North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans) in the banlieues or "pass" as assimilated, "white" French Jews (Loshitzky 146). Sven-Erik Rose raises similar questions, arguing that the film self-consciously interrogates Vinz's position of being "off-white" (486). Duvivier triangulates Pépé's own off-white identity between Inès, his dark-skinned gypsy girlfriend, and Gaby, his white French lover.⁹

Realism and Reception

Beyond the cinematography, the mise-en-scène, and the cinematic treatment of space, *La haine*'s relationship to the history and socio-economic context of the French banlieues also has important parallels with French poetic realism. As topical as Kassovitz's film felt upon its release, the time and setting remain vague. Though *La haine*'s costumes and production design offer clues, the film's setting cannot be pinpointed to a specific day, week, or year. *La haine* deliberately positions itself as a film about the eternal, cyclical conflict between the forces of power and those living at the margins.

Kassovitz's oblique treatment of history resembles that of Marcel Carné in *Le jour se lève*. Carné's police officers wear vaguely Germanic uniforms, alluding to the impending crisis on every 1939 viewer's mind without making the reference explicit or deterministic.¹⁰ André Bazin reproached the realism of *Le jour se lève* for its distance from history and politics (97). Similarly, Kassovitz does not appeal to concrete historical causes or political projects. Rather, he builds the film's narrative around anti-police and anti-establishment sentiments that could emerge from a variety of places and time periods.¹¹ In *La haine*, one of the few historical references is the image of the Bosnian

⁹ For a discussion of assimilation anxiety in *Pépé le Moko*, see Kennedy-Karpat 26–32.

¹⁰ For a full discussion of the costume design details, see Turk 161–62. Turk also discusses a scene that was cut from the final film in which a discussion between police officers makes the historical references more explicit.

¹¹ In a related vein, Carrie Tarr argues that the *La haine* is not principally concerned with issues of ethnicity, but with class and social marginalization ("French Cinema and Post-Colonial Minorities" 77–78).

crisis on the train station's TV monitors near the end of the film. This clip does place *La haine* in the 1990s, but it also broadens the film's themes beyond French borders, placing the conflict in an allegorical space of genocide. In the bathroom scene, the character Grumwalski's enigmatic references to Siberian work camps and by extension the Holocaust further serve to unmoor the conflicts of *La haine* from the specificity of time and space.

La haine's topicality is the product of reception rather than a feature of the film itself. As Vincendeau has noted, violent images of the banlieues and riots saturated TV screens and front pages in the early 1990s (*La haine* 24–25). Audiences made the connection with *La haine* without being prodded. Ashwani Sharma and Sanjay Sharma note that Kassovitz does not “situate the racialized crisis of the banlieues as the product of decolonization in France and contemporary postcolonial social relations” (111). He offers no history of the banlieues, treating neither the utopic *villes nouvelles* nor the construction of HLMs, nor the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s. In connection, the film's use of music may seem topical, but in fact this is an illusion. As Sharma and Sharma point out, Kassovitz's soundtrack is not defined exclusively by 1990s gangsta rap. Kassovitz does employ some gangsta rap, but what predominates is “a thoughtful and knowledge mixture of soul, funk, and rap” drawn from the 1970s to the 1990s (113).

La haine exists, then, in an eternal present tense that mid-1990s French audiences matched to the world around them. The film *felt* real, as anxieties surrounding the French banlieues were heavily mediatized. Just like the audience of *La haine*, 1930s viewers understood poetic realist films as topical and historical despite their purposeful vagueness. For example, 1930s film critic Émile Vuillermoz wrote that “[c]e tableau d'Alger [dans *Pépé le Moko*] peint par des Français est plus éloquent que n'importe quel article de polémique. La France s'avoue elle-même indigne de posséder et incapable d'administrer un empire colonial. [this picture of Algiers (in *Pépé le Moko*) painted by the French is more eloquent than any polemical article. France reveals herself to be unworthy of possessing and incapable of administering a colonial empire].”¹² Critics and politicians went so far as to blame the bleak pessimism of *Quai des brumes* for the debacle of the French capitulation to the Germans at the start of the Occupation (Turk 114–15). Such a statement is clearly exaggerated and even ridiculous if thought of as an accurate statement of historical cause, but it does index the e/affect of poetic realist films in their historical moment, the extent to which they figured the social anxiety and unease of late 1930s France. Kassovitz opts for a similar mode of approaching the social ills of the banlieues in *La haine*.

¹² *La cinématographie française*, no. 1032, August 12, 1938.

Masculinity in Mass Culture

In addition to the treatment of space and time, *La haine* also echoes poetic realism in its exploration of working-class masculinity through models provided by American mass culture. Following Judith Butler's influential account of gender as inherently performative (33), Todd Reeser has argued that masculinity in general possesses no original, authoritative model. Rather, it is an individualized and shared performance that draws on previously existing models circulating within a given culture or space. Akin to a style, masculinity takes shape through the ritualized repetition of corporeal practices and codes by individuals over time (81–85). *La haine* and the poetic realist films I discuss here share a preoccupation with adjudicating upon appropriate and inappropriate forms of masculinity, especially tough, virile versions of masculinity among France's marginalized classes. They juxtapose different images of masculinity through their contrasting male characters, and they self-consciously engage with images of tough-guy masculinity circulating in the media of their respective cultural moments.

La haine measures the appropriate balance of tough-guy hardness and vulnerability, and this duality has a history in the representation of gangster figures in poetic realism. In the same way that Kassovitz softens the hard, violent edges of masculinity represented in American films about the urban ghetto, French poetic realist directors like Marcel Carné and Julien Duvivier tempered the images of brutal and violent men that they adapted from early 1930s American urban gangster films like *Little Caesar* (1930), *The Public Enemy* (1931), and *Scarface* (1932). While the poetic realist films I discuss here try to hide the artifice of masculinity as performance for the central Jean Gabin character, Kassovitz in *La haine* seeks to highlight that artifice.

France produced one genuine Gallic gangster film in the 1930s, Julien Duvivier's 1937 film *Pépé le Moko*, which Vincendeau credits as the Ur-text for all post-war French crime films. Writing about the differences between the French and American gangster models, Vincendeau notes that the French version is more "romantic" than the American one (*Pépé le Moko* 49–51). While American gangsters may resemble the dandy in their style of dress, they tend to emphasize brutality over refinement. The gangster may desire fine things, but business always comes first.¹³

Ginette Vincendeau has argued that the other male characters in *Pépé le Moko* who surround Pépé represent excessive versions of masculinity. Their excess serves to demonstrate that Pépé possesses these same qualities (anger, violence, refinement, effeminacy), but in proper moderation ("Community" 31–32). In addition to particular emotions, the other male characters in the film serve to construct Pépé's particular embodiment of the gangster figure. Vincendeau herself notes elsewhere that the Gaston Modot character Jimmy's garish costume offers a visual caricature of the American

¹³ For a longer discussion of the differences between French and American gangsters in the interwar period, see my forthcoming book *Americanism, Media and the Politics of Culture in 1930s France* (University of Wales Press).

gangster that contrasts with P  p  's elegant dress (*P  p   le Moko* 43–44). Duvivier's camera focuses several times on P  p  's tailored suits and even self-consciously pans up and down in an elevator gaze to reveal P  p  's spectator wingtips, a stark contrast to the poorly chosen clothing of the other members of his gang (see Figure 7).¹⁴ For example, Pierrot, P  p  's surrogate son in the film, tries to play the tough guy, but his ill-fitting suit calls attention to his youthful na  vet   and awkwardness. What is more, his sentimentality leads to his death when the Arab owner of a local bar orchestrates his capture by police by pretending that Pierrot's mother is ill. In his naivet  , Pierrot prefigures P  p  's own downfall.

Despite the importance of these other figures, Carlos offers the strongest contrast that serves to construct P  p  's Gallic gangster. Despite his working-class costume and Spanish origins, Carlos offers a simulacrum of the American gangster figure. His personality and attitude evoke Rico from *Little Caesar*, Tony Camonte from *Scarface*, and Tom Powers from *The Public Enemy*. He is quick to anger, always ready to draw a gun, and obsessed with financial gain. Carlos' brutality prevents him from developing the style and taste that Duvivier associates with the more humane gangster P  p  . By contrast, Duvivier represents P  p   as sentimental, fashion-conscious, even aristocratic. P  p   can be hard in word or deed, but only when circumstances demand it. His story is an overt imitation of Howard Hawks's *Scarface*, but Duvivier revises certain aspects of the American gangster's personality. P  p   views thievery and gangsterism as both an art form and an artisanal trade. P  p   runs his gang more like a family than a business, as we see in his fatherly treatment of the young Pierrot. The film's valorization of the familial over the competitive aspect of the gangster maps the Gallic version of the archetype onto the proletarian hero and evokes a sense of working-class solidarity.

Unlike *P  p   le Moko*'s focus on the Jean Gabin character, Kassovitz places a trio at the heart of his film, allowing for a more prismatic and ambivalent examination of tough-guy masculinity. Whereas a female character causes both P  p  's downfall and that of the working-class trio in Duvivier's earlier *La belle   quipe*, Kassovitz largely excludes women from his version of the banlieues. Each main character embodies a different form of masculinity, and the same personal qualities are at issue in both *La haine* and *P  p   le Moko*. Though he is not as refined as the Grandp  re character in *P  p   le Moko*, Sa  d constructs his masculinity through language. For example, in the rooftop sequence, Sa  d attempts to use persuasion rather violence to get himself a hot dog. When that fails, he steals it and runs away rather than confront the vendor directly. In Sa  d's police interrogation scene, Kassovitz also recycles cultural stereotypes about the effeminacy of Arab men. With his penchant for language and his supposedly "feminine" looks, Sa  d resembles the Slimane character from *P  p   le Moko*. Hubert and Vinz, by contrast, present (or try to present) a harder exterior to others and have direct recourse to violent

¹⁴ For an analysis of how P  p  's costumes shade into the pimp, see Vincendeau, *P  p   le Moko* 42–46.

means. In their heated discussions about the appropriate use of violence, Hubert and Vinz in *La haine* resemble P  p   and Carlos. Vinz declares that he will kill a cop to avenge Abdel’s death, while Hubert argues that the death of one more police officer will do nothing to stop the cycle of violence.

Hubert displays his perfect understanding of Vinz when he implies that the latter’s tough-guy persona is an act. For Vinz, as for P  p  , masculinity is about style, surface, and the imitation of American models. Posters of action heroes Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger adorn the wall of Vinz’s bedroom. Media representations are especially important to understand masculinity as performance because, as Reeser explains, they simultaneously “reveal a form of masculinity that already exists in culture” and “construct (or help construct) the masculinity that they depict in culture” (25). The importance of American cinema for the construction of Vinz’s masculinity is clearer in *La haine*’s original script than in the final film. Myrto Konstanarakos points out that according to the script, Vinz was supposed to see American movies featuring Schwarzenegger and Stallone during his peregrinations through the Parisian multiplex. The script also mentioned an older but no less virile model of masculinity, Clint Eastwood. In the script version of the story, Vinz also watches *Bambi*, which alludes to the character’s sentimental interior (164). The actual scene in the film when Vinz hides from the Paris police in a movie theater preserves the juxtaposition of violence with animation, and it tellingly features Vinz making the gesture of a gun with his hand (see Figure 8).¹⁵

Though Vinz proves perfectly capable of pulling the imaginary trigger in the Cineplex, he cannot do so in real life. Vinz stumbles upon the opportunity to murder an overtly racist skinhead. This potential act of violence appears more justified than the planned cop killing, and Hubert urges Vinz to go ahead, all the while knowing that his friend is either unable or unwilling. Hubert’s unmasking of Vinz’s tough-guy persona exposes the vulnerability beneath the (cinematic) pose. This scene resembles the moment in Carn  ’s *Quai des brumes* in which the Jean Gabin character slaps Le Havre’s would-be hoodlum Lucien, who has been imitating the behavior of gangsters from American films, revealing the sniveling and terrified child beneath the mask (see Figure 9). Both these unmasking scenes explore the disjuncture between the performance of tough-guy masculinity and the embodiment of violent action. In the case of *Quai des brumes* and the other poetic realist films discussed here, the exposure of inappropriately soft and weak forms of masculinity serves to shore up the seeming virility and effortlessness of Jean Gabin’s masculine style.¹⁶ In the case of *La haine*, Kassovitz reveals tough-guy masculinity to be an unstable performance.

¹⁵ Doughty and Griffiths argue that mass culture in the film functions like a mirror through which Vinz seeks an identity for himself, though they conclude that he ultimately fails to stabilize a sense of self (126).

¹⁶ For an analysis of Jean Gabin’s masculine star persona across his many films, see Gauteur and Vincendeau.

Tragedy

If sentimentality, vulnerability, and even anxiety lie beneath Vinz's tough-guy act, *La haine's* tragic conclusion extends his pathos to the film's viewers as well. Sharma and Sharma argue that *La haine* contests stereotyped media representations of violence in the banlieues through an intensified realism that emphasizes affect rather than through a modernist or self-reflexive realism. They suggest that *La haine* most resembles classical melodrama in that "the mise en scène attempts to present the anxiety of exclusion and the alienation of the violence" (110). In a similar vein, Tom Conley and Jenny Lefcourt suggest that film's pathos has its roots in a "residual classicism." They write that "[t]he gun . . . becomes the 'floating signifier' of violence, like a letter of fate" and "the film obeys the Aristotelian 'unities' in its circumspection of time, space, and action" (231). I would suggest that the particular tonalities of despair that are at the heart of *La haine* also reference the tragic dramaturgy of French poetic realism.

Tragedy drives the beat of *La haine*, and it pulses in the ticking clocks that punctuate the film. In the film's final moment, a policeman shoots Vinz, Hubert avenges him, and Saïd looks on in horror. Like Gabin's many working-class heroes, the trio was not meant to survive the day unscathed; in fact, their destruction is premeditated and communicated to the viewer from the earliest frames. Hubert's opening monologue about a man falling from a fifty-story building foreshadows the ending: the viewer will spend the film waiting for the inevitable end of a long, slow fall. Vincendeau quotes an interview with Kassovitz in which he explains: "I knew the ending before I knew the storyline. Everything is about the end, the last five seconds" (*La haine* 44). Both *La haine* and *Le jour se lève* take up the classical unity of time in order to count down to the protagonist's death. Carné marks this technique through a flashback structure that was innovative for the 1930s, and Kassovitz indicates it through temporal intertitles. The ticking clock, moreover, likens the banlieues to a bomb waiting to explode.

La haine's prominent clock sounds echo the role of the alarm clock in the final scene of Carné's *Le jour se lève*. François winds this clock early in the film and explains to the Jules Berry character how its sound wakes him for each unremarkable day in his working-class life. The alarm clock finally goes off the next morning, after Gabin's character has committed suicide. The ticking clock in *La haine* morphs into the sounds of an alarm clock during the police repression midway through the film, but the ticking resumes just after. Vinz's murder, not the second riot, is the film's true paroxysm.

Both *La haine* and *Le jour se lève* end in a symbolic martyrdom that figures the social and economic forces oppressing the urban poor. In *La haine*, a sincere lament about the futility of violence underlies the masculine posturing of the police and the banlieue trio. In the final scene, a police car arrives out of nowhere. The train station is devoid of people and activity, again suggesting that viewers are in an abstract, figural

space. The three policemen immediately begin roughing up Vinz. One of the cops ostentatiously holds a gun to Vinz's head in a way that echoes Vinz's earlier performance of the tough guy. Kassovitz films this moment in an intimate two-shot that accentuates the size of the phallic gun. The framing of the shot makes it somewhat visually ambiguous whether Vinz or the cop is holding the weapon, suggesting that the ongoing escalation of violence is in fact a form of collective suicide (see Figure 10). The gun goes off by accident, and so the cycle of violence completes itself once more. Once the cop shoots Vinz, the other two policemen vanish. With their disappearance, the narrative ceases to exist in real time and space and enters the plane of the purely figural. Hubert, who has advocated non-violence throughout the film, now pulls Vinz's gun on the cop. *La haine* ends with the sound of a gunshot but cuts to black before viewers see who pulled the trigger. In this way, the film suggests that the logic of violence exceeds the psychology or motivation of any one person. Like Carné and Duvivier's films, *La haine* seeks to create a typology of martyrdom that symbolizes the ills of modern society.

The martyr's symbolic power is directly connected foreshadowing and fatalism, but as ending-oriented as these devices seem, Vincendeau has argued that in *La haine*, the scenes of "telling" and "listening to stories" that take place throughout contain the film's true meaning (*La haine* 44–46). I would add that the struggle over who tells the stories is just as important, for the poetic realist films as well as for *La haine*. In *Le jour se lève*, François calls attention to the disjuncture between the sensational techniques the papers will use to vilify him for his murder of a petty bourgeois entertainer and the psychological depth the film's retelling of events offers viewers. In *La haine*, the media coverage of Abdel's shooting by the police prefigures the shooting of Vinz in the final scene. The TV news offers a version of events tainted by the interests of power. The film fills in other possible stories about the causes and meanings of the riots and police violence. Facts are less important than the subjective, individual and collective forces that shape the meaning of events.

Both *La haine* and *Le jour se lève* end with a gesture that inscribes the characters' death within a community whose borders are not fully specified. In the case of *Le jour se lève*, the crowd gathered below François' window figures the dissolving unity of the Popular Front. In *La haine*, an ethics of solidarity replaces the hoodlum or American gangster's unbridled self-interest. Early in *La haine*, viewers see *Scarface*'s iconic slogan "La vie est à vous [The World is Yours]" written on a billboard advertisement. Near the end of the film Saïd rewrites this slogan with spray paint to read "La vie est à nous [The World is Ours]." Conley and Lefcourt read this rewriting as a reference to Jean Renoir's 1936 militant Popular Front film of the same name (235). Though Renoir and Kassovitz's films differ at an aesthetic and thematic level, the reference further confirms that Kassovitz had the Popular Front period in mind when he made *La haine*. While one could argue that *La haine*'s rewriting of *Scarface*'s slogan is ironic, Hubert takes up Saïd's inscription of an "us" in the final retelling of the fall story that closes the film. Crucially, it is no longer the story of a man falling from a fifty-story building, as in the prologue,

but that of a whole society falling. By changing the individualistic slogan from Hawks' *Scarface* to embrace the collective destiny of a whole society, Kassovitz echoes the way in which Carné and Duvivier channeled traditional French notions of working-class solidarity. Whereas the "us" in poetic realism is often remains implicit, in *La haine*, Saïd's rewriting makes it explicit.

My contention here has been that poetic realism is an important element in the cultural sampling and layering at work in *La haine*. The poetic realist moment in French film history offers a model for understanding *La haine*'s politics of style, by which I mean its particular mode of engaging with social problems through affect, pathos, and a figural rather than documentary realism. Poetic realism and the *chanson réaliste* emerged from the popular imaginary of early twentieth century working-class France, and they represented modes of evoking the despair, defiance, and beauty of working-class spaces and people. The complex Franco-American sampling at work in *La haine* suggests that American rap, hip-hop, and cinema now play an analogous role in fashioning the emotions and feelings of life in the banlieues. However, whereas American gangster films from the 1930s and beyond, along with some forms of hip-hop and rap, often emphasize the unbridled self-interest and acquisitive nature at the heart of American capitalism, Kassovitz's interpolation of the *chanson réaliste* tradition and the look and feel of poetic realism serves to counterbalance this focus on the individual with a reminder of the collective and societal aspects of the violence and marginalization at work in the French suburbs, both for those living inside and outside them.

Figures:



Figure 1: Fréhel starts the gramophone in *Pépé le Moko* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 2: DJ Cut Killer prepares for his performance in *La haine* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 3: The trio listens to a young boy discuss the French Candid Camera in *La haine* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 4: Jean and Nelly at the docks in *Quai des brumes* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 5: The trio arrives in Paris in *La haine* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 6: Pépé looks down at the Marine Quarter in *Pépé le Moko* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 7: P  p  's wingtips (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 8: Vinz at the movies in *La baine* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 9: Jean slaps Lucien in *Quai des brumes* (courtesy of Criterion)



Figure 10: The cop holds a gun to Vinz's head in *La haine* (courtesy of Criterion)

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The Draft: Rewriting Conflict in Yasmina Reza's *Le dieu du carnage*

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Abstract: This article repositions Amanda Giguere's thesis that "characters exist in a world where language fails," arguing that the dramatic tension throughout Yasmina Reza's play, *Le dieu du carnage* (2007) hinges on more than misunderstandings of speech and that writing succeeds where the spoken word has failed. The draft, defined in three distinct ways shows how Reza emphasizes writing in order to both charge the written word with an ephemeral perlocutionary quality and highlight how the spoken word can mimic print.

Keywords: Reza – drafting – performance – signature – language

The quintessential blockbuster dramaturge, Yasmina Reza has understood the craft of intellectual accessibility in a consumer culture. Currently the most often staged living French playwright, her oeuvre is also notably readable, particularly accessible to a broad public in textual form. Reza exploits the contrast between mass popularity and intellectual substance in her two most successful plays, *Art* (1994) and *Le dieu du carnage* (2007). Each of Reza's plays highlights a different style, while containing a signature set of commonalities, such as the play between tragedy and comedy, the 90-minute playing time, and a focus on small everyday struggles that serve as points of access into a discussion of more significant conflicts. *Le dieu du carnage*, the single-set play at the core of this article's analysis, is centered around two couples and their intended civil meeting over clafoutis and coffee to discuss their eleven-year-old sons' fight in the park, which quickly transforms into a series of escalating verbal conflicts.¹

Though scholarship on Reza is limited, scholars such as Anne Ubersfeld, Alice Bouchetard, Salah El Gharbi, and Denis Guénoun have approached Reza's writing from a literary perspective in an attempt to discover what about Reza's writing has captivated

¹ The award-winning play *Le dieu du carnage* was adapted into English both for London and Broadway productions in the first year after publication and was adapted by Reza and Roman Polanski into the 2011 film, *Carnage*.

audiences and caused her to be the only woman playwright to have won two Tony awards for Best Play. Focus on Reza's relationship to writing and orality has been highlighted by Ubersfeld, who maintains that Reza has created a new type of speech based on long monologues to silent observers onstage that likens a performative lecture. El Gharbi reads Reza through the reception of her works, analyzing her "lisibilité" and accessibility as markers of her success (14). Denis Guénoun states, "Je prenais avec l'écriture de Reza un plaisir de lecture. . . . J'ai décidé d'aller y voir de plus près: ses textes tiennent à l'analyse, la légèreté s'atténue au profit d'une impression de profondeur et de clairvoyance" (12). Reza's theatrical oeuvre, therefore, has drawn attention to a self-referential textuality that mirrors the playwright's own relationship to language. Recently, Amanda Giguere has approached the analysis of Reza's oeuvre from a more theatrical standpoint as a response to the literary criticism Reza's plays have produced. Giguere defines the device that unifies Reza's oeuvre as the *breach* and produces a study that treats each play as a different example of the rupture of expectations. Though her analysis is thorough and effective, Giguere's focus on the production of language as a theatrical device and not a literary device in *Le dieu du carnage* can be enhanced by looking at the emphasis on the writing process that structures orality, action, and conflict, and serves as a paradigm for the relationship between playwright and play.

In this article, I focus on the leitmotiv of the *draft* as a counterpoint to Giguere's breach to demonstrate that the point of convergence between the emphasis on the written word and dialogic conflict provides a condensed *mode d'emploi* for reading how Reza's performative style has evolved to unveil the play between textuality and orality inherent in theatrical writing. The definition of "performative" originates from J. L. Austin's 1962 *How To Do Things with Words*, in which he writes that linguistic acts do not simply reflect a world, but that speech has the power to create a world. The etymology of performance comes from the Greek "to furnish forth," "to carry forward," "to bring into being" (13). I maintain that the most effective performative moments in the play hinge on language in the written form. Because most of the scholarship on Reza mentioned above focuses on plays published before *Le dieu du carnage*, this article extends a literary analysis of Reza's most recent and widely staged play. Though Reza is first and foremost a playwright, her attention to the written word as a legitimate counterweight to the spoken word provides a productive bridge between the stage and performative writing as seen in her emphasis on the writing process.

Giguere writes that *Le dieu du carnage* is essentially about the failure of language, the breach, the rupture, and the collapse of communication. She compares it to previous plays in which the theme of the breach is more obvious: a rupture in time, space, or reality:

Instead Reza has turned on her very building blocks – the words she uses to construct her plays – and what appears in *Carnage* is a breach of language. The characters exist in a world where language fails. . . . Reza

has built a world in which words are inadequate, sentences are slippery, and language fails to achieve progress. (121)

Though I find Giguere's thesis useful in Reza's other plays, I argue that in *Le dieu du carnage*, analyzing language through the breach is incomplete because writing succeeds where the spoken word has fallen short, and that the confrontational tone and dramatic tension throughout the play hinge on more than misunderstandings of speech. While the original conflict remains unresolved, language in *Le dieu du Carnage* does not produce a failure in communication but is remarkably successful at igniting new conflict, and singular words are reiterated to become successful, self-referential objects of escalating provocations and retaliations. The characters read aloud, dictate journalistic drafts, manipulate, and rewrite each other's speech so that in *Le dieu du carnage*, the spoken word is uniquely built to highlight its successful counterpart in writing.²

Writing and rewriting in this play distinguishes itself from speech through the leitmotiv of the draft. I define the draft in *Le dieu du carnage* in three distinct but overlapping ways, all with a focus on the process or document of writing within the play. First, the draft is an unfinished document that shows various stages of the writing process, by overlapping omissions, rewrites, and substitutions. Secondly, the draft is a body of words conscripted and stylized to be used as weapons in verbal combat. Finally, the draft is a transaction, a communicative proof of signature or bill of exchange.³ Reza emphasizes writing in order to both charge the written word with an ephemeral perlocutionary quality and highlight how the spoken word can mimic writing by causing a lasting resonance, seen in the very opening discussion of the word "armé" (10).

The play's opening words are read aloud, drawing attention to the composition of recreating a past act of violence through written narrative. The beginning of the play finds the two couples (Annette and Alain Reille and Véronique and Michel Houllié) seated across from each other in the Houllié's living room. They are in the process of listening to Véronique write up a declaration that resembles a police report, or insurance claim:

Véronique: Donc notre déclaration... Vous ferez la vôtre de votre côté... "Le 3 novembre, à dix-sept heures trente, au square de l'Aspirant-Dunant, à la suite d'une altercation verbale, Ferdinand Reille, onze ans, armé d'un bâton, a frappé au visage notre fils Bruno Houllié. Les conséquences de cet acte sont, outre la tuméfaction de la lèvre supérieure, une brisure des deux incisives, avec atteinte du nerf de l'incisive droite." (10, my emphasis)

² Henceforth I will refer to *Le dieu du carnage* as *Carnage* throughout the article, not to be confused with Roman Polanski's film.

³ The definition and analysis of the *draft* in this article are mine and are unique to this play.

The declaration itself recognizes that words are the instigators to the act of violence – “à la suite d’une altercation verbale,” (10) which escalates into an act of brutality, resulting in permanent damage to Bruno’s mouth. The mouth remains a focal point throughout the play – eating, drinking, vomiting, and insults bring us back to the original instigating off-stage event of the boys’ fight. However, the mouth as producer of a spontaneous idea is anticipated by writing at several key moments in the play. Like Giguere, Alice Bouchetard focuses on speech in Reza’s oeuvre, recognizing that the rhythm of Reza’s dialogue mirrors the imperfections of the improvised spoken word: a string of unfinished thoughts, fragments, interruptions, and substitutions:

Yasmina Reza traite la langue comme un matériau vivant et met en scène une langue parlée qui semble parfois s’improviser sur scène. Les personnages s’interrompent, cherchent leurs mots, se reprennent, corrigent au fur et à mesure leurs propos. (37)

However, the written document Véronique is reading is far from improvised, it is instead a previously composed statement that scaffolds the characters’ discourse. This engagement between written and spoken language highlights how language can never produce a finished form free of possible edits, omissions, and rewrites, and yet remains a successful and irreversible communicative transaction.

The performed written utterance of *armé* produces a sincere and spontaneous response from the Reille and removes what Austin calls the “hollowness of theatrical performatives” (22). The idea of the elicited affective response adds a unique element to Austin’s theory of locution, illocution, and perlocution.⁴ With locution, Austin means that by saying a word, “I invoke the capacity of the sounds uttered both to stand for the idea, and to mark out the relevance of why these sounds were uttered” (18). The illocutionary dimension of the act, “denotes the kind of act I was accomplishing or attempting to accomplish in saying these words: warning, threatening, and so on” (18). It is in the perlocutionary dimension that the creation of emotion and the successful communicative transaction becomes important: “If illocution denotes the function performed *in* saying something, then perlocution denotes the effect I produced *by* issuing the utterance” (18). For the Reille, the word *armé* produces a stronger reaction because it is being drafted into the document Véronique is writing, and thus claims a more permanent position in the dialogue.

Writing in *Carnage* is drafted from different directions, forever deferring a finished product or sole contributor. As Véronique is reading, Alain Reille interrupts to take issue with her choice of the word “armé” (10). The Reille’s last name already contains the sonic allusion to *rayer*, the verb that means to scratch out, or draw a line

⁴ The following quotes are taken from James Loxley’s *Performativity* (2007) in which he starts by outlining Austin’s speech act theory.

through. This reminds the reader of the physical process of rewriting, but also contains the violent teeth-grating sound of a *disque rayé* or scratched disc, stuck on the same dissonant chord and playing in a loop. Alain is the character who is most concerned with word choice, at several times throughout the play focusing on one particular word, taking it up again, repeating it in order to draw attention to the word's effect.

In the first scene, Alain simply repeats the word as a question, lifting it out of the drafted declaration. Véronique immediately understands that Alain has a problem with the violent objective the word *armé* contains.

Alain: “Armé?”

Véronique: Armé? Vous n'aimez pas “armé”, qu'est-ce qu'on met Michel, muni, doté, muni d'un bâton, ça va?

Alain: Muni oui.

Michel: Muni d'un bâton.

Véronique: (*corrigeant*). Muni. (10)

In taking issue with Véronique's choice of word, Alain is inserting himself into the writing process and trying to destabilize the permanence of the written word that has affected him negatively. Drafting calls into question word choice, syntax, style, and omission, but it also promotes charging words with the equivalent to a stick to the mouth. Though we do not know why Véronique is writing up the declaration, (is it for her own records? Are the Houllié going to press charges?) Alain recognizes the power a single word can contain and the play becomes more about how the event is rewritten than about resolving the original conflict.

Alain, a lawyer, simultaneously spends the length of the play on the phone with his firm, drafting a response to the allegations published in that day's newspaper accusing his client, a pharmaceutical firm, of knowingly having a dangerous and faulty drug on the market. As a parallel motion to Véronique's performative drafting process, Alain also begins by reading aloud, though he reads to an unseen interlocutor, the person he is speaking to on the phone, a colleague named Maurice:

Alain: Oui Maurice, merci de me rappeler. Bon, dans *Les Echos* de ce matin, je vous le lis...: “Selon une étude publiée dans la revue britannique *Lancet* et reprise hier dans le *F.T.*, deux chercheurs australiens auraient mis au jour les effets neurologiques de l'Antril, antihypertenseur des laboratoires Verenz-Pharma, allant de la baisse d'audition à l'ataxie.” (15)

Away from the office, Alain has to delegate the actual writing of the journalistic response to his colleagues who call him periodically to read him their drafts. He then becomes the proofreader, orally drafting by dictating over the phone:

Vas-y...Oui...Pas “procédé”. “Manœuvre”. Une manœuvre, qui intervient à quinze jours de la reddition des comptes etc. ... Une étude entre guillemets! Tu mets étude entre guillemets... Tu n’as qu’à me citer: “Il s’agit d’une lamentable tentative de manipulation du cours ... du cours et de déstabilisation de mon client”, affirme maître Reille, avocat de la société Verenz-Pharma. ... A.F.P. Reuter, presse généraliste, pressée spécialisée, tutti frutti... (*raccroche*). (15)

Alain’s phone conversation punctuates the stage dialogue throughout the play. Though he is not physically producing a written text, his attention to how the words will be printed, from speechmarks to his own signature are essential parts of the writing process. It is both realistic and symbolic that the journal that published the study is *Les Echos*, emphasizing the way language works in the play. Writing becomes rewriting, echoing the replacement and substitutions of words. The echo becomes the bridge between spoken and written language and both contain an affective resonance that echoes the original shock, just as *armé* cannot be entirely replaced by *muni*. As *armé* echoes throughout the dialogue, both the written and spoken word contain a resonance of the words that are replaced.

Communication in *Carnage* succeeds through a complex styling of the draft process—creating a particular signature for each character that makes use of precision, omission, manipulation, and reflection. Stylized language becomes a way of appropriating discourse, and manipulating its use. Alain’s attention to precision is his own style of manipulating previously composed language. The article published in *Les Echos* that morning is disastrous for his client, and could bring serious consequences for his firm and for him as well. His manipulation of language is necessary to remove the authority of the original published statement. Alain must question motive, timing, and scientific process in order to insert at least a seed of a doubt in the readership. Feeling helpless at a distance, he tries to return to his office several times, only to remain at the Houllié’s and speak his words over the phone and hear them dictated, forcing an extra step into the writing process.

In Véronique’s signature, language becomes objectified as a bridge between writing and speaking. Véronique sees language as an object—a product of careful composition. Throughout the play she emphasizes print as a necessary form that records and enhances the value of a memory. Her relationship to language hinges on how effectively the physical representation of communication in print can stand in for action. Véronique demonstrates how the draft evolves to become a conscription of language. She strives to manipulate perpetuity into the oral communication of the afternoon, and gives value to successful distribution and readership in her career as a writer and bookseller. Her husband Michel’s speech is clumsy and lacks reflection but serves as a foil to Véronique by highlighting the value of each individual part necessary

to compose a working apparatus. Véronique's attention to detail in language is paralleled by Michel's profession selling "de la quincaillerie d'ameublement" and they become allies through their shared view of the importance of life's tools (20). As a writer, Véronique's attention to language as an object causes her to attempt to use writing not only to record history, but also to conscript it to achieve progress. Michel explains to the Reille:

Michel: Moi je suis grossiste en articles ménagers, Véronique est écrivain, et travaille mi-temps dans une librairie d'art et d'histoire.

Annette: Ecrivain?

Véronique: J'ai participé à un ouvrage collectif sur la civilisation sabéenne, à partir des fouilles reprises à la fin du conflit entre Ethiopie et l'Erythrée. Et à présent, je sors en janvier un livre sur la tragédie du Darfour. (16)

Véronique is neither a stranger to the draft, nor to conflict. She demonstrates a fascination with conflict and by writing about it she is putting boots to the ground in the only way possible to her. The document she drafts to reenact the boys' playground fight is a condensed and more intimate version of the books she publishes. Eager to use her writing to advance a cause, Véronique continues returning to the words in her statement. Giguere writes, "instead of focusing on the purpose of the written statement, Véronique seems more concerned with turning the boys' fight into a teachable moment" (122). Aware that the draft is not a resolution to the conflict, but only an unstable response, Véronique uses writing – both in her occupation and in this situation as a mother recording violence inflicted on her son – to counteract a feeling of helplessness and distance. As Michel says mockingly: "Elle se déploie pour la paix et la stabilité du monde" (100). Her words become conscripted to act in the absence of action.

Both Véronique and Alain emphasize the minute parts of speech in their drafts, but to very different ends. Language for Véronique contains an almost sacred power that rivals the brutality of violence, or the calm of pacification. However, though she tries to use her writing to solidify her civility and mask of politeness, Véronique's choice of words ends up causing the façade to come crumbling down around her. Giguere considers that each of the characters return to the offstage "inciting incident" of the playground fight to progressively reveal more of their individual savagery (118). Véronique has invited the parents of the boy who attacked her son into her home to make peace because she believes, as she says, "On ne gagne rien à s'installer dans une logique passionnelle . . . il existe encore un art de vivre ensemble, non?" (11). However, from the very beginning, the choice of the word *armé* sets in motion the momentum of the rupture in civility that builds throughout the play. Véronique's writing then uttering the word *armé* is just as much of an instigator as the original act of violence that

occurred offstage between the two eleven-year-old boys. Though she removes and replaces the word *armé* with *muni*, the original intention has been inscribed into the play's discourse. Having written and then spoken the word has left a scar on the future proceedings of the afternoon. As the conflict rises, Alain brings the disagreement back to that original word:

Véronique: Il n'y a pas d'origine. Il y a un enfant de onze ans qui frappe.
Avec un bâton.
Alain: Armé d'un bâton.
Michel: Nous avons retiré ce mot.
Alain: Vous l'avez retiré parce que nous avons émis une objection.
Michel: Nous l'avons retiré sans discuter.
Alain: Un mot qui exclut délibérément l'erreur, la maladresse, qui exclut l'enfance. (69)

In her drafted statement, Véronique emphasizes the consequence of the inciting incident, the damage done to her son's mouth. He has lost two teeth, and in the process, his nerves were exposed, causing potentially permanent damage. Bruno's facial damage is echoed in the exposed nerves of the Reille who find the idea of the pre-meditated intention in Ferdinand's act of brutality hard to swallow. Just as the collision of the stick to the mouth causes lasting pain in Bruno, Véronique's chosen word irreparably imperils potential civility in the relationship between the two families. Giguere identifies the discussion around the word *armé* as the moment Reza "inserts a tiny rupture in the fabric of the play," stating that it is here "the breach emerges as a seedling as the audience witnesses the first failure of language" (125). However, the focus on how the action is recreated in the written narrative demonstrates Véronique's desire to trigger a feeling of guilt—and in that she is successful. The word choice does indicate a breach in civility, but not in language. Giguere's suggestion that the audience be asked to "reevaluate the relationship between language and truth" is secondary to Reza drawing attention to how an event can be experienced differently through the rewriting process, stressing style, word choice, substitution, and omission. Continually returning to her written version of the instigating event, Véronique is more concerned with the perlocutionary effect produced by the document, and wants the Reille to feel badly about their son's action more than she wants to simply record the event. Even when she is not physically writing, her choice of words leaves its mark in the discourse of the play. In the same way she chose *armé* in her statement, she later uses the word *défiguré* to describe her son's face, this time standing by her chosen word.

Véronique: Et Ferdinand qu'est-ce qu'il dit? Comment il vit la situation?
Annette: Il ne parle pas beaucoup. Il est désemparé je crois.
Véronique: Il réalise qu'il a défiguré son camarade?

Alain: Non. Non, il ne *réalise* pas qu'il a *défiguré* son camarade.
 Annette: Mais pourquoi tu dis ça? Ferdinand *réalise* bien sûr!
 Alain: Il *réalise* qu'il a eu un comportement brutal, il ne *réalise* pas qu'il a *défiguré* son camarade.
 Véronique: Vous n'aimez pas le mot, mais le mot est malheureusement juste.
 Alain: Mon fils n'a pas *défiguré* votre fils.
 Véronique: Votre fils a *défiguré* notre fils. Revenez ici à cinq heures, vous verrez sa bouche et ses dents. (27-8, my emphasis)

Reza has stacked and repeated the dialogue to the point of being absurd and childlike. Not only are single words repeated (*défiguré*, *réalise(r)*) – entire phrases are parroted back and forth between Alain and Véronique. This time instead of producing an actual written document, the repetition of the performed utterance uses orality to imitate the permanence of print. Mimicking the way children speak on the playground, Alain quotes Véronique's exact phrase several times, in order to cause her to hear the absurdity in her word choice, simultaneously charging the words *défiguré*, *réalise(r)* with a combative force.

In emphasizing the draft of writing, Reza is showing how the written word contains a performative ephemerality that imitates the potential shock and cruelty of the performed utterance, yet causes a lasting resonance by remaining written into the play's discourse. In contrast to spontaneous improvisation, the notion of the draft requires reflection, oftentimes providing a filter for the choice of words, or unveiling the cruelty resonant in each choice. Each word in the written draft remains easily changed or rewritten and follows the rhythm and cadence of the improvised spoken word, yet once shared, the words themselves cannot disappear, causing them to be fixed into the play's discourse in a way that imitates print.

Though Véronique is presented as wanting to solve the world's problems, she is also attached to the production and transmission of the textual products as a bookseller. The opening stage directions make direct reference to the functionality of the books as props that parallels Michel's profession selling "[s]errures, poignées de porte, cuivre à souder, et des articles de ménage, casseroles, poêles..." (20). Words become highlighted in their materiality through the Houllié's professions emphasized by the stage props in their living room. Reza writes: "*Un salon. Pas de réalisme. Pas d'éléments inutiles*" (7). The reader immediately knows that the objects on the table serve a purpose: "*Au centre, une table basse, couverte de livres d'art.*" At first the books are used as an icebreaker, though the language they elicit from the women comes out in one-word spurts. Trying to make conversation while her husband talks rudely on the phone, Annette leafs through the books:

Annette: J'adore Bacon aussi.

Véronique: Ah oui, Bacon.
 Annette: (*tournant les pages*)... Cruauté et splendeur.
 Véronique: Chaos. Equilibre.
 Annette: Oui. (35)

The books elicit unfinished thoughts, ejections of clichéd one-word commentary. The images in the art books, and the words they elicit, mirror the building tension in the room and the breakdown of civility. The four adults are positioned around the table and Annette's nervous nausea eventually builds through the scene until she cannot control it anymore. When she vomits, it comes out as a violent projectile all over the books on the coffee table: "*Annette vomit violemment. Une gerbe brutale et catastrophique qu'Alain reçoit pour partie. Les livres d'art sur la table basse sont également éclaboussés*" (53). The words in the stage directions repeat the women's interpretive lexicon as though their conversation had continued: "brutale, catastrophique" (53). Though Véronique pretends to be sympathetic to Annette feeling sick, she is mostly horror-struck at the state of her vomit-covered books, emphasizing the importance of the text's presence over the performative body.

While Annette and Alain clean up in the bathroom, Véronique and Michel frantically try to clean off the books, drench them in expensive perfume, and then dry them so the pages do not get wrinkled. The emphasis on the physicality of the books themselves dominates the scene and the value Véronique places in them is both tragic and ridiculous.

Véronique: Ça va gondoler.
 Michel: On peut donner un coup de séchoir et aplatir avec d'autres livres par-dessus. Ou repasser comme avec les billets.
 Véronique: Oh là là là...
 Annette: Je vous le rachèterai.
 Véronique: Il est introuvable! Il est épuisé depuis longtemps!
 Annette: Je suis navrée ...
 Véronique: C'est une réédition qui a plus de vingt ans du catalogue de l'exposition de 53 à Londres! (56-7)

The books become like the play's currency, physical representations of value in economic transactions. The books on the coffee table are art books, collections of images, but the textual artifacts have taken on the proper nouns of well-known family members, "Le Foujita," "Les Dolganes," "Le Kokoshka," and Reza uses them as a foundation for her stage décor (60). Véronique and Michel spend longer trying to salvage the books than they spend trying to assure that Annette is feeling better, or whether Alain has something clean to wear. Michel provides the action to accompany Véronique's words, adding power to her statements. Though he is apathetic and

ridiculous, he is allied with his wife in the materiality of language and they work together to rectify the damage in way that is impossible when trying to pacify the Reille: “Michel: Lisse bien, lisse bien ... Tourne la page. Tends-la, tends-la bien” (62).

For both Véronique and Michel, the books’ value is representational—directly related to an affective memory. In contrast to mass-produced books, these are more like works of art or spoken words, irreplaceable and irreproducible. The pages are compared to physical money, as manipulable as bills: “ou repasser comme avec les billets” (57). Annette, who is a “conseillère en gestion de patrimoine” (18) is an expert in manipulating and securing fortunes, however, she is unable to understand the value Véronique places in these coffee table books. Instead of containing text, they are filled with images, playing with the expression “une image vaut mieux qu’un long discours” and the rapport between interpretation, social status, and aesthetic taste. Throughout the play words contain different values, as displayed in how the four characters choose to rewrite the playground fight, not in how they try to resolve it. The coffee table books serve as a reminder that language is effective in the play because of the value singular words are given to those speaking them. The reproduced paintings elicit different reactions from the two women that ultimately contribute to their signature styles throughout the play. Alluding to her blockbuster play from 1994, *Art*, Reza is again drawing attention to how the value we place in objects is a subjective process, yet contains the power to produce real societal shifts. In *Art*, Serge has bought a white painting for 200,000 francs, and the price he paid remains the driving force of the dialogue throughout the play. In *Carnage*, the intention behind a chosen word charges it with power while simultaneously fracturing its meaning. The books’ value becomes a fluctuating subjective measurement. Here instead of a painting, the coffee table books are representations of already produced works, they are not the works themselves. They become reprinted indications of the commodification of art.

Annette’s signature is seen primarily through her speech and body language, becoming apparent after she has had time to be able to reflect upon the degradation of civility that has made her nauseous. Annette recognizes the effort Véronique has gone to, and at first refuses to continue the aggression, praising the Houllié for their graciousness: “Annette: ... Si Bruno avait cassé deux dents à Ferdinand, est-ce qu’on n’aurait pas eu Alain et moi une réaction plus épidermique? ...” (27). Annette believes her hypothetical reaction would have been quicker to anger and less cordial. Her use of the word “épidermique” refers to the body and its signs, the epidermal flush of anger or cold sweat of anxiety. However, she is also alluding to the surface masks and niceties that she finds impossible to stomach. Once she has vomited and stripped herself of her mask, Annette remains huddled over the *cuvette* vomiting bile, unable to maintain her composure or politeness.

Annette’s vomit becomes a leitmotiv throughout the play as the symbol for what links interpreting meaning to affective reaction. At the beginning, Annette is able, through societal filtering, to control which words she utters. However, she cannot

control her feeling of nausea, triggered by anxiety, guilt, tension, and the build up of unspoken thoughts. Her vomit brings her into the dialogue, acting as symbol for reading (ingesting, digesting) and speaking (expelling). In ruminating meaning, she must ingest the words spoken to her, digest them, and expel a response. Mirroring the eating of the *clafoutis* Véronique has baked, Annette's body takes over the process of dialogue in a Rabelaisian exaggeration. When her body can no longer hold back, it forces Annette to insert herself into the dialogue by means of the mouth. Unable to articulate her true feelings in words, her body provides the opportunity with vomit, charging speech with object (and abject) physicality. Vomiting provides the opportunity for Annette to express herself.

For both Annette and Alain, the stylistic reflection at the center of the drafting process is seen in how they discover value in the spoken word. While cleaning herself up in the bathroom, Annette has had time to think about their children's fight. She comes back and says,

Annette: [...] Je me suis *dit* une chose dans la salle de bain...

Véronique: Oui?

Annette: Nous sommes peut-être trop vite passés sur... Enfin je veux *dire*...

Michel: *Dites, dites* Annette.

Annette: L'insulte aussi est une agression. (65, my emphasis)

The repetition of the words "dire, dit, dites" is not an accident in her revelation. Annette, having stayed apologetically silent on the subject of her son's aggression, reveals that she does not believe he is to blame for the altercation. Annette states what has come to the forefront of her thought, namely that Bruno calling her son "une balance" is the reason Ferdinand retaliated with physical violence, which fires up the conversation between the four adults once again (66). Ironically, being called a *balance* or tattle tale, means Ferdinand must have told someone about something Bruno did, further complicating the origins of the fight. Action and language are blurred once again into a process of rewriting the event through performative narration. Annette strips off her mask of false pleasantness and begins voicing her true cruel thoughts. Echoing the previous scene in which she vomited, Annette begins to vomit words, each statement more shocking than the last:

Annette: Quoi Annette? (*À Michel*.) Vous pensez que mon fils est une balance?

Michel: Je ne pense rien du tout.

Annette: Alors si vous ne pensez rien, ne dites rien. Ne faites pas ces réflexions insinuanes.

Véronique: Annette, gardons notre calme. Michel et moi nous efforçons d'être conciliants, et modérés...

Annette: Pas si modérés.
 Véronique: Ah bon? Pourquoi?
 Annette: Modérés en surface.
 Alain: Toutou, il faut vraiment que j'y aille...
 Annette: Sois lâche, vas-y. (67)

Annette's time in the bathroom away from the group afforded her the possibility to reflect on the subject of the boys' fight. Having had time to collect her thoughts before she speaks, choose her words, and structure her utterance, her reflective oral drafting process produces a surprising, improvisatory, and sharp spoken style. She recognizes that her speech is a result of a thought process and the strength of an opinion that needs to be voiced. This realization causes her to use language as a weapon for aggression.

Both written and spoken words have representatives among the stage props. The coffee table books are fixed objects in the Houllié's home, however, their presence and physicality highlight the portability of the written word and provide a physical representation of the value Véronique places in print. Contrasting the incident with the textual object of the books, Alain's *portable* becomes the representative object of the spoken word. After the vomiting incident, the Reille stay with the Houllié even though Annette is continually dry-heaving into a bucket. Annette's nausea prevents her from escaping the cause if it. Alain is on his phone again, still drafting the response to the *Echos* article.

Annette: Je vis ça du matin au soir, du matin au soir il est accroché à ce portable! Nous avons une vie hachée par le portable.
 Alain: Heu...Une seconde... (*couvrant le téléphone*)... Annette, c'est très important.
 Annette: C'est toujours très important. Ce qui se passe à distance est toujours plus important. (94)

As the conversation heats up, the dialogue mirrors Annette's "vie hachée" by the *portable* (94). Alain's conversation punctuates the stage dialogue serving as a climactic counterpoint that builds throughout the scene. Though Alain is talking to someone on the phone, he remains a part of the stage dialogue, still trying to control Annette and overlapping his responses to work in both conversations. His ability to pass between conversations is exclusively because of his phone, whose presence becomes a catalyst linking action with language, at the hand of Annette.

Alain: Vigilance...Oui...Annette, c'est absurde de boire dans ton état...
 Annette: Quel état? Au contraire.

Alain: C'est intéressant cette notion... (*portable*)...Oui, non, aucune interview avant la diffusion du communiqué...

Véronique: Monsieur, je vous somme d'interrompre cette conversation éprouvante!

Alain: ... Surtout pas... Les actionnaires s'en foutront... Rappelle-lui la souveraineté des actionnaires...

Annette se dirige vers Alain, lui arrache le portable et... après avoir brièvement cherché où le mettre...le plonge dans le vase de tulipes. (105)

Having realized in the bathroom that words and violence are equalized, Annette now takes silent action against the object of her irritation, the *portable*. In doing so, she deprives Alain of the possibility of dictating his draft over the phone demonstrating how the realism of the stage objects acts more like an acoustic actor in the play – the surroundings and props become mere objects to bounce words off of, or to engulf a tense silence. Here, the role of silence is overturned by the recognition of the objectified and portable language. The objects on stage are featured in the dialogue in the same way the objects incorporate the dialogue.

Each character uses citation as a destabilizing mockery, a way of echoing words in order to rob them of their authority. In focusing on the parts of speech themselves each character undermines the stylistic signature of the other. Even the eloquence of Alain's speech containing the origins of the title of the play is broken into its nuts and bolts, its meaning lost on the pettiness of how Alain pronounces the names of the weapons. In an example of Ubersfeld's recognition of Reza's *quasi-monologue*, Alain speaks at length to his silent audience:

Alain: Véronique, moi je crois au dieu du carnage. C'est le seul qui gouverne, sans partage, depuis la nuit des temps. Vous vous intéressez à l'Afrique n'est-ce pas ... Il se trouve que je reviens du Congo, voyez-vous. Là-bas, des gosses sont entraînés à tuer à l'âge de huit ans. Dans leur vie d'enfant, ils peuvent tuer des centaines de gens, à la machette, au twelve, au kalachnikov, au grenade launcher, alors comprenez que lorsque mon fils casse une dent, même deux, à un camarade avec une tige de bambou, square de l'Aspirant-Dunant, je sois moins disposé que vous à l'effroi et à l'indignation.

Véronique: Vous avez tort.

Annette: (*accentuant l'accent anglais*). Grenade launcher !...

Alain: Oui, c'est comme ça que ça s'appelle. (98-99)

In immediately picking apart his speech and ridiculing his pronunciation, Annette counteracts Alain's eloquence but proves his belief in the god of carnage.

Despite their disagreement, Annette and Alain both realize that weapons and words are interchangeable, and they become unified in their use of them.

In conclusion, throughout the play, the ephemerality of speech is contrasted with the permanence of print through documentation, drafting, and exaggerated affective reactions. This demonstrates how Reza's relationship to language as a theatrical device relies on the tension between the written and the spoken and unveils the writing process of the playwright through diegetic writing in the play. According to Austin, theatrical discourse is inherently hollow, and the move in Reza's plays toward unidirectional speech such as monologues, soliloquies, or fragmented overlapping utterances could point to a failure of communication as noted by Giguere. However, though the play's undulating climaxes and dips in tension build toward an ultimate failure to resolve the original conflict, the conspicuous absence of the boys who brought their parents together demonstrates how language has been called upon to achieve different results. The play does not center around the boys' fight, but rather how the event is rewritten, and how the violence produced by the original event permeates the characters' stylistic signatures throughout the drafting process. Thinking about language as a portable but unfinished product contributes to how one reads dramatic writing by using the overlaps between speech and writing to bridge the ephemerality of speech and the perpetuity of print. The signature becomes the way of ascribing and transferring value between the textual and the performative world. In this way, style – as seen in the various overlapping drafts – becomes a process of textual marking unique to each character's signature.

Reading the play with a focus on the leitmotiv of the draft shows how language does function productively in the play. Temporary alliances and moments of constructive communication are produced because of how the characters see language work in parallel ways. Alain's rewriting of *armé* is not only a breach in civility but also an acknowledgement to Véronique that they must rewrite the event together. Words, which contain the possibility to shock and incite violence, cannot be transferred effectively without attention to the textually stylistic structure they are drafted into, whether uttered or written. In this play, the strong focus on writing shows how communication becomes a transaction with traceable origins and an ability to affect and elicit actions. Language is not only a tool, however objectified it is to Véronique and Michel, nor is it entirely a weapon as seen by Annette and Alain. It is an agreement to carry out a linguistic transaction and engage with another character's style and composition technique.

Though the leitmotiv of the draft is specific to this play, Reza's focus on the link between diegetic writing and theatrical writing can be extended as a unifying characteristic of how she deals with conflict in her other plays, while opening up the dialogue of the evolution of the *théâtre de la parole* in contemporary French theatre. Seen explicitly in this play, Reza's readability and accessibility thus become qualified through

an engagement with textual agency, extending the reception of her plays to include a legitimate literary component that also enhances the stage performance.

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A Student-Centered Cultural Approach for Teaching French Literature by Women

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Abstract: This article presents an interactive class that I developed to improve students' understanding of multiple perspectives and cultures and their proficiency skills in French as they discover works of women who write in French. My course emphasizes the integral link between French language, literature, and culture and provides multiple resources and summaries that a teacher might use to give students the background information to interact more knowledgeably with a text, and realize its pertinence to their current understanding of the world, and to their daily life as they develop their communicative skills in French. Each activity is explained as instrumental to a student's acquisition of a specific level of the proficiency skills in the 2013 *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements*.

Keywords: teaching – literature – gender studies – cultural awareness – French

This article focuses on an interactive class I first developed at my university in 2006 to improve students' proficiency skills in French as they discover the works of women who write in French throughout the ages and the relevance of this writing to today's world. In accordance with the 2013 *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements*, my methods and activities focus on performance and understanding multiple perspectives and cultures (3). This article thus draws on scholarship that addresses current ACTFL proficiency guidelines, and the teaching of writing, textual analysis, speaking, culture, and literature, to identify the proficiency skills that are targeted in each of my class activities and homework assignments for teaching a course on French women writers. My course emphasizes the integral link between French language, literature, and culture and provides multiple resources and summaries that a teacher might use to give students the background information to interact more knowledgeably with a text, and realize its pertinence to their current understanding of the world, and to their daily life as they develop their communicative skills in French.

In 2007, Scott Jaschik presented the conclusions of an MLA panel stating that the traditional model of language study followed by literary study must be jettisoned because the programs that train undergraduate majors and new Ph.D.'s have so much emphasis on literature that broader understanding of cultures and nations has been lost.

Many articles since have detailed the significance of specific courses in French and the innovations involved to make them pertinent to today's world. For example, as Sophie Marnette and Helen J. Swift report the results of a workshop devoted to teaching Medieval French in the UK, as our students are increasingly mobile and do not necessarily plan to become specialists in French, we must be more specific about what we wish to achieve in each class. They suggest that using and developing more online materials and exposing students to medieval texts in French encourages students to engage with broader contextual and conceptual issues and thus creates a link between today's world and its medieval precedent (81-82).

In a similar vein, Nancy Virtue holds that there is still a valid place for traditional literary content if it is taught with recent methods and multimedia-enhanced instruction in ways that break down the separation between language and literature (880-881). Her class, like my own that stresses performance, was held in 2006, but unlike mine, her focus was solely on Medieval French Literature and the performance of a single play. She explains the rationale for her approach as meeting the "five C's" of ACTFL's Standards of 1996, the promotion of communication, the integration of culture and language, the connections between language and content, the comparison between the students' first and second languages, and the establishment of communities inside and outside school walls (882).

As Simon Gaunt and Nicholas Harrison explain, in a prospective student's mind, relevance is linked to perceived attractiveness and to employability (110). If students could more easily notice their own progress in acquiring communicative skills in each language or literature class, they might be more eager to sign up for classes. One way to make them focus on their progress is for the teacher to articulate the skill that they are acquiring with each assignment, project or test.

The 2013 *NCSSLFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements* provide Global Can-Do Benchmarks that help teachers and students target desired student-learning outcomes (4-5). For that reason, in what follows, I have articulated the skill targeted by each of my assignments and activities. In our curriculum, a student who studies an upper-level literature class would most likely have developed all of their speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills to at least an Intermediate High level. My desired learning outcomes for the class are thus to make them attain at least an Advanced Low rating in all categories. This means that in their interpersonal and presentational speaking capabilities, their goal would be to develop from being able to talk or write in general about familiar topics of everyday life to also talking or writing in paragraphs in an organized way and in some detail about familiar topics beyond everyday life. For reading skills, the target goal would be to improve from understanding the main ideas of texts in various time frames on everyday life, personal interests and studies to comprehending at least the main idea and some supporting detail in various time frames on a variety of genres and topics of some length. In listening skills, their objective would be to improve from understanding the main idea and a few details in messages and presentations on

topics of everyday life and personal interests and studies to comprehending the main idea and many details on a variety of personal and general topics of various time frames including the ability to follow lengthy descriptions and stories and to understand something unexpected.

Similar to Catherine R. Montfort, I advocate the study of excerpts of texts by French women writers as the most manageable way of encouraging students to interact with the variety of texts representative of French women writers. After a series of exercises, teacher-led discussions, and activities related to each text, Montfort asks her students to write their own literary analysis of the same text (624). My focus is slightly different as my primary goal in teaching literature is to encourage literary analysis and interaction that will be life altering and student-centered as students work on their analytic skills and abilities to speak and write in French. The teacher must be a facilitator and resource to involve students and to make them all participate. Like Nelson, I believe that this increased equality of participation promotes growth and development that allow students to make connections between all their classes more quickly. As their self-image improves, their learning becomes more involved (Nelson 1). Improving one's self-image and abilities to identify and analyze relationships between diverse subjects and cultures rapidly also makes one more marketable (Davidson 128).

This text and the assignments that I provide to study French literature using the NCSSEFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements as student goals offer a potential answer to two earlier studies citing deficiencies in the teaching of literature. Fein's 1986 study shows that colleges do not cover French literature adequately to train high school French teachers to teach it successfully (Fein 192-193; 195). The 2011 study of Nicole Mills suggests that TAs at the college level do not see the intersection between applied linguistics and literary study and are thus not effective teachers (75).

The appendices at the end of this article provide the specific instructions given for many of the assignments and the final project. The course text *Contre-Courants: Les femmes s'écrivent à travers les siècles* offers an overview of 46 French women writers and 71 texts and of their importance to understanding French and Francophone cultures. Nine units are covered, each organized by a different theme and introduced by a summary of history and literature that would introduce potential high school or college teachers to French literary history and analysis. One of the great advantages to using *Contre-Courants* is that most of the issues treated within are still pertinent to what women may and may not acceptably wear, say, and do within a given culture. Each excerpt in *Contre-Courants* is glossed and followed by questions authored by Mary Ann Caws, Nancy K. Miller, Elizabeth A. Houlding, or Cheryl A. Morgan to guide the students' reading and interpretation. During class discussions, to promote the development of a student's analytic skills, I provided additional background information for the excerpts and questions and asked the students, "How do these texts relate to what is happening in America, in France, and in French-speaking countries today?"

I agree with Marlies Mueller that students tend to read their own values into any text and that educators must prepare a student for culturally literate communications with the French that will improve relationships between the American and French-speaking cultures (21; 24). For this reason, I ask students to read current articles that we could discuss about women and the workplace, abortion rights, marriage, childcare, violence, and dress code debates in French-speaking countries. These articles may be in English for understanding similar articles in French would require Advanced High Interpretive Reading Skills on ACTFL's scale (38). Also useful are an in-class presentation in simple French and a discussion of the highlights of women's struggle for equal legal rights as provided by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, and Susan Groag Bell and Karen M. Offen, who provide specific documents in translation that show societal efforts to keep women in subservient roles. For example, some commentators blamed the decline in the birthrate in France on women's emancipation (Bell and Offen 129-136). Such thinking led to the 1920 decrees creating special medals for mothers and making any advocacy of abortion punishable by six months to 3 years in prison and a fine of 100 to 3000 francs. (Bell and Offen 309-310).

Studying some good examples of reading a text in the context of its own underlying framework can also be helpful for developing job skills that require understanding multiple perspectives and cultures and exploring the relationship of a literary text to a value system of a particular society and historical period informed by history, sociology, and philosophy. Students also benefit from defining and discussing the meaning of literature in the classroom before they begin their study of French texts (Davis, Kline, and Stoekl 660). A multi-faceted literary analysis in English that I have used in class to help the students acquire pertinent vocabulary and to encourage them to apply what they had learned about analyzing literature in other classes to their readings in French is Charles Segal's in-depth study of Ovid's tale of Philomela and Procne. It reveals not only multiple ways of reading a literary text (drawing on a mix of reader-response, feminist, intertextual, deconstructionist, and psychoanalytic approaches), but also addresses an important myth that is often analyzed and rewritten in texts of many languages to defend women (Segal 258). In fact, Ovid's myth of Philomela and Procne has become noteworthy among scholars as a text that is misogynist in certain ways and yet very feminist in others. It is one of the first texts to be interrogated and recast by feminist literature and criticism (Joplin 28; Cixous 110). For example, Joplin identifies the inconsistencies and improbabilities in the storyline to argue that Ovid's ending focus on women's capacity for immediate violent revenge diverts a reader's attention from other messages in the tale. As the tongueless woman in the story has spent a year in seclusion patiently developing the skills and self-reflection to weave her story, the more important message is that art can be a powerful form of resistance for women (51). Vicki Mistacco, in contrast, reads Ovid's tale as proof of the patriarchal stereotype that a woman writer would speak only to prostitute herself or to unveil an act of violence or domination against women by the patriarchy (5-6). Women writers, she claims, retell

this myth and the murder of Itys to show women's efforts to break the patriarchal chain, first, by beheading its heir (symbolically destroying the patriarchy as head of society), second, by joining forces as women, and third, by refusing to remain in the roles of submission and fear traditionally assigned to women (Mistacco 13). Several other critics praise Ovid's myth as one of the first texts to present the horrors of rape for women and to show how such violence affects them emotionally and physically (Kahn 42-43; Segal 259; Marder 157; Salzman-Mitchell 146-7). Some even provide evidence that reading and discussing Ovid's tale of rape in a classroom setting has empowered young women who have been raped and helped them to talk about it and gain self-confidence (Kahn 43, 47-8, 55).

The summary of Ovid's tale is as follows: Procne marries Tereus, the King of Thrace, after her father, the King of Athens, awards her to him for his help in the war against Thebes. Five years later, at her request, Tereus goes to Athens to bring Philomela, her younger sister, back for a visit. During the journey, he rapes Philomela; then, to keep his crime secret, he cuts out her tongue, imprisons her, and later tells his wife that her sister died. Philomela reclaims her voice by weaving her story into a fabric that she sends to her sister as a message. Procne rescues Philomela, then slits her son's throat because he resembles his father too much. She and her sister then cut up her son Itys, boil him, and trick Tereus into eating parts of him. As Procne reveals what he has eaten, Philomela flings his son's bloody head at him. To escape Tereus's wrath, Philomela and Procne sprout wings and turn respectively into a nightingale and a swallow. Tereus transforms into a hoopoe (Ovid, 319-335).

Other authors also offer analyses of the intersections between perspectives and cultures that a teacher might present. Mistacco's overview of French-speaking women and the literary tradition, "Philomèle et les soeurs de Procne," clarifies that to be published, women were required to deny the importance of their writings (23). Expected destinies for female protagonists included marriage, death, or the convent (26). Historically acceptable themes for women writers have been maternity, love, and nature. Thus, from Marie de France onward, women writers have used double meanings, duplicity, ambiguity between orthodoxy and sedition, doubt between dissimulation and revelation, and a fluid notion of identity. Recurrent motifs that express the relationship between women and the literary tradition are modesty, the loss of a tongue (or language), subterfuge, weaving, deciphering, the nightingale and its song, the swallow, and flight.

In "The Queen's Looking Glass," Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar also provide literary commonplaces that help students decode textual images. For example, historically, men claimed writing and painting as masculine arts performed (symbolically) by their penis, and denigrated any woman who wrote or created a work independently. This practice informs women authors' attempts to represent a symbolic female organ from which female creativity might flow. Male writers have so often characterized women as docile, dependent, and selfless angels or desiring, creative, and

independent monsters that women still struggle to escape these stereotypes of women. A woman writer must first dismantle the representations and discourses telling her that she cannot write anything worthy and is a monster if she fulfills her own goals and desires (4-18).

Gilbert and Gubar also illustrate the function of symbolic female angels and monsters within myths by including well-known sagas such as those of Adam, Eve and Lilith (Adam's first wife) (33-44). In legends from earliest times, Lilith was often viewed as the first *femme fatale*, a succubus, a spirit who seduces men and women alike and who visits men at night to steal their sperm to make demon babies, and her imagined existence has been used to justify many Jewish Orthodox customs that are designed to control women and keep them subservient to men (Bitton 130). In the 1970s, Jewish and other feminists started to rewrite their own versions of Lilith to claim her as the first feminist, the first woman who always has been equal to man (Osherow 71). Thus every bad girl in a work of art (even in Lady Gaga's productions) may be a possible rewriting of Lilith. European literature has featured Lilith since the Middle Ages and most notably in the works of the nineteenth-century authors, Victor Hugo, Rémy de Gourmont, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Anatole France, even before she started to figure widely in feminist texts of the 1970s (Bitton, 126). From the 1970s onward, Mirielle Righini, Françoise d'Eaubonne, Michèle Costa-Magna and Véra Memmi, Edith Vallée, Séverine Auffret, and Elisabeth Badinter are among the prominent French women writers who have reappropriated Lilith (Bitton, 130).

Due to Lilith's importance in various cultures, a teacher might also present or assign the following readings. As Michele Osherow explains, the myth of Lilith comes from a rabbinic "midrash" which is a type of literature meant to interpret Biblical passages. A well-known midrash, attributed to Ben Sira in approximately 1000 C. E. focuses on Lilith and explains why the first chapter of Genesis in the Jewish Old Testament states that God created man and woman simultaneously out of the earth (v. 27), whereas the second chapter of Genesis asserts that God created woman out of one of Adam's ribs to be his helpmate. (Osherow 70; Bitton 119). According to Ben Sira, the first woman, Lilith, thought that she was equal to Adam and refused to lie beneath him. Adam disagreed and tried to overpower her repeatedly so Lilith flew away to the Red Sea, where she had sexual relations with demons, and became known for stealing and harming babies. Although God sent angels to bring her back, she declined. Thus God gave Adam a new wife named Eve. According to some texts, Lilith returned to seduce Adam after he was married to Eve (Patai 221-224).

Jeffrey M. Hoffeld holds that the legend of Lilith also preoccupied Christian writers, such as Petrus Comestor, in the second half of the twelfth century, who provided Latin commentaries on the Bible. Some of these writings depict a jealous Lilith who, to help the devil, took on the form of the serpent who tempted Eve in the garden of Eden, which further inspired several representations of Lilith as the temptress-

serpent that we can see in amulets or charms of the past and on the base of statues of the Virgin Mary in early-fifteenth-century Northern France. (Hoffeld 432-33).

Raphael Patai claims that tales about Lilith or “Lilitu,” actually date from Sumerian legends of 2400 B.C.E. describing Lilith as a beautiful maiden, a harlot, and a vampire, who would never let go of a lover, but never really satisfy him. A Babylonian terra-cotta relief from the same time period shows a goddess-like figure of Lilith as slender, shapely, beautiful, and nude with wings, owl-feet and a cap covered by several pairs of horns. In northern Syria of the seventh century B.C.E., she appears on a tablet as a winged sphinx with an inscription suggesting that she is of danger to those in childbirth (Patai 221-222).

After presenting background information and providing references for additional reading, for the first unit of the course on the process of deciding to write as a woman, I asked students to write the first 250 words of their autobiography. This assignment combines the NCSSFL-ACTFL presentational writing intermediate mid-skill of writing an autobiographical statement for contests, programs, or a job or study application with the advanced task of drafting and revising an essay for school and the advanced high task of writing a family or community history (*Can-Do* 24-26). It also encourages students to consider how an author encodes limits into a text. During our next meeting, the students presented their compositions aloud. We discussed why they had all chosen a chronological structure that included date and place of birth, parents, a childhood memory, and in what way they were each talented or special in their presentations. Why, for example, didn't they start their autobiographical presentations with the moment they realized that they were talented or the deciding factor in their life thus far? To make them experience a woman writer's stereotypical dilemma, I then told them to rewrite their 250 words as though they knew that to be accepted, they did not have the right to be talented or intelligent in any way that did not include housework, cooking, making themselves into beautiful art objects, raising children, or making conversation.

The tests on the first two units combine the Intermediate High Presentational Writing ability to produce simple summaries about something learned and something researched and challenge them to attain the Advanced High goals of writing a position paper on something researched and writing an editorial piece to speculate on implications of an issue (*Can-Do* 26). Both tests were open book and consisted of two essay questions each to be completed at home. The first, worth 80 points was as follows:

Nous avons lu des extraits des plusieurs écrivaines dans la première section de notre livre de cours. Choisissez quatre sur huit des femmes suivantes et écrivez au moins un paragraphe sur chacune pour décrire son importance. Dans chaque paragraphe, il faut situer l'auteur dans son temps et son pays, il faut parler de ce qu'elle a écrit et pourquoi c'était

remarquable de l'avoir fait, et il faut parler de son originalité par rapport aux autres écrivaines: Marie de France, Christine de Pisan, Catherine des Roches, George Sand, Simone de Beauvoir, Françoise Ega, Nicole Brossard, Maryse Condé.

The second question, worth 20 points, was more open to interpretation and input from the daily lives of students: “Selon votre livre, quels sont les plaisirs et les angoisses d'une femme qui se voue à l'écriture? Comment ces plaisirs et angoisses ont-ils changé depuis le 12^e siècle?”

The second unit at-home test was designed to make the students reflect on why the writings of French women writers would be important to read today.

Choisissez une auteure de la section “En Famille.” Commentez et expliquez ce que vous avez compris et appris de cet extrait en donnant des exemples précis du texte et en citant le texte (l'extrait de l'auteure en question). Répondez aux questions suivantes dans votre explication:

- 1) Quel rapport y a-t-il entre les idées de cet écrivain et le sort des femmes dans le monde d'aujourd'hui?
- 2) De quelle façon est-ce que cet extrait peut vous aider à mieux vivre dans le monde actuel?

To encourage students to support their ideas more effectively and to be more involved with finding, deciphering, and presenting the background information that would give them more access to the target texts, I had our university reference librarian do a special class for my students on finding and using reference materials online and in our library. I also provided the following guideline:

Un bon essai sur une œuvre littéraire pour ce cours doit inclure les éléments suivants:

Une introduction

Au moins une phrase qui annonce le fil conducteur de votre essai

Plusieurs points ou opinions dont vous voulez convaincre votre lecteur

Au moins un exemple ou une citation pour soutenir chaque point ou opinion

Des notes ou références indiquant la page et l'oeuvre de chaque référence

Une bibliographie

Une conclusion

Une bonne réponse à une question d'essai ou d'examen va clairement reprendre les termes de la question, les définir, répondre à la question et donner des exemples précis pour soutenir chaque point.

Other successful tactics that promote student reading comprehension and writing production include the following. Translate more passages into English before continuing the in-class discussion in French. Share expertise about how to locate words, expressions and their translations on the Internet. Find a balance between having students work together in small groups, and having one large group discussion led by the teacher. Be ready to shift gears if either situation is not working.

Overall, students performed best when I told them to explore their texts as though understanding each text was essential to learning from history and to living better in contemporary society. For the section on “Corporalités” in which women writers explore new ways of representing the female body in relationship to other bodies and to writing, each group of two students had to interpret one excerpt or poem from Cixous, Albiach, Labé, Kristeva, Desbordes-Valmore, Beauvoir, Irigaray, Joyce Mansour, and Colette, and to present the meaning of their text based on the literary history behind it, the individual situation of its author, and the images and figures within. As further clarification, I provided the following instructions:

Pour votre présentation du chapitre “Corporalités,” je m'intéresse surtout à votre interprétation du texte dont vous êtes responsable. Je demande que vous répondiez aux questions dans *Contre-courants* ainsi qu'aux plus grandes questions, “Quel est l'intérêt symbolique de ce texte?” “Comment pourrais-je convaincre mon ami(e) qu'il faut absolument lire ce texte pour mieux comprendre la vie actuelle?” Vous avez le droit de vous servir des renseignements dans d'autres livres et sur Internet, mais ce sont vos idées sur le texte et votre façon de les expliquer et les soutenir avec des exemples précis de votre extrait qui sont les plus importantes. Écrivez une version de ce que vous voulez dire. Vous avez le droit de nous la lire pendant votre présentation si vous voulez.

This was useful as an activity because in seeking an explanation, students often consulted other texts at the library or online, and the stronger students motivated the weaker students to learn more. Giving extra credit for preparation in writing and allowing them to read what they had written resulted in better presentations, better French, increased student confidence, and quicker internalization of certain expressions in French.

Students also learned best from positive reinforcement for their performance. Studies by Stephen D. Krashen have shown that students are hypersensitive about being

corrected and that negative feedback often hinders their progress. For these reasons, I recommend the following. Praise in detail what has been presented well. Correct errors in French only if the errors were repeated several times and impaired communication. Request student reactions and questions before giving teacher feedback. Ask one or two questions to clarify points or encourage students to further reflection and interpretation. All of these tactics increased student confidence and eagerness to participate in class.

Having students rewrite and perform texts was a particularly effective activity that addressed both the Advanced Low Presentational Writing Skill of revising an essay or composition and the Advanced-Mid Presentational Speaking category of telling a story to a particular audience for dramatic effect (*Can-Do* 25, 18). As Margaret Haggstrom suggests, dramatizing literary texts helps students to analyze them and to communicate their interpretations in a playful manner while developing their speaking and reading abilities in French (9). Her research shows that students tend to wait for the teacher to announce the correct textual meaning (Haggstrom 7-8). Envisioning how to perform a text encourages freedom of textual interpretation. I thus have students do dramatic presentations of their particular text in groups of two or three for the section called "Histoires d'amour." Each group studies its text to decide which part of the reading to dramatize or rewrite into conversational scenes and which props to use. Students like to be filmed so that they can view and hear themselves afterwards; it allows them to gain confidence about what they do well and to learn more easily what they most need to improve. Examples of dramatizations that work well include rewriting Marguerite Yourcenar's "Feux" and performing it as a monologue by Phèdre; doing dramatic readings of poetry accompanied by music or dance, giving a Powerpoint with colors images, and an explication de texte; and the staging of Marie de France's "Les Deux Amants."

The section on marriage easily lent itself to an assignment designed to make students develop the Advanced Low Presentational Speaking Skills of presenting reasons for and against a position on a political and social issue and during a formal debate. This section culminated in a class debate of the pros and cons of marriage for a woman as explained in Appendix A. To help the students focus on the intellectual nature of creating arguments for debate, I found it useful to assign students to groups for or against marriage without knowing their feelings on it. One of my students volunteered to make a handout with French vocabulary and expressions to help students express opinions. I gave them 30 minutes in class to discuss with their groups, the arguments each would present during the allotted time. After the debate, each student was asked to send me an e-mail commenting on what had worked well and ideas for improving our in-class debate.

They liked the assignment for the following reasons. With this format, they could analyze a piece of literature, learn French debate rules and vocabulary, and discover facts on marriage in Francophone history and society today in a time-efficient way. The debate brought out the positive and negative sides of marriage both in the

literature and in French society today. Being assigned sides required them to explore a view of marriage that they had never seen before, and showed them that a story could be used to argue both sides. It encouraged them to ask their classmates questions about ambiguous points. Having a limited time to speak made them write down main points and citations that would guide them in their arguments, and help them to plan their speech and responses. Using the class period before the debate to meet with their direct opponent and their team to discuss their texts was very helpful. Overall, this was a “really fun” assignment that made them think about a text differently--it was easier to analyze because they had “a goal in mind.”

However, I would recommend the following during future uses of this assignment. Before starting the debate, find a debate in French on the Internet and transcribe the expressions used to ask questions or react to them. Spend class time before the debate day watching and commenting on the format and style of the debate. During the debate, give each speaker three minutes to speak without interruption. Then two questions will be asked, one by the direct opponent (specialist of the same textual excerpt) and one by another member of the direct opponent's team. The remaining time of the six minutes would be spent answering the two questions and making a concluding statement. In a class with less advanced students, allow students to have a preview of the main points of the opposite team so that questions may be prepared in advance and each student will have the chance to ask at least two questions during the debating period.

For the “Féminismes” section, the testing project combined the Presentational Speaking Intermediate High skill of presenting ideas about a famous person with the Advanced Low skill of presenting reasons for or against a position on a political or social issue (*Can-Do* 16-17). The preparation for this also requires students to practice the Interpretive Listening Advanced Low skills of understanding short presentations about people in history with following oral stories, recorded book summaries, and short excerpts from speakers (*Can-Do* 31). This testing assignment (found in Appendix B) was to reproduce the format of the former French television program that introduced newly published books of interest, *Apostrophes*, hosted by Bernard Pivot. Students first watched a video of a past *Apostrophes* program as a model for their version of the talk show, which would discuss the ten texts that explore representations of women in the section called “Féminismes.” Each student who played an author had to read the excerpts from her respective author, read about or view short films of the author on the Internet and attempt to develop a heartfelt understanding of that author’s worldview. Much like Bernard Pivot in the original *Apostrophes*, the student acting as host would have to skim all of the texts, underline key phrases and copy quotations. Websites now provide short films of numerous interviews by Pivot and lists of questions that he has asked in his show, *Bouillon de Culture*, that replaced *Apostrophes*. I told the host student to ask each author student to define and question the privileges of masculine authority, to state how she had contested these privileges in her writing, and to define her idea of woman. This

activity seemed to work best in groups of five that allowed for two performances, of approximately 40 minutes each.

For the unit, “Paroles and Politiques,” two different projects have worked successfully. The first works better with more advanced students and challenges students to perform at a Superior Level of Interpretive Reading (that of reading a position statement and understanding the references (*Can-Do* 39). The preparation necessary for the oral presentation encourages them to practice the Advanced Low Presentational Writing skill of writing summaries or annotations for a research project (*Can-Do* 25). The presentation part urges them to attain the Advanced Mid Presentational Speaking abilities of making a presentation on a subject of research and teaching a lesson to a particular audience (*Can-Do* 18). Assign the students partners and texts based on what you know about their levels and how your students work together. Then provide the following instructions.

Deux personnes vont travailler ensemble pour présenter chaque texte ou auteur à la classe. Pour chaque texte il faut faire un petit compte rendu du texte précisant les points essentiels et pourquoi c'est important dans l'histoire des femmes en France. Après chaque présentation des deux personnes, il faut poser à vos camarades de classe cinq questions sur les choses essentielles à retenir pour bien comprendre le texte ou l'auteur. Si vos camarades ne savent pas les réponses, il faut les expliquer ou les écrire pour assurer que tous comprennent les réponses.

The second project, a game similar to *Jeopardy* practices the Intermediate High-Advanced Low Presentational Skills requiring the reporting of ideas about historical events, people or issues and the Advanced Low Presentational Writing Skills of writing summaries for research projects. (*Can-Do* 16-17, 25). The questions have clearly right or wrong answers and limited time is allowed to answer each question. Every student had the responsibility of making up five questions with answers for one of the author's texts in the section. Those making questions for the same authors and texts had to consult with one another so that no two questions would be the same. The day of the competition there were two teams and a stopwatch. I asked the questions and watched the clock. Each person had a small whiteboard or paper and a bold marker. For every question that was asked, designated members from opposing teams had fifteen seconds to write the correct response without consulting anyone. If there was no correct response, another fifteen seconds were allotted for the members of each team to confer and to give a group response. If there was still no correct response, neither team received the point. This activity works best with questions that have a single factual answer.

For the final section “Passages,” on transitional moments in French women writers’ lives, I asked the students to write texts on their own rites of passage, an

assignment which makes them reach toward the Advanced High Presentational Writing goal of writing entries in a reflection journal (*Can-Do* 26). Students surprised me with their honesty and their efforts to imitate the French texts by writing about such varied things as their first romance, their loss of virginity, the changes in their body from childhood through adolescence to adulthood, their first jobs, and the night their parents split up. One even presented her rite of passage in the form of a free verse poem shaped like a wedding dress and discussing the pros and cons of getting legally married.

The culmination of this course was the final presentation/final project that required students to practice the Advanced Mid Presentational Writing and Speaking skills of writing a research paper and presenting the research (*Can-Do* 26,18). Each student had to read a text by an author not studied in class, present that author in class, write a brief paper on that author's work, and grade his or her own work as explained in Appendices D and E. Overall, the final presentations revealed that the students had made good progress in speaking about French literary texts in context. Their self-evaluations confirmed the importance of positive feedback for they graded their own work much more harshly than reasonable for their level of expertise in French.

In conclusion, the activities provided for teaching French literature in this study encourage a broader understanding of French-speaking cultures and perspectives and develop a student's speaking, reading, writing, and listening communicative skills in French. The instructions provided could easily be modified for use with texts of other foreign-language literatures as well. Personalizing these homework and in-class projects to teach literature is an excellent way to create class solidarity, increase students' enjoyment of literature and decrease students' fear of reading, writing, and speaking in a foreign language. These guidelines offer several alternatives for helping students to understand the links between French literature and the globally diverse world that they will govern tomorrow.

Appendix A

Instructions pour le débat sur le mariage

Sujet pour le débat: "Une femme peut trouver son bonheur à l'intérieur du mariage."

Pour: six étudiants

Contre: cinq étudiants

Instructions: En travaillant dans les groupes ci-dessus, vous allez essayer de nous prouver pourquoi une femme peut ou ne peut pas trouver son bonheur à l'intérieur du mariage. Il faut soutenir votre position par des citations des textes dans la section sur l'amour de votre livre de classe et par des statistiques ou citations trouvés ailleurs sur le mariage dans les pays francophones.

Suggestions pour vous préparer :

En lisant chaque texte présenté dans cette section, demandez-vous de quelle manière il indique que le mariage est bénéfique ou maléfique pour les femmes. Notez vos idées.

Après avoir lu tous les textes, organisez vos idées. Est-ce que vous avez suffisamment de détails pour convaincre l'autre de votre position ?

Faites des recherches sur Internet ou à la bibliothèque pour chercher des statistiques ou histoires récentes sur le mariage en France ou dans des pays francophones pour renforcer vos arguments.

Retrouvez les autres membres de votre groupe et partagez vos idées. Organisez-vous pour que chaque membre ait quelque chose à dire sans répéter exactement ce que dit un autre dans le groupe. Il vous faut donc beaucoup d'exemples pour appuyer votre point de vue.

Appendix B

Instructions pour le programme "Apostrophes" pour la section "Féminismes"

Instructions pour les auteurs:

1. Vous êtes maintenant l'auteur que je vous ai indiqué.
2. Étudiez l'extrait de cet auteur pour bien comprendre les idées principales de l'extrait et pour être capable de parler aux autres de ce que vous (l'auteur) avez écrit dans cet extrait.
3. Faites des recherches sur Internet et dans les livres pour mieux comprendre votre auteur.
4. Préparez un discours de 10 minutes minimum sur les idées de votre auteur afin d'être capable de répondre aux questions du présentateur (notre Bernard Pivot).

Instructions pour celui ou celle qui joue Bernard Pivot, le présentateur:

1. Vous êtes maintenant le présentateur d'un programme littéraire comme *Apostrophes* du passé.
2. Vous allez lire tous les extraits de ce chapitre, soulignant et copiant des phrases dans chaque extrait qui vous ont frappé et pour lesquelles vous allez demander une clarification.
3. En plus, il faut demander à chaque auteur de 1) définir et interroger les privilèges de l'autorité masculine 2) dire comment elle a contesté les privilèges par ses écrits 3) définir son idée de la femme.

Appendix C

Instructions pour le jeu pour "Paroles et Politiques"

Chaque individu doit écrire cinq questions avec réponse concernant l'auteur et le texte dont il est responsable. Il doit y avoir deux questions avec réponse sur le texte et trois sur l'auteur ou vice-versa. Il faut rédiger des questions avec des réponses précises et assez courtes pour répondre en un mot ou deux phrases au maximum.

Les deux personnes qui formulent des questions pour le même auteur et le même extrait doivent se consulter pour être sûres d'avoir dix questions avec réponse différentes.

Nous allons avoir une compétition entre deux équipes avec toutes les questions formulées et avec des prix pour ceux qui gagnent.

Les points seront accordés de la façon suivante :

Il faut un chronomètre. Toute réponse doit s'écrire sur une feuille de papier ou un petit tableau blanc de telle façon que les autres lisent facilement la réponse de leur place. Pendant les quinze premières secondes, une personne de chaque équipe peut écrire la réponse. S'il n'y a pas de bonne réponse, je donne encore quinze secondes à chaque équipe pour trouver une réponse de groupe. Si personne ne gagne le point, le professeur donnera la réponse.

Appendix D

Projet Final

Ce qu'il faut faire pour votre présentation:

Choisissez un auteur et un des livres sur la liste ou une œuvre d'une autre femme écrivaine pas traitée dans notre livre. Vérifiez votre sélection avec moi.

Lisez votre œuvre une première fois. Prenez des notes en marquant soigneusement des pages ou sections sur ce que vous trouvez intéressant, ce qui vous fait penser à d'autres textes ou idées étudiés ou discutés dans le cours.

Faites des recherches sur votre auteur pour savoir sa situation, sa formation, sa classe sociale, les stéréotypes sur elle.

Analysez comment l'histoire personnelle de votre auteur se montre dans l'œuvre que vous avez choisie.

Analysez le reste de l'œuvre choisie par rapport à tout ce que l'on a étudié dans ce cours et par rapport à ce que vous avez découvert en faisant des recherches

**** Attention: Lisez avec l'esprit critique ce que vous trouvez sur Internet ou dans des livres. Il faut vous demander si votre source est fiable et perspicace. Il y a beaucoup de choses publiées qui montrent une vision assez limitée. Je vous demande d'avoir des interactions intellectuelles avec tout ce que vous lisez.

Relisez votre présentation quand vous l'aurez finie mais avant de la faire. Ecrivez-moi une lettre m'expliquant votre méthode de travail, les qualités et faiblesses de votre présentation et ce que sa préparation vous a appris. Dites-moi aussi quelle note votre présentation mérite et pourquoi.

Après avoir fait votre présentation, ajoutez un paragraphe à votre lettre pour parler des qualités et faiblesses de votre présentation orale, ce que cette présentation vous a appris sur vous-même, l'enseignement, etc. Dites-moi aussi quelle note la version orale de votre présentation mérite et pourquoi.

Ce qu'il faut faire pour votre dissertation finale:

Préparez votre présentation en notant bien tout ce que vous avez lu et cité pour le faire.

Faites votre présentation devant la classe.

Considérez les commentaires de vos camarades de classe et de votre professeur pour modifier certaines parties de votre présentation.

Perfectionnez votre français et votre style. Le style écrit est souvent différent du style parlé. Vérifiez votre grammaire et orthographe en vous servant des outils de votre traitement du texte.

Vérifiez que vos citations, vos références, votre ponctuation conviennent aux normes du style MLA.

Relisez votre dissertation quand vous l'aurez finie. Ecrivez-moi une lettre m'expliquant votre méthode de travail, les qualités et faiblesses de votre dissertation et ce que vous avez appris en la faisant. Dites-moi aussi quelle note votre dissertation mérite et pourquoi.

Appendix E

Œuvres et auteurs suggérés pour le projet final:

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Le côté technologique de Proust

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Abstract: Le but de cet article est d'examiner et de catégoriser sous ses diverses formes l'utilisation littéraire que fit Proust des appareils technologiques, dérivés matériels des progrès scientifiques de la deuxième moitié du dix-neuvième siècle et du début du vingtième. Ces aboutissements du génie inventif humain, devenus des produits industriels ou en voie de l'être, jouent des rôles divers dans l'univers littéraire proustien. Dans certains cas, tout comme pour les personnages, on les voit évoluer, subir des transformations qui sont constatées et commentées par le narrateur.

Keywords: Marcel Proust – *À la recherche du temps perdu* – technologie – modernité – passéisme – moyens de transports – télécommunication – Première Guerre mondiale – scientisme

Tiens, me dit Albertine, il y a un aéroplane, il est haut, très haut. (*La Prisonnière* 3: 907)

Tn paradoxe apparent se présente d'emblée: l'œuvre proustienne, s'arc-boutant sur la mémoire, semble être principalement tournée vers le passé, vers un monde par définition disparu, auquel n'ont accès – et au prix d'efforts multiples et soutenus – que le souvenir involontaire et la création littéraire. Tout ce qu'impliquent les innovations technologiques – l'amélioration, le progrès, la modernité, l'avenir – paraît à première vue étranger, sinon antithétique, à l'univers romanesque de la *Recherche*. C'est une des raisons pour lesquelles, à partir du deuxième volume, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* qui obtient *in extremis* le prix Goncourt en 1919, l'énorme projet littéraire qu'avait conçu Proust fait l'effet d'être en net décalage par rapport à la nouvelle époque de sa publication, celle de l'après-Grande Guerre et de l'expansion économique des années 1920: "Lorsque la *Recherche du temps perdu* est publiée après la guerre, l'œuvre donna l'impression d'un monument d'une autre ère, d'un monstre préhistorique échoué dans les années folles" (Compagnon 26).

Néanmoins, le long regard rétrospectif du narrateur de la *Recherche* sur une époque révolue n'empêche nullement la prise en compte des divers effets des innovations techniques, pas plus que ceux du passage du temps sur les personnages. Comme le souligne William C. Carter: "Proust was as interested in the present and future as he was in the past. This is proven out by the profusion of imagery drawn from

modern inventions that appears in his writings. There is scarcely an invention, new at the time, that was not put to good metaphorical use by the writer” (184). Le prodigieux développement technologique qui avait caractérisé la Belle Époque est abondamment reflété, intégré, approprié par un narrateur avide de connaître les nouvelles perspectives que pouvaient lui procurer, en particulier, les moyens de transport et de communication alors en plein essor. Même les bombardements aériens de la Grande Guerre, illustrant la nouvelle dimension du potentiel mortifère des progrès techniques, trouveront leur place dans le dernier volume, *Le temps retrouvé*. “Aucun aspect de la vie moderne n’effraie Proust, qui les insère tous dans son œuvre, où ils jouent, avion inclus, un rôle capital: le téléphone, la voiture, les avions, les bombardements aériens auront non seulement une place, mais leur épisode” (Tadié 599).

Cette présence notable dans l’œuvre reflète l’intérêt constant que portait l’auteur aux innovations technologiques, et que l’on peut constater à travers sa correspondance: “Le charme pour nous vieillot (1900) de la *Recherche* et la vie recluse de l’écrivain pourraient nous faire penser que tout, dans le mode de vie de Proust, était suranné. Or une chose frappe, à lire ses lettres: c’est qu’il s’est entouré de toutes les inventions mécaniques de son temps” (Fraisie 291). Au niveau personnel, Proust, esthète maladif et en grande partie confiné à son appartement pendant la rédaction de la *Recherche*, ne semble pourtant pas être prédisposé à se passionner pour les dernières inventions technologiques. Là encore, il n’en est rien. Comme l’attestent de nombreuses lettres, Proust est fréquemment curieux, parfois enthousiaste, vis-à-vis des nouveautés techniques, en intégrant certains dans sa vie quotidienne (le théâtrophone), ou en faisant l’expérience (l’automobile), ou encore cherchant à se renseigner sur d’autres (l’aviation).

Le goût de l’auteur pour les appareils mécaniques qui matérialisent le progrès technologique s’intègre dans le cadre d’un intérêt plus diversifié vis-à-vis de plusieurs disciplines scientifiques. François Vannucci a dressé un inventaire des références scientifiques dans la *Recherche*. Au-delà de leur variété, qui rappelle la diversité des lectures de Proust et l’étendue de ses connaissances, sinon du niveau de précision de son érudition¹, certaines catégories de ces références scientifiques sont associées à une thématique particulière. Par exemple, la botanique semble notamment être associée à la sexualité (Vannucci 99-103). Pour sa part, Donald Wright a fourni une étude détaillée de

¹ Comme le signale Vannucci, “Proust semble parfois prendre un malin plaisir à parsemer son texte de paroles passablement techniques” (93). En se servant de la terminologie scientifique à des fins métaphoriques, l’auteur de la *Recherche* n’est pas toujours rigoureux: “Proust utilise abondamment le langage spécial des sciences, mais il commet parfois des erreurs dans le maniement des termes” (179). Notons au passage une erreur frappante, lorsque Proust fait de Thomas Edison, au lieu d’Alexander Graham Bell, l’inventeur du téléphone: “C’est ainsi que la découverte d’Edison avait permis à Françoise d’acquérir un défaut de plus, qui était de se refuser, quelque utilité, quelque urgence qu’il y eût, à se servir du téléphone” (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 128).

l'importance de la science médicale dans l'œuvre proustienne². Il insiste à juste titre sur le fait que, de façon générale, la science "est un élément de première importance pour pouvoir analyser d'une façon efficace le texte proustien" (20). Loin de se cantonner dans un esthétisme distancié ou désincarné, Proust assimile toutes les tendances et facultés de son époque, mêlant dans son œuvre "un scientisme de laboratoire à une conception psychologique de l'individu" (258). Cette alliance de la représentation des produits les plus avancés des sciences de son époque et de la minutie de l'analyse psychologique constitue un des aspects de la modernité de la *Recherche*, si étonnante que celle-ci puisse initialement paraître.

Le but de cet article est d'examiner et de catégoriser sous ses diverses formes l'utilisation littéraire que fit Proust des appareils technologiques, dérivés matériels des progrès scientifiques de la deuxième moitié du dix-neuvième siècle et du début du vingtième. Ces aboutissements du génie inventif humain, devenus des produits industriels ou en voie de l'être, jouent des rôles divers dans l'univers littéraire proustien. Dans certains cas, tout comme pour les personnages, on les voit évoluer, subir des transformations qui sont constatées et commentées par le narrateur. D'abord source d'éblouissement confinant à une révélation divine (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 417), l'avion deviendra, comme on le verra, un engin de mort – aux dimensions et à la portée esthétique tout aussi surhumaines – pour le narrateur perdu dans les ténèbres d'une grande ville bombardée (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 412).

Qu'elles aient été inventées ou récemment améliorées du vivant de l'auteur, la liste des nouveautés technologiques représentées dans son œuvre est longue: l'automobile, l'avion, la bicyclette, l'ascenseur, le téléphone, le théâtrophone, le pianola, la photographie, le cinéma, la radiographie³... Mais aussi les bombardements aériens, la tour Eiffel hérissée de projecteurs, transformée en gigantesque outil militaire destiné à repérer les avions allemands (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 380). Qu'elles soient caractérisées ou non par le gigantisme, les inventions modernes de l'époque de Proust sont souvent associées à des dimensions mythologiques: Orphée pour le téléphone, le pilote en tant que "demi-dieu" grec pour l'avion. Quant à l'automobile, elle devient un "géant aux bottes de sept lieues" (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 386), qui va jusqu'à modifier "le rapport de l'espace au temps" (3: 385). L'adoption ou la généralisation d'une innovation technologique constitue aussi un marqueur du passage du temps et de l'évolution des usages sociaux (thématiques proustiennes s'il en est), permettant au narrateur d'insister sur l'étrangeté de chaque nouvelle expérience: "Le téléphone n'était pas encore à cette

² Proust lui-même rappelle souvent l'importance de la science médicale pour sa famille. Dans une lettre à Ernst Robert Curtius, il souligne que son père et son frère étaient tous deux professeurs de médecine (*Correspondance* 21: 479).

³ La découverte des rayons X en 1895 a suscité un engouement durable. Le narrateur assimile la nouvelle technologie de la radiographie à la révélation d'une plus profonde vérité: "De sorte que cette étrange épreuve qui nous semble si peu ressemblante à quelquefois le genre de vérité, peu flatteur certes mais profond et utile, d'une photographie par les rayons X" (*Le côté de Guermantes* 2: 569).

époque d'usage aussi courant qu'aujourd'hui" (*Le côté de Guermantes* 2: 431); "[L]es avions étaient encore rares à cette époque" (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 417). Une fois banalisée dans son usage, une nouveauté technologique devient ainsi une étape de transition sociale au même titre que l'adoption d'une nouvelle mode littéraire ou musicale parmi les diverses coteries que fréquente le narrateur. Cependant, le plus souvent, la propulsion mécanique des moyens de transport modernes ne fait pas accélérer le récit, de même que les nouveaux moyens de communication à distance (le téléphone et le télégramme), au lieu de contribuer à un éventuel éclaircissement ou dénouement, tendent plutôt à créer des quiproquos, voire à intensifier l'angoisse provenant de l'absence de l'être aimé.

Antoine Compagnon a décrit en détail la dimension double ou hybride de la *Recherche*, qui récapitule une longue tradition littéraire tout en annonçant l'émergence d'un nouveau paradigme: "[L]'ambiguïté propre à l'œuvre de Proust, assise entre deux siècles comme entre deux chaises, bancale ou boiteuse, et trouvant son énergie dans ce décalage. . . . *À la recherche du temps perdu* est entre deux siècles, dernier grand roman organique du XIX^e siècle et premier grand roman expérimental du XX^e siècle" (49-50). Ce qui est vrai pour l'œuvre dans son ensemble s'applique également à la question plus restreinte de la fonction narrative des innovations technologiques. Chez Proust, la littérature s'approprie la modernité technique, la met à son service au même titre que tout autre phénomène qui viendra à être incorporé au récit, d'où la présence d'un double niveau technologique. Dans la *Recherche*, voitures hippomobiles et automobiles coexistent, l'équitation rencontre l'aviation, les lettres manuscrites sont accompagnées, non pas supplantées, par le télégramme et le téléphone.

La vie de Proust coïncide à peu près avec un moment charnière du développement historique, à la fois héritier de l'optimisme scientifique du dix-neuvième siècle, qui prévoyait un nouvel âge d'or grâce aux avancées scientifiques, et annonciateur des désillusions qui ont suivi les 'progrès' technologiques meurtriers (tanks, mitrailleuses lourdes, artillerie à longue portée, bombardements aériens, gaz asphyxiants, etc.) de la Première Guerre mondiale. On peut établir un contraste entre l'entreprise romanesque de Proust, qui cherche d'abord et surtout à accéder à "l'édifice immense du souvenir" (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 46), et celle de Victor Hugo qui, toujours visionnaire, appelait en 1851, lors d'un discours à l'Assemblée nationale, à la construction de "cet édifice immense de l'avenir" (10: 275) – en l'occurrence, sa vision utopique de ce qu'il appelait les États-Unis d'Europe⁴. Dans "Plein ciel" (*La légende des siècles* 5: 810-22), Hugo a

⁴ Modèle ambigu mais essentiellement négatif, l'œuvre hugolienne constitue selon Françoise Leriche une véritable "obsession" parmi les divers réseaux intertextuels de la *Recherche*. Comme l'explique Leriche, l'importance de la "polémique anti-hugolienne" est particulièrement visible dans le contraste qu'établit le narrateur au moment de clore son récit, alors qu'il a compris comment il pourrait réaliser son œuvre: "Victor Hugo dit: 'Il faut que l'herbe pousse et que les enfants meurent.' Moi je dis que la loi cruelle de l'art est que les êtres meurent et que nous-mêmes mourions en épuisant toutes les souffrances, pour que pousse l'herbe non de l'oubli mais de la vie éternelle, l'herbe drue des œuvres fécondes, sur

présenté sa conception du transport aérien, qu'il situait dans un avenir relativement proche. Selon lui, l'aviation accomplirait à l'échelle des continents ce que le chemin de fer avait accompli à l'échelle des pays: réunir les peuples pour faciliter le dialogue, encourager le commerce et aboutir à l'avènement de la paix. Vision irénique qui de nos jours ne peut que paraître naïve, et dont Proust a pu voir l'envers destructeur lors des bombardements aériens de la Première Guerre mondiale.

Le scientisme naïf du dix-neuvième siècle, qui associait de façon directe et simpliste les progrès scientifiques au développement moral des sociétés humaines, s'est désagrégé au fur et à mesure que s'amoncelaient les cadavres de la première guerre moderne et mondiale, durant laquelle le potentiel meurtrier de diverses innovations technologiques a été abondamment démontré. Bien que *Le temps retrouvé* (le seul volume de la *Recherche* dont le récit soit situé durant la guerre) ne s'attarde pas sur les détails de l'hécatombe quotidienne qui se déroulait dans les tranchées, Proust parsème la fin de son œuvre de références au nombre sans précédent de vies humaines perdues. C'est par rapport à un moyen de transport moderne que le narrateur rappelle que pendant la guerre les soldats allemands étaient "immobilisés il est vrai par une sanglante barrière toujours renouvelée – à une heure d'automobile de Paris" (4: 351), en précisant toutefois que la proximité relative de cette "sanglante barrière" (métonymie à la fois révélatrice et euphémique) n'empêchait ni les Verdurin de donner des dîners ni Charlus d'aller "à ses plaisirs".

Pour l'essentiel, le monde romanesque de Proust coïncide avec celui de l'Europe de la Belle Époque: une relative stabilité sociale et géopolitique, des frontières ouvertes (pour ceux qui avaient les moyens de voyager), une vie culturelle innovante et expansive – le tout sous-tendu par une conception généralement optimiste quant aux effets des progrès scientifiques et technologiques. À l'échelle mondiale, cependant, cette Europe-là était également celle de l'impérialisme colonial, du racisme et de l'affrontement des blocs économiques. Or, cette Europe-là s'est effondrée en août 1914, ce qui n'a évidemment pas été sans conséquences sur l'évolution de l'œuvre que Proust avait commencé à rédiger bien avant le début des hostilités.

Deux auteurs de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle et du début du vingtième, qu'on associe généralement aux débuts du genre de la science-fiction, Jules Verne (1828-1905) et H. G. Wells (1866-1946), illustrent un certain traitement littéraire des progrès scientifiques de leur époque. Plusieurs romans de Wells (par exemple: *A Modern Utopia*, 1905; *Men like Gods*, 1923) décrivent un avenir utopique qu'a permis le développement conjoint de la science et de la morale. Pour ce qui est de ces auteurs, bien qu'il faille nuancer l'image (surtout dans le cas de Verne) d'un optimisme béat vis-à-vis des effets sociaux des innovations technologiques, il est clair que celles-ci occupent une place centrale dans leurs œuvres. En ce qui concerne ces deux exemples, les progrès

laquelle les générations viendront faire gaiement, sans souci de ceux qui dorment en dessous, leur 'déjeuner sur l'herbe'" (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 615).

scientifiques et leurs conséquences sociales sont la condition essentielle de la création d'un monde romanesque. Tel n'est pas le cas chez Proust, pour qui sciences et technologies ne sont que des éléments parmi d'autres d'un projet romanesque bien plus vaste et multidimensionnel. Examinons à présent de façon plus détaillée comment Proust a fait usage littéraire de certains appareils, simples ou sophistiqués, qui à son époque constituaient des nouveautés ou qui s'étaient récemment banalisés.

Voir

Dès le début de la *Recherche*, le sens de la vue est associé au rêve, à la vision magique, à la fantasmagorie, aux images mouvantes qui seront bientôt produites à grande échelle au cinéma. Il faut ici d'abord tenir compte des appareils visuels qui ont été inventés avant la période où vécut Proust. La lanterne magique, un des lointains ancêtres du cinématographe, est très tôt présentée, lors du drame du coucher à Combray: "On avait bien inventé, pour me distraire les soirs où on me trouvait l'air trop malheureux, de me donner une lanterne magique dont, en attendant l'heure du dîner, on coiffait ma lampe" (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 9). À la fin de la *Recherche*, la métaphore de la lanterne magique servira à illustrer les effets ravageurs du passage du temps lors du bal de têtes: "[L]e Temps qui d'habitude n'est pas visible, pour le devenir cherche les corps et, partout où il les rencontre, s'en empare pour montrer sur eux sa lanterne magique" (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 503).

Un autre appareil à fonction ludique permet de recomposer ce qui est visible pour un laps de temps, mais qui sera bientôt transformé. À cause des mouvements de "ses petits losanges colorés", le kaléidoscope est utilisé pour métaphoriser les changements de perspective ou de point de vue, ainsi que les transformations sociales ou mondaines, en fonction des effets du passage du temps: "Mais pareille aux kaléidoscopes qui tournent de temps en temps, la société place successivement de façon différente des éléments qu'on avait cru immuables et compose une autre figure" (*À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* 1: 507). La même image de transformation sociale et intellectuelle, par recomposition d'éléments existants, se trouve dans *Le temps retrouvé*: "[L]e kaléidoscope n'est pas composé seulement par les groupes mondains, mais par les idées sociales, politiques, religieuses"⁵ (4: 472).

Le stéréoscope, autre appareil qui modifie la perspective, peut donner l'illusion de la profondeur à une silhouette entrevue: "On a vu une femme, simple image dans le décor de la vie, comme Albertine profilée sur la mer, et puis cette image on peut la détacher, la mettre près de soi, et voir peu à peu son volume, ses couleurs, comme si on l'avait fait passer derrière les verres d'un stéréoscope" (*Le côté de Guermantes* 2: 658). Dans ce cas, l'attrait de la nouveauté (grâce aux appareils à plaques, le stéréoscope se

⁵ Il semble que la création littéraire fonctionne inversement: face à la constante transformation sociale, "les grands littérateurs n'ont jamais fait qu'une seule œuvre, ou plutôt réfracté à travers des milieux divers une même beauté qu'ils apportent au monde" (*La Prisonnière* 3: 877).

perfectionne au tournant du siècle) se conjugue avec le snobisme: pour Bloch, le stéréoscope est un jouet de salon, servant à impressionner les invités (*À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* 2: 107).

Étant donné son goût pour les appareils visuels de toute sorte (lanterne magique, kaléidoscope, stéréoscope), il est étonnant de constater que le cinéma tient si peu de place dans l'œuvre de Proust. Or, à partir de 1895, le cinématographe des frères Lumière va rapidement devenir un phénomène industriel et artistique à l'échelle mondiale. Paradigme nouveau de la narration – on compare couramment un film à un texte que l'on peut semblablement analyser – le cinéma constitue un concurrent potentiel à l'écriture textuelle. Cependant, si Proust en fait quelques mentions non négligeables, il semble qu'il n'ait lui-même jamais vu un film: “[L]a réclusion fit que Proust ne fut jamais mis en contact direct avec l'invention des frères Lumière” (Fraisie 297). Il est donc d'autant plus curieux de trouver une description fort vive et évocatrice de la sensation d'étrangeté et de fascination que pouvait procurer le septième art à ses débuts. Durant la Première Guerre mondiale, Paris est souvent plongé dans le noir à cause des risques de bombardements aériens. Pour le narrateur, accoutumé à l'éclairage public de la “ville-lumière”, l'inhabituelle obscurité évoque “une mystérieuse pénombre de chambre où l'on montre la lanterne magique, de salle de spectacle servant à exhiber les films d'un de ces cinémas”⁶ (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 313).

Notons également la présence d'une technologie visuelle qui s'était répandue plusieurs décennies avant que n'apparaissent les images mouvantes du cinématographe. La fascination de Proust pour la photographie est amplement documentée, voire exagérée (Brassai). Néanmoins, la dimension artistique de la photographie, tout comme celle du cinéma, ne joue qu'un rôle relativement faible dans l'œuvre proustienne, ce qui présente un net contraste avec toute l'importance conférée à la peinture. De faible portée esthétique, la photographie est surtout représentée comme une simple technique de reproduction visuelle, une source de portraits à but souvent fétichiste. C'est ainsi que la grand-mère du narrateur trouve que “la vulgarité, l'utilité reprenaient trop vite leur place dans le mode mécanique de représentation, la photographie” (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 39). La photographie est également associée, de manière peu valorisante, à la scène de voyeurisme et de “profanations rituelles” à Montjouvain (1: 160). Dans *Le temps retrouvé*, juste avant le moment épiphanique dans la cour de l'hôtel de Guermantes, le narrateur constate que les insignifiants “instantanés” de Venise que produit sa mémoire volontaire sont “ennuyeux[x] comme une exposition de photographies” (4: 444). Plutôt que la photographie ou le cinéma, qui chez Proust paraissent n'être utiles qu'à reproduire de plates images réalistes, sont privilégiés les appareils moins sophistiqués (lanterne magique, kaléidoscope, stéréoscope) dont le narrateur peut se servir pour transformer,

⁶ Les salles de cinéma parisiennes, moribondes depuis le début de la guerre, connurent une nouvelle affluence grâce à l'arrivée massive, à partir de l'été 1915, de permissionnaires en quête de divertissement (Cronier 143-47).

et ensuite incorporer au processus narratif, ce qu'il voit. En ce sens, le regard, à l'aide de tels appareils, devient actif, s'apparentant à une forme d'écriture.

Entendre

Tout comme pour la vue, le sens de l'ouïe apparaît très tôt dans la *Recherche*, lorsque le narrateur se rappelle avoir entendu au loin, dans un demi-sommeil, "le sifflement des trains" qu'il compare au "chant d'un oiseau dans une forêt" (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 3). Dans la vie de l'auteur, les appareils de reproduction ou de transmission sonore serviront de compensation à sa claustration involontaire. Ne pouvant sortir aussi souvent qu'il le souhaitait, Proust était obligé de renoncer à de nombreuses représentations musicales ou théâtrales. Il s'était donc abonné au théâtrophone, service que Clément Ader (qui jouera également un rôle dans le développement de l'aviation) avait développé, et qui a duré de 1889 à 1932, lorsqu'il a été supplanté par la TSF ou radio. Sans sortir de son appartement, avec un écouteur téléphonique à chaque oreille, Proust pouvait ainsi entendre de la musique ou des dialogues, retransmis en direct à travers le réseau téléphonique, grâce à des microphones placés sur la scène de plusieurs théâtres et salles de concerts parisiens. Si le théâtrophone ne figure pas dans la *Recherche* (Sakamoto 252), il est bien présent dans la correspondance de Proust: "[J]'ai entendu hier au théâtrophone un acte des *Maîtres Chanteurs* . . . et ce soir... tout *Pelléas!*" (10: 250). Même si la qualité acoustique laisse souvent à désirer, ce service d'écoute à domicile permettra quelquefois à l'auteur de pallier les inconvénients de ses longues périodes de réclusion.

Pour Proust, le théâtrophone n'était pas le seul outil technologique qui lui permette d'écouter de la musique sans être obligé de sortir. Dans *La prisonnière*, lorsque le narrateur demande à Albertine de lui "faire un peu de musique" (3: 874), elle se sert du pianola, appareil mécanique qui utilise des rouleaux, et qui par extension métonymique confère un aspect mécanique au personnage qui l'actionne. Dans la vie, pour les mêmes raisons qui avaient mené à l'abonnement au théâtrophone, Proust fait installer un de ces appareils dans sa chambre: "Quand je ne suis pas trop triste pour en écouter, ma consolation est dans la musique, j'ai complété le théâtrophone par l'achat d'un pianola" (*Correspondance* 13: 31).

Ce qui ressort de ces deux exemples, c'est que chez Proust, l'ouïe semble être plus passive que le regard. Le pianola sert simplement à reproduire, comme le théâtrophone a pour unique fonction de transmettre, des morceaux musicaux que l'écouteur se contente de recevoir, sans qu'aucune transformation n'ait lieu, contrairement à ce qui était le cas avec certains appareils visuels. Proust use de peu de lyrisme lorsqu'il évoque – rarement – le théâtrophone ou le pianola, appareils certes utiles, mais qui n'exigent presque aucune intervention de la part de l'utilisateur-récepteur et qui ne peuvent s'apparenter à une activité créatrice.

Communiquer

Contrairement au théâtrophone, le téléphone, instrument de communication et non uniquement d'écoute, joue un rôle important dans la *Recherche*. À la fois comique et poignant, l'épisode du dialogue téléphonique avec la grand-mère illustre les intermittences des moyens de communication modernes, avec tout le potentiel de malentendus qu'ils génèrent (*Le côté de Guermantes* 2: 431-35). Or, la conversation téléphonique qui semble abolir la distance, sinon le temps, met le narrateur en état de dépendance, non plus seulement vis-à-vis d'appareils mécaniques, mais également d'intermédiaires humains. Avant qu'elle ne puisse aboutir (ce qui est loin d'être toujours le cas), la tentative de dialogue est ainsi contrôlée, canalisée, vérifiée par des êtres invisibles mais apparemment tout-puissants. Face à l'étrangeté de ce contact éphémère avec une voix chérie mais incorporelle, le narrateur a recours à une suite de références mythologiques pour qualifier les standardistes qui s'interposent entre lui et sa grand-mère: "Vierges Vigilantes"; "AnGES gardiens"; "Danaïdes de l'invisible"; "ironiques Furies"; "les servantes toujours irritées du Mystère, les ombrageuses prêtresses de l'Invisible, les demoiselles du téléphone!" (2: 432). Plus tard, le narrateur se comparera à Orphée, "resté seul, répét[ant] le nom de la morte" (2: 434).

En effet, à travers le paradoxe de la voix audible (par intermittences) mais toujours distante, la tentative de conversation téléphonique entre le narrateur et sa grand-mère constitue également une prémonition de la disparition de celle-ci: "Présence réelle que cette voix si proche – dans la séparation effective! Mais anticipation aussi d'une séparation éternelle!"⁷ (2: 432). Dans ces conditions, le sentiment d'angoisse du narrateur, dû à la dislocation radicale entre la personne et sa trace sonore, que la nouvelle technologie a plutôt tendance à accentuer en transmettant une voix désincarnée et spectrale, ne peut que s'accroître: "[J]e n'avais près de moi que cette voix, fantôme aussi impalpable que celui qui reviendrait peut-être me visiter quand ma grand-mère serait morte" (*Le côté de Guermantes* 2: 434).

À notre époque saturée de moyens de télécommunication omniprésents, l'épisode tragicomique de la rencontre du narrateur avec le téléphone tend à première vue à renforcer l'image d'une œuvre passiste, même en tenant compte du siècle qui nous en sépare. Mais il serait réducteur d'interpréter cet épisode comme une expression de la méfiance qu'aurait ressenti l'auteur face à une technologie qui faisait ses débuts – et qui se trouvera par la suite progressivement banalisée à l'intérieur du récit. La modernité de Proust ne se mesure pas en fonction du degré de nouveauté de chaque appareil technologique avec lequel entre en contact le narrateur (ou quelquefois l'auteur), et qui a d'ailleurs vocation à devenir lui-même désuet, à être remplacé par un autre appareil toujours plus nouveau et perfectionné. Comme on l'a vu, dans sa vie

⁷ Autre moyen technologique de communication à distance (bien que plus ancien), le télégramme apporte rarement de bonnes nouvelles: l'annonce de la mort d'Albertine (*Albertine disparue* 4: 58); la fausse impression qu'elle est encore vivante (4: 220).

comme dans son œuvre, Proust ne se barricadait nullement dans une attitude de refus vis-à-vis du progrès scientifique et technologique. Outil narratif, ni plus ni moins qu'un autre, quel que soit son niveau technologique, le téléphone s'intègre dans le récit proustien, jouant son rôle dans la suite d'adieux qui accompagne le passage du temps et le déploiement du projet romanesque. Si Proust ne dresse aucun panégyrique du progrès technologique, il considère soigneusement chacune de ses manifestations. Comme on le verra, s'il semble réserver un accueil mitigé au téléphone, il fera preuve d'enthousiasme envers l'automobile.

Se mouvoir sur terre

La bicyclette

La production industrielle de la bicyclette se développe durant les années 1890, ce qui réduit son coût et le rend abordable à de nouvelles catégories sociales. Le premier Tour de France se tiendra en 1903. Parmi les "jeunes filles en fleurs" que rencontre le narrateur lors de sa villégiature sur la côte normande, Albertine se distingue dès le début en tant que "la jeune fille à la bicyclette" (2: 186). Elle sera plus tard qualifiée de "bacchante à bicyclette" (2: 228), son incessante mobilité constituant un des signes de son homosexualité. C'est grâce à son appareil à deux roues qu'elle réussit à se soustraire au regard et à l'emprise du narrateur: "[J]e la voyais prendre sa bicyclette et filer à toute vitesse" (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 247). Dans la même phrase, le narrateur fait part de ses soupçons quant au but des randonnées cyclistes d'Albertine, qui partait sans doute rejoindre une autre jeune fille en fleurs.

Insaisissable à Balbec, Albertine deviendra cependant à Paris la "pesante esclave" qui n'est plus "sans cesse en fuite sur sa bicyclette" (*La prisonnière* 3: 873). Le narrateur se sert de deux appareils mécaniques pour établir le contraste entre l'ancienne Albertine et la "bête sauvage domestiquée" qu'il garde dans son appartement parisien: "Ses belles jambes, que le premier jour j'avais imaginées avec raison avoir manœuvré pendant toute son adolescence les pédales d'une bicyclette, montaient et descendaient tour à tour sur celles du pianola. . . . Ses doigts jadis familiers du guidon se posaient maintenant sur les touches" (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 884). D'une innovation technique à l'autre, de la mobilité individuelle à la production sous tutelle de notes musicales, Albertine a perdu sa liberté en acceptant de mettre ses talents au service des goûts esthétiques du héros-narrateur. Alors que la bicyclette lui permettait d'être toujours en mouvement, le pianola l'immobilise, la réduit à l'état de pantin qui active les touches sous la direction du narrateur.

L'automobile

En 1900, année de la création du *Guide Michelin*, le nombre de conducteurs en France se comptait non par millions, mais par milliers. Moyen de transport plus récent, plus cher et techniquement plus sophistiqué que la bicyclette, l'automobile est dans la *Recherche* associée aux visites chez les Verdurin, qui eux-mêmes, se voulant modernes, décident de faire l'acquisition d'une automobile avec chauffeur, remplaçant ainsi "leur break par une auto" (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 417), avec pour résultat, en grande partie dû à l'intervention de Morel, que "le cocher avait été mis à la porte", son remplaçant étant "le chauffeur qui nous avait promenés, Albertine et moi" (3: 419). Si l'automobile devient pour le narrateur une source d'inspiration littéraire, elle constituera pour Albertine une étape intermédiaire entre sa liberté à bicyclette et son statut de "prisonnière" dans l'appartement du narrateur à Paris⁸. Dans la vie de l'auteur, l'automobile est associée, tout comme l'avion, à Alfred Agostinelli, qui en tant que chauffeur de taxi emmena Proust visiter la Normandie durant l'été 1907, avant de devenir son secrétaire en 1913 (Tadié 695-701).

Toujours soucieux de connaître et si possible d'essayer les nouveautés techniques, Proust consacre à l'automobile un article célèbre, qu'il intègre plus tard dans la *Recherche*⁹. Même s'il ne conduisait pas lui-même, il est clair d'après la place importante donnée à l'automobile dans l'œuvre et la correspondance que ce nouveau moyen de transport offrait à Proust des perspectives esthétiques originales et fécondes. N'étant plus confinée comme le train aux tracés rectilignes et aux horaires fixes des chemins de fer, l'automobile pouvait prendre des détours, s'aventurer sur toutes les routes et changer rapidement d'orientation, offrant ainsi de nouvelles perspectives aux yeux des passagers. Par opposition au "point unique" où nous mène directement le train, moyen de transport qui avait pourtant enchanté le narrateur¹⁰, l'automobile décrit des "cercles, de plus en plus rapprochés" autour de la destination, offrant ainsi l'avantage de "nous aider à sentir d'une main plus amoureusement exploratrice, avec une plus fine précision, la véritable géométrie, la belle 'mesure de la terre'" (3: 394). Faut-il voir dans ce souci

⁸ Après le départ d'Albertine, le héros-narrateur annonce dans une lettre avoir voulu lui offrir un yacht et une Rolls-Royce (*Albertine disparue* 4: 37-39). Philip Kolb indique dans une note que le prix d'une Rolls-Royce était à peu près équivalent à l'aéroplane que Proust voulait offrir à Agostinelli (*Correspondance* 13: 221n8).

⁹ L'épisode des changements de perspective sur la vue des clochers de Martinville (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 177-80): c'est dans une voiture à cheval, au lieu d'une automobile, que le narrateur-enfant perçoit les mouvements apparents des trois clochers à l'horizon. Proust reprend et modifie ici son article, "Impressions de route en automobile" (*Contre Sainte-Beuve* 63-69), qui avait été publié en 1907 dans *Le Figaro* (Tadié 596-97; Danius 237-38).

¹⁰ "Il peut sembler que mon amour pour les féériques voyages en chemin de fer aurait dû m'empêcher de partager l'émerveillement d'Albertine devant l'automobile qui mène, même un malade, là où il veut, et empêche—comme je l'avais fait jusqu'ici—de considérer l'emplacement comme la marque individuelle, l'essence sans succédané des beautés inamovibles" (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 394).

d'éviter toute linéarité directe une des sources d'inspiration des phrases proustiennes, dont la longueur et le niveau de complexité syntaxique sont de longue date célèbres? Des circonvolutions routières aux circonlocutions littéraires, l'écriture de l'auteur de la *Recherche* semble souvent procéder par cercles concentriques, faisant progressivement ressentir au lecteur toute la topographie, toutes les sinuosités des sentiments et des pensées.

Au début du vingtième siècle, passer de la calèche à l'automobile (et du cocher au chauffeur) n'implique pas seulement un changement de vitesse. C'est une entrée dans la modernité technologique, une étape consciente vers le basculement dans une nouvelle époque – et donc une nouvelle façon d'aborder la problématique du récit littéraire. L'épisode crucial des "pavés assez mal équarris" de la cour de l'hôtel particulier des Guermantes, qui suscite chez le narrateur un moment épiphanique de "félicité" éblouissante et révélatrice, provient de ce qui faillit bien être un accident d'automobile: "au cri du wattman je n'eus que le temps de me ranger vivement de côté" (*Le Temps retrouvé* 4: 445). Comme le précise une note, un wattman était à l'époque un chauffeur d'automobile à propulsion électrique (4: 1256). Source de danger mais également à l'origine d'une révélation décisive, l'automobile, version moderne du *Deus ex machina*, a permis une fois de plus au narrateur de se détourner de son chemin préétabli, de découvrir de nouvelles perceptions, d'aboutir à un autre niveau narratif. Pour reprendre la thématique étudiée par Carter, le narrateur trouve enfin la clé de sa "quête" personnelle (et donc celle du projet romanesque proustien) à la suite d'une rencontre presque fatale avec une automobile¹¹.

Proust n'était évidemment pas le seul à se pencher sur la thématique de l'automobile au début du vingtième siècle. Le "Manifeste du Futurisme" de Filippo Tommaso Marinetti sera publié, également dans *Le Figaro*, en 1909, deux ans après l'article de Proust. Annonciateur du fascisme, auquel il se ralliera plus tard, Marinetti est connu pour son éloge dithyrambique de la force et de la vitesse, telles qu'elles s'incarnaient dans l'automobile: "Nous déclarons que la splendeur du monde s'est enrichie d'une beauté nouvelle: la beauté de la vitesse. Une automobile de course . . . est plus belle que la *Victoire de Samothrace*" (47). Il est toutefois impossible d'établir une quelconque influence, réciproque ou unilatérale, entre ces deux auteurs. Face à l'émergence d'une machine qui allait transformer bien plus que les simples déplacements quotidiens, Proust et Marinetti ont proposé des réponses littéraires totalement divergentes. L'attrait de la vitesse en automobile, du 'vertige' qui s'en dégage, mais sans les corrélations politiques de Marinetti, est également chanté dans *La 628-E8* d'Octave

¹¹ Il n'est guère surprenant que les nuisances plus banales qui de nos jours sont communément associées à l'automobile (le bruit, la pollution) soient représentées différemment dans la *Recherche*: "Comme un vent qui s'enfle par une progression régulière, j'entendis avec joie une automobile sous la fenêtre. Je sentis son odeur de pétrole" (*La prisonnière* 3: 912).

Mirbeau¹², long récit publié la même année que l'article de Proust. Là encore, peu de liens à trouver entre le texte fourre-tout (mais souvent passionnant) de Mirbeau et le réseau littéraire complexe dans lequel Proust insère l'automobile, comme il le fait avec d'autres produits technologiques de son époque. Contrairement aux auteurs qui privilégiaient l'effet grisant de la vitesse¹³, Proust semble avoir été surtout fasciné par la variété et la labilité des perspectives visuelles qu'offrait l'automobile.

Le train

Moyen de transport privilégié depuis des décennies, le train n'est cependant guère rapide durant la Belle Époque. Dans une lettre à sa mère, Proust dit qu'il "craignai[t] fort les huit heures de train" que durait le voyage de Dinard à Paris (le 15 août 1904, *Correspondance* 4: 217). Si son chemin (et son horaire) est tracé d'avance, par opposition à la multiplicité des parcours possibles en automobile, le train a l'avantage de pouvoir transporter un plus grand nombre de personnes, ce qui en fait un lieu de rencontre idéal. De nombreuses scènes de la *Recherche* se passent durant des voyages en chemin de fer. Le narrateur signale les multiples surnoms du train local qui passe par Balbec, emmenant les invités des Verdurin à la Raspelière (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 180). S'il n'offre pas la multiplicité de perspectives visuelles que confère l'automobile, le train constitue un lieu ambulant de sociabilité (3: 483), de mondanité (3: 259), mais aussi d'érotisme (selon Bloch, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* 2: 136). Pour le narrateur, le voyage en train après le séjour à Venise renouvelle le lien, provisoirement endommagé, avec sa mère (*Albertine disparue* 4: 234-52). N'offrant pas l'attrait de la toute dernière nouveauté, comme l'automobile et surtout l'avion, le train fait partie des innovations technologiques plus anciennes et donc plus rassurantes. Nul besoin de recourir à des références mythologiques pour le décrire. Si le train ne permet pas de découvrir de nouvelles perspectives, il fait partie du paysage.

L'ascenseur

Il faut mentionner ici l'ascenseur, et celui qui le fait fonctionner, le "lift". À Balbec, celui-ci, en dehors de son métier proprement dit, joue un rôle qui rappelle celui des "demoiselles du téléphone", agissant en tant qu'intermédiaire ou intercesseur pour le

¹² "[L]’automobilisme est donc une maladie, une maladie mentale. Et cette maladie s’appelle d’un nom très joli: la vitesse” (Mirbeau 3: 298). Krzywkowski compare la représentation de la vitesse par Mirbeau à “une scène de film expressionniste” (178).

¹³ Dans *Le temps retrouvé*, le narrateur relativise les conséquences des rythmes accélérés que procurent les nouveaux moyens de transport: “Certains disaient que l’art d’une époque de hâte serait bref, comme ceux qui prédisaient avant la guerre qu’elle serait courte. Le chemin de fer devait aussi tuer la contemplation, il était vain de regretter le temps des diligences, mais l’automobile remplit leur fonction et arrête à nouveau les touristes vers les églises abandonnées” (4: 467).

compte du narrateur (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 186-90). Dans un long paragraphe (3: 413-17) qui commence par une référence aux “promenades en automobile”, le narrateur, rappelant sa “disposition aux étouffements”, est mal à l’aise de se trouver momentanément retenu dans l’ascenseur lorsque le lift est malade, “me toussant et crachant à la figure” (3: 413). Le narrateur livre ensuite ses réflexions plutôt égalitaristes sur les vertus comparées des classes sociales, avant de narrer son étonnante première rencontre avec un avion, alors qu’il était – détail tout aussi surprenant – à cheval. Automobile, ascenseur, avion: tout comme le lift sert d’intermédiaire social, l’ascenseur, à travers son mouvement vertical, assure la transition entre le transport sur terre et dans les airs.

Se mouvoir dans les airs

Bien qu’il ne soit jamais monté dans un avion, Proust accorde une place presque aussi importante à l’aviation qu’à l’automobile dans la *Recherche*. Invention fort récente et quasi miraculeuse, l’avion est d’abord source d’émerveillement, comme il a été précédemment mentionné, lorsque le narrateur souvent valétudinaire, mais faisant incongrûment de l’équitation près de Balbec, aperçoit soudainement un “aéroplane” et son pilote:

[J]e vis à une cinquantaine de mètres au-dessus de moi, dans le soleil, entre deux grandes ailes d’acier étincelant qui l’emportaient, un être dont la figure peu distincte me parut ressembler à celle d’un homme. Je fus aussi ému que pouvait l’être un Grec qui voyait pour la première fois un demi-dieu¹⁴. (*Sodome et Gomorrhe* 3: 417)

La dimension mythologique de l’engin volant aux “grandes ailes d’acier” se propage à celui qui le pilote, et qui semble le chevaucher dans les airs, tout comme le narrateur sur sa monture terrestre. Cette rencontre fortuite entre un cavalier et un aviateur est toute de verticalité, le premier ayant les yeux levés vers le ciel, le second finissant par “piqu[er] droit vers le ciel” (3: 417). Technologie, mythologie et sexualité se confondent ici, la vue exaltante de l’avion et de son pilote (c’est-à-dire un chevalier du ciel sur sa monture ailée) faisant “fondre en larmes” le narrateur. Plus tard, cette représentation adulatrice de l’aviation acquerra une tonalité bien plus sombre, sans toutefois perdre de sa portée mythologique. Dans *Le temps retrouvé*, le narrateur décrira les bombardements aériens que subit Paris durant la Première Guerre mondiale, tout en se rappelant sa première rencontre:

¹⁴ Il est tentant de voir dans cet épisode, comme le suggère une note (3: 1576), une double préfiguration funèbre: l’une, interne au récit, à la mort d’Albertine dans un accident de cheval; l’autre, dans la vie de l’auteur, à la mort d’Alfred Agostinelli dans un accident d’avion. Cependant, Carter (chapitre 6) offre une lecture de ce passage qui en limite la dimension autobiographique.

Les rues devinrent entièrement noires. Parfois seulement, un avion ennemi qui volait assez bas éclairait le point où il voulait jeter une bombe. Je ne retrouvais plus mon chemin, je pensais à ce jour, en allant à la Raspelière, où j'avais rencontré, comme un dieu qui avait fait se cabrer mon cheval, un avion. Je pensais que maintenant la rencontre serait différente et que le dieu du mal me tuerait. (4: 412)

Même dans ce nouveau contexte mortifère, le narrateur continue à attribuer une valeur esthétique à l'innovation technologique capitale qu'est l'aviation: "Je lui parlais [à Saint-Loup] de la beauté des avions qui montaient dans la nuit" (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 337); "Et, escadrille après escadrille, chaque aviateur s'élançait ainsi de la ville transportée maintenant dans le ciel, pareil à une Walkyrie"¹⁵ (4: 338).

Notons ici l'association du seul 'gratte-ciel' de Paris à la thématique de l'élévation que développe Proust. Engin mécanique éminemment vertical, quoique stationnaire, la tour Eiffel participa aux combats aériens nocturnes de la Grande Guerre, ses poutrelles d'acier enchevêtrées servant de support aux projecteurs destinés à repérer les avions allemands qui bombardaient Paris: "des feux intermittents que, soit de ces aéroplanes, soit de projecteurs de la tour Eiffel, on savait dirigés par une volonté intelligente" (*Le Temps retrouvé* 4: 380). Unique source terrestre de lumière, alors que la capitale est plongée dans l'obscurité, la tour projette vers le ciel la "vigilance amie" qui rassure le narrateur face aux risques de bombardement. Un quart de siècle après sa construction, et après les polémiques qu'elle déclencha (dont il sera question plus bas), la tour était enfin devenue utile.

Ce qui manque

Si curieux qu'il ait été, si panoramique et minutieux qu'ait pu être le regard qu'il portait sur sa société, Proust laisse plusieurs innovations technologiques de son époque dans l'ombre. Dans une œuvre qui donne souvent l'impression d'une somme encyclopédique, les lacunes technologiques sont aussi saillantes que les appareils modernes auxquels il consacre de longs développements.

Alors que le narrateur s'attarde sur les bombardements aériens, on ne trouve aucune référence directe aux gaz asphyxiants, pourtant abondamment utilisés sur les champs de bataille (la "sanglante barrière") de la Grande Guerre. Faut-il y voir le refus instinctif d'un asthmatique chronique d'aborder toute l'horreur de ce sujet? Par contre, lors de sa promenade nocturne avec le narrateur, Charlus compare Paris, qui est à portée

¹⁵ La musique de Wagner est également associée à l'aviation dans *La Prisonnière*. "[F]allait-il de ces appareils vraiment matériels pour explorer l'infini, de ces cent vingt chevaux marque Mystère, où pourtant, si haut qu'on plane, on est un peu empêché de goûter le silence des espaces par le puissant ronflement du moteur!" (3: 668).

des canons et des avions allemands, à Pompéi menacée par une irruption imminente du Vésuve: “Les fêtes remplissent ce qui sera peut-être, si les Allemands avancent encore, les derniers jours de notre Pompéi” (*Le temps retrouvé* 4: 385). Cette vision de fin d’un monde, cette fois d’origine humaine et non naturelle, semble plutôt exciter l’imagination du baron germanophile: “Quels documents pour l’histoire future, quand les gaz asphyxiants analogues à ceux qu’émettait le Vésuve et des écroulements comme ceux qui ensevelirent Pompéi garderont intacts toutes les demeures imprudentes qui n’ont pas fait encore filer pour Bayonne leurs tableaux et leurs statues!” (4: 385).

Chez Proust, rien non plus sur le métro parisien, qui fait ses débuts en 1900, l’année de l’Exposition universelle, mais que n’emprunte jamais le narrateur de la *Recherche* (alors qu’il prend souvent le train). Contrairement à bien d’autres moyens de transport, ce lieu de transit souterrain, nouveau réseau de tunnels ferroviaires qui se trouvait sous la ville, n’a apparemment pas eu d’effet sur l’imagination de Proust. Là encore, faut-il y voir le refus instinctif d’un malade chronique de s’y laisser enfermer? Notons au passage que Proust était conscient du danger, pour un asthmatique comme lui, de voyager dans une automobile ouverte au vent, comme l’atteste une lettre à sa mère: “[L]e temps fraîchissant, le vent s’élevant, j’ai pensé que l’automobile pouvait . . . être cause d’une crise” (le 22 septembre 1899, *Correspondance* 2: 339).

Technologie et écriture

Comme c’est le cas chez bien d’autres écrivains de l’époque, l’œuvre de Proust reflète à des degrés divers les rapides transformations sociales et, partant, esthétiques résultant de la seconde Révolution industrielle. Comme le signale Isabelle Krzywkowski, la question de la représentation littéraire des nouveaux produits technologiques fait l’objet de longs débats depuis le milieu du dix-neuvième siècle: “L’évolution de la place accordée à la machine dans la littérature et les arts est de ce fait inséparable du débat sur la modernité” (111).

Proust ne se situe évidemment pas dans la lignée de Théophile Gautier et de son affirmation de “l’art pour l’art” dans la préface de *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), qui niait toute valeur esthétique à ce qui peut provenir des progrès technologiques: “Il n’y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien; tout ce qui est utile est laid, car c’est l’expression de quelque besoin, et ceux de l’homme sont ignobles et dégoûtants, comme sa pauvre et infirme nature. – L’endroit le plus utile d’une maison, ce sont les latrines” (1: 230). Néanmoins, si Proust ne saurait être assimilé à un chantre naïf du progrès et de la modernité, il est tout aussi distant de la conception hugolienne du “Beau Utile”, qui en 1864 associait mécaniquement l’esthétique au scientifique: “L’art doit aider la science. Ces deux roues du progrès doivent tourner ensemble”¹⁶ (*William Shakespeare* 12: 400).

¹⁶ Dans *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, Norpois, toujours aussi tranchant et pompeux, réduit l’œuvre de Bergotte (et, indirectement, les premières ambitions littéraires du narrateur) à un simple et inutile exercice esthétique: “Je sais que c’est blasphémer contre la Sacro-Sainte École de ce que ces

Durant la jeunesse de Proust, la question platonicienne du beau et de l'utile, renouvelée au cours du dix-neuvième siècle par les constants progrès technologiques, allait se cristalliser autour d'un monument parisien qui figurera dans *Le temps retrouvé*. La tour Eiffel avait en son temps (l'Exposition universelle de 1889) symbolisé à la fois une prouesse technologique et un scandale esthétique. Dans un texte qui ne peut que paraître bizarre de nos jours, la "Protestation des artistes" (Eiffel 69-70), signée par une prestigieuse liste d'écrivains et d'artistes, vilipendait "l'odieuse colonne de tôle boulonnée" qui allait "profaner" la capitale. En l'occurrence, l'argument de Gautier était partiellement renversé, "l'inutile et monstrueuse tour Eiffel" tirant sa laideur de son *manque* d'utilité – ce qui allait changer, contre toute attente, durant la Grande Guerre. Toutes proportions gardées, le monument technologique parisien allait également s'avérer utile dans l'œuvre de Proust.

De l'utilité pratique à l'appropriation littéraire, il y a toutefois une grande distance, que ne franchit pas toujours Proust. L'auteur de la *Recherche* ajuste son traitement de chaque innovation technique en fonction d'une logique narrative, au lieu d'un impact social (ou d'un niveau de sophistication). Tout développement technologique se mesure donc en fonction de sa contribution à l'imagination créatrice de l'écrivain. C'est ainsi que le kaléidoscope, appareil simple à usage ludique, parce qu'il est mieux adapté à la vision cyclique des transformations sociales et esthétiques, sera cité et surtout métaphorisé plus souvent que le cinéma, découverte capitale sur les plans technique et artistique. Or, il ne s'agit pas là d'une approche fantaisiste vis-à-vis de la société de son époque. En effet, les innovations technologiques chez Proust ne constituent pas de simples éléments de décor dans le récit. Comme les personnages, elles s'intègrent dans la mobilité, le bouleversement et le déclin éventuel des milieux sociaux, ainsi que des tendances esthétiques qui s'y développent. Servant parfois d'instruments déclencheurs, certains appareils permettent de procéder à des tournants inattendus dans le déroulement du récit, à de brusques variations du point de vue. Pour reprendre la métaphore proustienne du kaléidoscope, la nouveauté d'une part appelle d'autre part, comme par concomitance, une éventuelle disparition. L'émergence, puis la banalisation progressive, de nouveautés technologiques constitue un autre signe des renouvellements sociaux, du déclin d'une élite socioéconomique que décrit minutieusement Proust¹⁷. Dans *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, le narrateur compare les bouleversements sociaux de la première phase de l'Affaire Dreyfus, et de la vague d'antisémitisme qui l'accompagna, à la succession d'apparitions de nouvelles technologies: "Cela n'empêche pas que chaque fois que la société est momentanément

messieurs appellent l'Art pour l'Art, mais à notre époque il y a des tâches plus urgentes que d'agencer des mots de façon harmonieuse" (1: 465).

¹⁷ Dans *Le côté de Guermantes*, le narrateur se demande ce que seraient les usages sociaux dans une société transformée, et a recours une nouvelle fois aux innovations technologiques comme point de comparaison: "Après tout, la politesse dans une société égalitaire ne serait pas un miracle plus grand que le succès des chemins de fer et l'utilisation militaire de l'aéroplane" (2: 746-47).

immobile, ceux qui y vivent s'imaginent qu'aucun changement n'aura plus lieu, de même qu'ayant vu commencer le téléphone, ils ne veulent pas croire à l'aéroplane" (1: 508).

Reste à savoir quels sont les effets – qu'ils soient néfastes, mélioratifs ou ambigus – des nombreuses innovations techniques de l'époque, auxquelles s'intéressait Proust et qui sont abondamment représentées dans la *Recherche*. Il est clair que les progrès technologiques fournissent d'abord et surtout de nouveaux exemples des conséquences, le plus souvent destructrices, du passage du temps. À la fin du premier volume, le narrateur retourne au Bois de Boulogne, espérant retrouver certaines des sensations de sa jeunesse (en particulier l'élégance des "anciens attelages"): "Hélas! il n'y avait plus que des automobiles conduites par des mécaniciens moustachus qu'accompagnaient de grands valets de pied"¹⁸ (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 417). Une fois de plus, le kaléidoscope technologique et social a produit ses effets transformateurs. Cependant, comme on l'a vu, de telles expressions de nostalgie passéiste sont rares chez Proust. En ce qui concerne les innovations technologiques, ce qui domine, dans sa vie comme dans son œuvre, c'est la curiosité et parfois l'enthousiasme pour presque tous les appareils et procédés modernes. Proust est donc pleinement un homme de son époque, qui est justement caractérisée par d'extraordinaires progrès technologiques.

À un niveau plus détaillé, et dans la mesure où l'on peut établir un bilan, la place respective des divers appareils et procédés technologique est très variable. Aucune uniformité chez Proust dans ce domaine: s'il dévalorise les moyens mécaniques de reproduction visuelle (la photographie, le cinéma), il trouve utile les moyens mécaniques de transmission ou de reproduction sonore (le théâtrophone, le pianola); alors que le téléphone ne fait que mieux ressentir la distance de l'interlocuteur, sa fonction pratique dans la vie quotidienne est indéniable; quant aux moyens de transport modernes (l'automobile, l'avion) qui avaient initialement suscité tant d'enthousiasme, ils finiront eux aussi par se banaliser. Dans tous les cas, ce qui compte, c'est le maniement littéraire, que module Proust en fonction de l'appareil ou procédé technologique individuel, mais qui est généralement lié à une évolution ou une mutation. Le côté technologique de Proust finit toujours par rejoindre celui du récit, à travers la transformation du matériau brut qu'est le vécu en produit fini narratif. C'est ainsi que se résout l'apparent paradoxe de la nouveauté technologique dans une œuvre qui semble tournée vers le passé, chaque innovation étant progressivement intégrée dans le continuel processus de questionnement mémoriel qui est à la base de la création littéraire.

¹⁸ L'innovation technologique n'est qu'un des éléments signifiants de la temporalité proustienne, qui transforme et abolit la réalité antérieure, comme le rappelle la célèbre fin du premier volume de la *Recherche*: "La réalité que j'avais connue n'existait plus. Il suffisait que Mme Swann n'arrivât pas toute pareille au même moment, pour que l'Avenue fût autre. Les lieux que nous avons connus n'appartiennent pas qu'au monde de l'espace où nous les situons pour plus de facilité. Ils n'étaient qu'une mince tranche au milieu d'impressions contiguës qui formaient notre vie d'alors; le souvenir d'une certaine image n'est que le regret d'un certain instant; et les maisons, les routes, les avenues, sont fugitives, hélas! comme les années" (*Du côté de chez Swann* 1: 419-20).

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Imprisonment and the Deterritorialization of Exile in Max Aub

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Abstract: From the time of his imprisonment following the Spanish Civil War, Max Aub's literary production focused on the effects of exile, as well as the nature of imprisonment by the state. In his poetry and plays, he writes this space of imprisonment as being as severe as exile, allowing him to construct imprisonment as an extension of, and not as distinct from, exile. This article describes Aub's attempts to deterritorialize the experience of exile, as a means of re-inscribing the notion of a homeland in spatial terms.

Keywords: Aub, Max – Exile - 20th century Spanish literature – Deterritorialization – Imprisonment - Space

The exodus of Spanish Republicans following the Civil War was so massive and convoluted for those affected, with over 400,000 people crossing the border into France and many relocated to concentration camps throughout both mainland France and North Africa, that Francisco Caudet refers to it as “El laberinto de la diáspora,” drawing both from Gerald Brenan's historical work *The Spanish Labyrinth* and Max Aub's cycle of novels *El laberinto mágico* (Caudet 71-73). Max Aub is a fitting choice from which to draw inspiration regarding this exodus, as both his life and his work demonstrate the complications and contradictions of exile and the sense of imprisonment that it brings. He furthermore provides a clear sense of how exile feels like a punishment imposed by one's home nation, as the state managed to exert physical control over his person following his departure from Spain in 1939. After his arrival in Paris to complete work with André Malraux on the film *L'Espoir*, he was imprisoned multiple times in Paris (in Roland Garros), Vernet, and Nice, then finally brought to the prison camp in Djelfa in French Algeria, where he remained interred until 1942,¹ largely on the accusation of the Franco government that he was a

¹See Naharro-Calderón, p. 100-01, for an explanation of the circumstances of Aub's imprisonments.

communist subversive working to undermine the Vichy government.² His condition as a French prisoner charged in effect by the Spanish government created a sense of imprisonment by the two nations he could claim as his homeland at that time, as he was born in Paris and had lived in France until the age of 11 before moving with his family to Spain at the outbreak of World War I. Through this series of circumstances, Aub's early exilic works portray not only the consequences of exile, but likewise the condition of imprisonment and its effect on the individual's understanding of his or her connection to the national space.

Aub's early exilic works create strong points of conflation between exile and imprisonment, as conditions that separate the individual from the idea of a homeland, regardless of the specific point of physical habitation. Here Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization, in which the individual assumes an ontological relationship to the State, while the signs of affiliation with the State take on new, abstract meanings, underscores the struggles of the individual in the modern world. They write: "the State commences (or recommences) with... an act of territoriality through the fixing of residence.... But the State operates by euphemisms. The pseudo territoriality is the product of an effective deterritorialization that substitutes abstract signs for the signs of the earth" (*Anti-Oedipus* 196). This is to say that any relationship established with the state is rooted in signs that are themselves abstract substitutes for more concrete concepts of identity. The individual's relationship with the state is thus permanently fraught with shifting signs that indicate fleeting and abstract meanings. The individual in exile, cut off from the direct control of state apparatuses (though by no means escaping them completely), faces a further deterritorialization from the concrete territory of the state, thus separated first through physical contact with the territory, and then through the abstract markers of meaning that link the individual to the state.

It is evident, thus, that exile is a profoundly deterritorializing occurrence, yet Aub's literary production during the first decade of his exile reveals not only conflicts in his sense of freedom and the consequences of removal from the nation, but also his ability even to deterritorialize the terms of exile as a response to the psychological demands of his exilic experience. He writes the space of imprisonment as one that is functionally as severe as that of exile, and likewise undermines the discourse of exile as painful for those remaining within the national sphere just as much as those living outside of it. The discourse of exile in Aub's early exilic works is ultimately a turn toward expressing the disruption of nationalism and the value of place and origin, and a

² Aub's experiences in this cycle of accusations and imprisonment is treated thoroughly in his fiction. Along with the events surrounding his internment in Djelfa, related in the works included in this article, he portrays in largely autobiographical form the conditions in Roland Garros and Vernet in his drama *Morir por cerrar los ojos* and the screenplay based on that play titled *Campo francés*. Manuel Aznar Soler's edition of Aub's *Diarios*, published in 1998, provides facsimiles of many of the documents related to Aub's imprisonment and release by the French government, as well as Aub's petitions for release and visas for travel through the United States and to Mexico.

strategy of undermining and functionally deterritorializing both the concept of the nation of origin and the writing of exile as a means of adapting to the outcome of his removal from a point of origin, the Spanish nation, which was both adopted and constructed as absolute in his mind.

The punitive reach of totalizing national structures

The link between exile and imprisonment is evident historically, as well as through Aub's literature, and provides one of the leading factors motivating the need to engage with exile from a dictatorial regime. Imprisonment at times appears as a threat leading to the decision to depart one's nation; in other cases it precedes the moment of departure, effectively consolidating the individual's determination that he or she is incapable of continuing to live within that national sphere. It is crucial to indicate in either case, however, that any determination on the part of the individual to depart is hardly an alternative circumstance to a forced expulsion on the part of the ruling government. This is to say, echoing the statement by Amy Kaminsky in her work *After Exile*, that "Voluntary exile' is... an oxymoron that masks the cruelly limited choices imposed on the subject" (9). Exile is a choice that in many cases is no choice at all; the subject faces the impossibility of residing in the nation of origin and the possibility of residing elsewhere. By extension, imprisonment, or its mere threat, serves in essence as an exiling act on the part of the government, that seeks to silence the individual and remove him or her from the intellectual and social territory of the nation, just as a physical expulsion would accomplish, demonstrating the means by which imprisonment offers no true alternative to exile for the individual. Both conditions would thus lead to the nation-state attempting to assert control over the first of Sebastiaan Faber's definitions of cultural hegemony, "which implies a 'conquest' not only of the state and economic structures, but also of the cultural field of civil society" (*Exile* 35).

In concrete terms, both exile and imprisonment correspond to what Foucault terms the "discipline-blockade." This is a punitive social structure that he describes in terms relating to its prison-like aims: an "enclosed institution, established on the edges of society, turned inwards towards negative functions: arresting evil, breaking communication, suspending time" (209). If some separation is possible between exile and politically-motivated imprisonment, one could always point to the presence or absence of the physical prison, and to the location of said structure. Certainly the exile is free to wander within the space of exile (though with potential limitations), while the prisoner remains enclosed and geographically within the national territory, yet there exist numerous cases of exiles writing of feelings of confinement, as though exile itself

indicates a reflection, or perhaps inversion, of the imprisonment that was either threatened or experienced within the home nation.³

As an extension of the punitive forms of social coercion, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari claim that the nation-state regulates homogeneity through what they term “abstract machines.” These elements of power attempt to unify the individual with the nation, by establishing binary claims of identity. This enforcement of binarism allows the individual to comprehend his or her role within the nation as a consequence of belonging or non-belonging, and thus allow the nation to fundamentally exist as a totalized whole, composed of all of those that pertain to that sphere. This form allows the nation to persist without any permissible space for those claiming a partial belonging: once the individual is established as part of the nation, then he or she persists in that position indefinitely, unless expelled completely. As punishments, exile and imprisonment both function as abstract machines of this totalizing desire, tools that remove the heterogeneous individual from the intellectual space of the nation, and thus allowing all those remaining to exist as a unified ontological whole. The employment of the abstract machine is ultimately predicated on the form of capitalism that the state exists to perpetuate, and in consequence the machine becomes a regulator of a system that is designed as self-reinforcing. The citizens of the state are allowed no freedom to dissent from the economic form, and thus through their absolute relationship to the nation, help it to reinforce its role as a regulator of its own system. They write:

Not only are [nation-states] constituted in an active struggle against the imperial or evolved systems, the feudal systems, and the autonomous cities, but they crush their own “minorities,” in other words, minoritarian phenomena that could be termed “nationalitarian,” which work from within and if need be turn the old codes to find a greater degree of freedom.... It is in the form of the nation-state, with all its possible variations, that the State becomes the model of realization for the capitalism axiomatic. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 456)

The modern state thus requires totality as a consequence of the capitalist impulse, and must in turn regulate outliers, or minority groups, that threaten to work against the economic impulses of the state, and by their definition, toward increased freedom.⁴

The state’s use of punishment against the intellectual is carried out as an extension of this normalizing impulse, and works by destabilizing the existence of the

³ Jordi Gracia’s *A la intemperie* provides an indication of how this structure was complicated in the case of Spain, as he focuses on the relative intellectual freedom of exile in comparison with those writers still residing in Franco’s Spain.

⁴ In the case of Franco-era Spain, as well as numerous other countries, this manifests in a clear way in terms of regionalisms, in particular in Cataluña, Valencia, or Galicia, as a homogenous notion of Spain as effectively Castilla is dictated by the central government.

individual within the state's territory. This process of normalizing the relationship of the individual to the state occurs within the split between territorialization and deterritorialization, and bears on exile as a marker of the state's ability to determine the relationship between the individual and the nation of origin. As Sophia McClennen writes, citing Steven Best and Douglas Kellner's analysis of Deleuze and Guattari: "deterritorialization opposes territorialization, where the first is the 'unchaining of both material production and desire from socially restricting forces' and the latter is 'the process of repressing desire by taming and confining its productive energies'" (61). When the state removes the individual from its territory (whether physically or symbolically), the process deterritorializes the individual by restricting his or her ability to destabilize the political and economic social structure. This process, however, is marked by its belatedness: the need to separate the individual from the territory generally follows the individual's prior decision to seek out greater freedom, and in this sense, the imprisoned or exiled person is already deterritorialized from the ideological apparatus of the state prior to imprisonment or exile. In connecting deterritorialization to the structures of discipline imposed by the state, this condition can be seen as not merely a reflection of the separation of the individual from the control of the state, but rather as a process by which the state actively removes the citizen, and in response, through which the individual might be capable of subverting the discourse of control imposed upon him or her.

If the state's actions in deterritorializing the individual underscores the inability of that person to act within the homogeneity of the national space, then the intellectual working from the left against these structures can be seen as motivated by these same desires: to protect the freedoms of the nation from the political forms that destabilize it (variously fascism, authoritarianism, militarism, etc.). As an individual actor, the intellectual largely seeks freedom over totality, in effect working against the abstract machines of the state, and thus has no need for the homogeneity sought by the state.⁵ Introducing deterritorialization into the conflicts of exile, however, inverts the control of the state as a marker of power, and in a sense the intellectual breaks free from deterritorialization by reterritorializing his- or herself to new discourses. This inversion of control arises through the act of exile specifically: once the individual is severed from the physical space of the nation, then the state ceases to maintain control over that individual. The exiled person subsequently gains a degree of autonomy and agency beyond the national border by reterritorializing, or constructing a new ontology within the available signs that exist outside the earlier national sphere, and would thus be free to undermine the state through whatever means possible. Exile thus has the potential to work against the state in two ways: by removing the individual from the process of territorialization, thus losing control of the repression of the individual; or forcing the

⁵ Edward Said works through the nuances of the intellectual's place in a homogenized, nationalized society in *Representations of the Intellectual*, in particular in the first two lectures: "Representations of the Intellectual" and "Holding Nations and Traditions at Bay."

individual into a deterritorialized state, leading to that individual's greater ability to seek freedoms from the state, even while physically absent. Applied to exile, deterritorialization and territorialization are hardly opposing binary discourses, but instead form (rhizomatic) points of connection to the nation that work to cohere or fragment the national structure as dictated by the individual's response to state power.

Aub and the totalized homeland

Foucault's construction of the "discipline-blockade" (and by extension the "discipline-mechanism," which "must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come" (209), is intriguing in terms of exile, as the state's control over the individual can be seen as fragmented through the disciplinary process. The exile essentially escapes the state's control in a physical manner. This does not necessarily remove the individual from state control entirely, as the psychological effects of a repressive regime are fully capable of following the individual outside of his or her home nation. In any case, any of the liberties associated with exile arrive with the caveat that they are not absolute, even when escape from dictatorship or other politically-motivated forms of repression are achieved. This fact is not lost in the case of Aub, for whom the distance achieved from Spain did not lead to the absence of state control.

In describing Aub's place within the larger body of Spanish Republican exiles, Faber writes: "Aub se distingue de sus compañeros exiliados por su refinada conciencia... no sólo de lo que implica el exilio en términos éticos, sino también de los trágicos dilemas asociados con este deber moral" ("Max Aub, conciencia" 16). This label of Aub as the "conciencia del exilio" is quite apt regarding his ability to present highly nuanced situations that largely avoid judgment of his characters within his literary works, and that understand the divergent points of view of his contemporaries within his personal correspondence and diaries. It is not at all surprising when considering the complexity and nuance of his own exilic experience, that he discovered the nuance of his literary creations through the experiences of his own life. Reading his diaries and noting his literary production following his internment in Djelfa, Aub seemed to think on very few topics without coming to terms with them in some manner through his exile. This hardly places him apart from many of his contemporaries, several of whom felt exile to be a defeating circumstance. And it is equally important to notice here that while Aub did display a highly refined sense of what exile meant to him and his fellow Republican exiles, this position emerges largely as a consequence of the greater experience with exile that occurred over the final thirty years of his life, and was by no means a part of the discourse of exile with which he engaged during the initial years of his displacement.

During the Civil War, his later nuanced views of artistic production and the position of the intellectual were largely absent, and he understood the war as an

immediate threat to the ontology of Spain. He would write in 1938, in the introduction to his “Teatro de circunstancias,” a collection of theatrical works treating the Civil War and the breakdown of society immediately prior to its outbreak:

Si existe algún escritor español en cuya obra no haya repercutido la guerra abominable que nos ha sido impuesta, o no es escritor o no es español. Se pudo defender en algún tiempo pasado que el mantenerse alejado de las luchas sociales o internacionales era una posición moral altiva y en consonancia con ciertas teorías que reivindicaban muy alto el espíritu; el tiempo es otro, nuestros años con de lucha, y el que no lucha muere o está muerto sin saberlo. No sostengo aquí “que el que no esté conmigo está contra mí”, sino que los que no están ni con los unos ni con los otros inexisten, y lo que no existe, mal puede sobrevivir. (OC VII-A: 227)

This introduction was composed in Barcelona, where Aub lived through the conflict, and is hardly a difficult position to comprehend when considering the severity of the war and the schism it created within Spain. The use of the Civil War as an absolute marker of historical experience provides a clear temporal break in the nation’s history, and likewise separates Aub’s output in his young adulthood from his more mature exile literature. Here his description of the struggle for the nation works through an absolute ontological relationship between the Spanish people and their country, through its insistence on connecting history, nationalism, and aesthetics. As an intellectual on the left, opposed to the hyper-nationalistic policies of the *Falange* or the politics of Franco, calling the totality of the nation into question and calling out those who attempt neutrality reveals a breakdown in the nation that would grow more severe with the experience of exile. While Aub claims here that the intellectual’s task is to make a choice, regardless of what that choice might be, his position is in effect that this choice is ontological: Spanish identity depends on the writer’s display, at least unconsciously, of a response to the war in his or her literary production.

A shift from the ontological connection between the nation and the ideology of its inhabitants followed Aub into the initial stages of his exile, and emerges in the poetry he wrote while interred in Djelfa, between November 1941 and September 1942. In a poem titled “Tres años,” dated 2 February 1942 and published in the collection *Diario de Djelfa* two years later, he indicates a theme that would resurface in the writings from his final decade of his life, of the variability of national existence:

[...]
Tres años de noche, tres años de campos, tres años de Francos.

Tres años que España está borrada del mapa.

Tres años que vivimos más abajo del mundo,
 Erramundos.
 Tres años de Sahara
 –todo el mundo es Sahara, menos España–.
 Tres años de sangre, tres años de podredumbre, tres años
 de muerte, tres años de hambre.
 Tres años que muerden, tres años que roen.
 Febrero del treinta y nueve.
 Tres años de muerte. (*OC I*: 112)

Death and inexistence here provide a counterposition to ontological existence. Just as a response to the Civil War indicates one's absolute connection to the nation in his writings during the war, here death and inexistence provide absolute and metaphorical means of understanding the loss of Spain. Much of this struggle continues in the poem "Salmo CXXXVII," from April 1942. Here the threat to Spain again plays out as one of existence against death, though here death likewise carries with it the infiltration of persons who at one time were ontologically connected to the nation, yet now that tie has been severed:

¡Extranjeros, vosotros
 que dormís en nuestras camas!
 ¡Españoles nosotros,
 polvo y tierra de España
 extranjeros
 en las arenas del Sahara!
 [...] (*OC I*: 148)

Aub's understanding of Spain can thus be seen as quite similar to the vision that emerged during the war. As in the introduction to the "Teatro de circunstancias," the effects of the Civil War are only felt by those who may still claim some sense of Spanish identity, though those individuals ostensibly now live outside the immediate territory of the nation. Andrés Pau addresses this same idea in relation to Aub's theater, writing that for Aub, "quienes han permanecido en España no sólo desconocen su pasado –que no les interesa– sino que no saben nada de aquellos que marcharon tras la guerra" (512).

Within the claims made on the nature of Spanish identity in the pieces cited above, Aub engages in a process that shows a largely totalized vision of the nation, while simultaneously showing how exile breaks that totalized nation in geographic terms. The geographic separation from the nation is essential, and reveals itself more poignantly in "Salmo CXXXVII," as those who inhabit the nation are presented as being less Spanish than the exiles residing in North Africa. Aub here presupposes a totalized nation composed of its ideologically-determined exiled and imprisoned

population, linked to the territory of the nation as a metonymic construction tied to the sands of the Sahara, and thus decenters Spain in terms of its population. If the nation is capable of being understood in such totalizing terms, however, Aub severs this totalization geographically through the discourses of exile and imprisonment, which through his own incarceration in Djelfa are impossible to separate in a fundamental manner. To extend this line of thought to a point of resolution helps to reveal where Aub breaks with a totalization of the nation: if Spain can be totalized by simply restoring the population of Djelfa to its geographic space within the nation, then one must likewise presuppose the absence of the still-ideological “forasteros” living in Spain. In effect, such a move would rewrite the Civil War, as the fragmentation of the conflict and the loss of life cannot be merely erased by restoring the exiles to their homeland.

The deterritorialization of exile

Aub’s output following his release from Djelfa is remarkable for its ability to rewrite the nature of exile outside of the geographic structure normally associated with it. Geographic separation from the nation distinguishes the exile from the political prisoner, despite both figures being unwelcomed in the cultural space of the nation, yet in Aub’s early exilic works this difference is minimized in terms of comprehending the individual’s relationship to his or her homeland. Instead of simply revealing the exile as deterritorialized, he in turn deterritorializes the nation through his exile. Even with the first of his novels concerning the Civil War, *Campo cerrado* (1943), Aub cannot reveal the collectivity of the immediate prewar context of Spain through the novel’s protagonist Rafael López Serrador, and must attempt instead to collect the diverse elements of the nation’s social structure through frequent narrative asides, tracing the lives of other characters. Aub separates the protagonist from himself as well, writing Rafael as a young man who, like Aub, is from the Valencian countryside near Segorbe, yet who aligns with the *Falange* in a seemingly casual fashion, not driven by ideology so much as carried away by the competing political positions that exist in Barcelona. It is ultimately telling in this regard that Rafael does not even die through the conflict, but rather of typhoid in a Barcelona hospital. In effect, the central conflict that runs through the cycle of novels cannot encompass the totality of life and death that Spain experienced during its most violent conflict.

Deterritorialization emerges here as a decentering of the individual in response to the social and economic structures of modernity. By extension, it is accompanied by a shift in the markers of totality that would otherwise allow the individual to align with the territorialized structure of the nation-state. The individual requires an ideological relationship to the nation in order to accept the totality projected by the political apparatus of the nation. Yet with the consequences of exile, and the disconnect of the individual from the ideological sphere of the nation, that individual must reckon with a nation that is no longer totalized for him or her. This disruption of totality might

emerge in terms of spatial, linguistic or cultural relations, and must confront the nation in fragmented terms. Deleuze and Guattari remark in their study of the works of Kafka that the decentered individual can only engage language that “is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (*Kafka* 16). Here Deleuze and Guattari’s revelation of the deterritorialized writer’s fundamental need to engage his or her displacement through literature is informative in the case of Aub, for whom geographic and cultural fragmentation formed a key part of his lived experience.

Aub’s engagement with literature was unquestionably central to his identity, and in terms of the deterritorializing process he employed this literature as a means of using exile to destabilize Spain as a geographic space. This can be seen in his poetry from Djelfa, as well as through his constant engagement with discourses of exile throughout his literary career. The struggle between the historical and social reality of Spain and the identity of the exiled national subject emerges in the early works of his exile following his arrival in Mexico in 1942. In his 1944 drama *Tránsito*, he writes exile as an experience that is future-laden and disrupting to the family structures of those suffering the aftermath of the conflict. The work is presented as taking place in 1947, three years after its publication, which according to Silvia Monti “indicaría con toda claridad que Aub no tenía mucha confianza en la posibilidad de un retorno a España en breve” (18). Aub here uses the charactonym of the title character’s identity to show the protagonist’s attempt to find solace in the arms of a Mexican woman whose presence reminds him constantly of his wife Cruz who remains in Spain. The work revolves around the protagonist Emilio’s attempts to reconcile his memories and reconstruct a life in another country as he realizes that he can no longer have the life he desired in Spain. To this extent, Aub works through the paradigm of “destierro/transtierro,” showing the attempt of the exiled individual to come to terms with geographic separation from the home nation through cultural replicas of the previously-inhabited space.⁶ This space is ultimately untenable for Emilio, as he continues to desire a life with his wife and son, which marks this transition as nearly impossible at this point, as Aub seems to foresee his own difficulty in resolving it even three years after composing the play.

For Emilio, the separation from Spain is likewise difficult to resolve through its implications for his view of the ontological connection between the individual and the

⁶ María Paz Sanz Álvarez’s article “Vivir en España desde la distancia” is helpful in laying out the distinction between “destierro” and “transtierro” in the case of Aub. She distinguishes between the desterrado, who understands his or her predicament in terms of residing in a different nation, separate from the nation of origin, and the transterrado, for whom “el exilio en tierras hispanoamericanas le hacía sentirse más como en ‘casa’, fundamentalmente porque todo el mundo hablaba su misma lengua” (164). José Monleón provides a more hermeneutic approach to the terms: “El destierro es un sustantivo cerrado, estático, inexorable; en cambio, el transtierro es una herida, un equipaje sin abrir, siempre para salir hacia otra parte. El desterrado es un personaje más sereno, que espera que el plazo se cumpla; el transterrado es un enfermo que mira y remira hacia su tierra, que la espía desde lejos, que la lleva dentro de él, que se siente trasplantado a un medio que no es el suyo” (77).

nation. He remarks in a dreamed conversation with Cruz on the breakdown of this relationship:

EMILIO: ...Antes, el hijo de un carpintero sabía que sería carpintero. El hijo de un español, español.

CRUZ: ¿Y ahora?

EMILIO: Ahora... ¿Qué será el hijo de un alemán? ¿Qué será el hijo de un fabricante? ¿Qué será el hijo de un joyero?

CRUZ: Siempre habrá alemanes, fabricantes, joyeros o albañiles.

EMILIO: Pero no los predestinados. Lo serán otros, los que habían nacido para distinto fin.... Mi hijo ya no es mi hijo, el que hubiese sido mi hijo. ¿Qué será la semana próxima? (OC VII-B 84)

Emilio's exile is disruptive through its ability to shift the inherent identities associated with one's point of origin and family circumstance. This is tellingly not only of consequence for the individual immediately exiled, but also of the future sense of self-recognition and social recognition tied to those affected by the exile. His separation from his son Pedro, apparently a *maqui* still fighting in Spain whose fate remains unknown to Emilio, interrupts his ability to understand the condition of his family, to which Cruz responds that he should have a child with Tránsito. Such a child, however, would live with an identity separate from that of either Emilio or Pedro; Pedro can insist on his Spanish lineage, while Emilio lives with, at best, a "transterrado" identity. The child of Emilio's exile, of his "tránsito" to Mexico, would exist with a connection to Mexico and not to Spain, thus separating the child from Emilio.

Tránsito is furthermore telling in the representation of Emilio's imagination, which switches frequently between his recognition of Cruz and the presence of Tránsito on the stage. Emilio is able to live a strained life surrounded on different levels by the two family structures available to him, one in Mexico and one in Spain. His memories of his wife and son as well as his attempt to justify his presence in Mexico to Cruz, who makes little attempt to dissuade him from continuing in Mexico as he is, reveal the breakdown in his identity as torn between two national spheres, but with no clear ability to reconcile them. His conversation with his friend Adolfo, a fellow exile who desires to return to Spain, indicates this split. Adolfo claims that it is his memories that call him back to Spain; Emilio responds: "Me daría vergüenza pensar así" (88). This is of course an ironic statement, as the entire play revolves around his inability to disconnect from his memories of Spain. Yet even with these memories, his ability to return to a Spanish territorial space to hold discourse with his wife is not absolute. He cannot, however, find the means to converse with Pedro, even through his imagination. His lingering doubts as to whether his son is still actively fighting the regime, in jail, or been killed, places his identity in doubt for Emilio, and even Cruz's claims as to his condition are not consistent, first declaring him killed and then stating that he escaped from

government troops. In Emilio's imagination, he sleeps through his son's appearance to Cruz at the play's close, dying in her arms, as she attempts to rouse her husband with words that speak to the absolute nature of his situation: "¡Despierta tú, Emilio! ¡Emilio, óyeme! ¡Estás soñando! ¡Despiértate! Estás en México, en tu cama, con TRÁNSITO. Vuélvete, revuélvete; tócala, tócala; date cuenta. España está lejos. Lejos, tras el mar" (93). His separation from Spain is clearly not absolute, as his memories attest, yet his dream of the death of his son carries the markers of this trauma. The distance from Spain has severed his ability to construct the relationships he desired with his family, and his attempts to fill those gaps with substitutes in Mexico fail to satisfy his emotional needs.

Tránsito ties closely to the first part of Aub's cycle of plays titled *Las vueltas*, largely through its treatment of territorial and cultural separation from the homeland, as well as the implications of imprisonment. In 1965, when the three separate plays were published together, he wrote an introduction that states:

Que yo sepa, no he estado en España desde el primero de febrero de 1939. Las obras —o la obra— que siguen, escritas en 1947, 1960 y 1964, suceden allí y, más o menos, en esas fechas. Inútil decir que reflejan la realidad tal y como me la figuré. ¿Qué tienen que ver con la verdad? Daría cualquier cosa para saberlo: por eso las publico. Las reúno porque obedecen a un motivo común. Bastará para darles unidad que los mismos actores interpreten los papeles principales de las tres piezas. (*OC VII-B* 181).

The unity of these works is crucial in understanding the interconnection between exile and imprisonment in Aub's output. This is due to his grouping of the first two works of the cycle, *La vuelta 1947* and *La vuelta 1960*, concerning formerly imprisoned individuals who have returned home following release from a politically-motivated imprisonment, only to be recalled to prison by the works' ends, with the final piece, *La vuelta 1964*, exploring the return to Spain of an exiled Republican living in Mexico. *Las vueltas* as a whole is representative not only of the national problem of determining statelessness and nationalism, but also indicates the consequential psychological effects of either circumstance on the individual, following the claim of Manuel Aznar Soler that "El retorno —como la libertad para un prisionero— es una idea recurrente y obsesiva para cualquier exiliado" (283). Both conditions are mutually significant, and Aub's continued effort to work through their meaning is evidenced in his return to the subject in the mid-1960s, both with the final parts of the cycle of plays and with the composition of *Campo francés* in 1960, an updating of his 1944 play *Morir por cerrar los ojos* as a film treatment.

The specific points of comparison between *La vuelta 1947* and *Tránsito* largely conflate the two protagonists, providing on some level the realization of Emilio's

imagination in the latter play in the person of Isabel in the former. Her return to her village following her imprisonment in Valencia is nearly entirely unsatisfactory, as she must deal with the presence of Paca, her husband Damián's lover in her absence, and must likewise work through the dissatisfaction of her husband on her return. Much as with the return of exiled individuals, as appear in *La vuelta 1964* or even Aub's diary of his 1969 trip to Spain, *La gallina ciega*, the return from exile in Aub's work expresses a temporal gap that cannot find resolution, as the place of origin fails to remain static in the exile's absence. This separation is both spatial and temporal, and a constant characteristic of Aub's works concerning the experience of return. In the 1949 story "Librada," Ernesto, imprisoned in the Spain to which he has returned, writes to his wife Librada: "España me hizo la impresión de ser más pequeña de que cuando la dejamos, como si estuviera encogida, o como si hubiera crecido en nuestro recuerdo los años que pasamos fuera de ella, o tal vez porque América es más grande" (*OC IV-B* 187). His return to Spain following exile in Mexico leads to what he deems a return home, yet it is not a home he can recognize in any clear way. Similarly, in *La vuelta 1947*, Isabel returns to find the shift in her family and the ideological separation she feels from those around her, whether her husband's turn to acquiescence in the face of fascist politics or her young daughter's uncertainty and distrust of the label "roja," despite a failure to comprehend its meaning. Her acceptance with returning to prison at the work's close is a return to the point of her separation, yet it likewise emphasizes the gap in her allegiance to either of the realms available to her: political imprisonment and her point of origin. Just as exile marks a schismatic point in the individual's experience, so does imprisonment preclude the individual from ever returning to the space he or she once knew as home.

Isabel's desire to resist Francoist ideology provides the most concrete connection with the exilic literature by Aub during this period, as the nation divides between those accepting of the regime (even if begrudgingly) and those who cannot survive within it in any real way. As she prepares to return to prison, she remarks to Damián: "Ya no sabéis distinguir la verdad de la propaganda... She habla, cada día, de cárceles, de fusilamientos: creéis sentirlo. Pero no. Estáis parados, mudos, ciegos... Sólo reaccionáis cuando os atañe personalmente." She continues later: "Hoy, para vosotros, la falta de libertad, la muerte, no tiene importancia: es lo de siempre. Detuvieron a ése..., fusilaron a aquél... Y dormís tranquilos" (*OC VII-B* 198). The ability to be blind or to forget marks the crucial separation between those still struggling against the regime and those who have accepted it, drawing a clear link to the "extranjeros" in the poetic works of the incarcerated Aub. Through the ideological lens that Aub employs, the breakdown in the national structure cannot be understood within the presence of the political conflict. Thus, the distinction between an exile and a political prisoner is of scant concern. Damián indicates this breakdown through his incomprehension of Isabel's connection to the political left, as well as to his ignorance of the Republican exiles. He remarks: "A lo mejor eres de las que se hacen ilusiones de que los de México

o los de Francia llegarán aquí algún día con el maná. ¡Vas aviada! Aquéllos sólo piensan en hacerse ricos con el dinero que robaron” (193). For as much as Isabel provides a congruent political and exilic position to Emilio in *Tránsito*, Damián appears as the vital consequence, forced to live in a divided family with an unappealing substitute for his absent wife. His opposition to Isabel’s current political stance is not determined by his absolute acquiescence to Francoist politics, but rather to his desire to stay out of trouble with the authorities following his own previous and much shorter prison sentence.

Even for as much as Isabel is forced to work through the separation from her family and her village, and at least pay lip service to the choices made by her husband, so must Damián resolve the consequences of this conflict in the social structure surrounding him. In this same way, the condemned Francisco writes to his wife Gabriela in Aub’s 1949 story “Ruptura”: “La detenida pareces tú: te apiadas sobre el pobre cadáver de tus treinta días de cama incompartida” (*OC IV-B* 171).⁷ Aub’s characters in these works lament the consequences of their exiles and imprisonments in terms of the disruption of the family structure, and while his biography helps to indicate his own position on the side of the exiles and prisoners, a clear concern for those on the other side of the geographic and ideological divide is notable. In the end, the consequence of physical separation for the family structure is absolute in so far as it disrupts all parties, and the inversion of the terms of exile or imprisonment shows the breakdown in the former totality of this structure. Understood in terms of exile, the nation is incapable of withstanding the excision of its members, and must come to terms with the consequences of this separation in an attempt to fashion a totality once more.

Aub’s focus on internment as a response to exile helps demonstrate his effort to work through the structure of spatial separation and explore the consequences of this removal in other facets of the individual’s life. The three plays comprising *Las vueltas* emphasize this concern through a remarkably similar structure, even despite the changes in Spanish politics between the 1940s and 1960s, as Pau indicates of *La vuelta 1960*: “en esta segunda vuelta no hay un atisbo de represión exterior dentro de la viviendas de los ciudadanos, cuestión que muestra la seguridad y confianza que va adquiriendo el poder político” (509). In *La vuelta 1947* Isabel returns from prison to her home, finds it inhospitable for personal and political reasons, and is then informed that she must return to prison. The work’s title implies both of these moments of return, and Aub proceeds to utilize this structure twice more, only the third time replacing the prison

⁷ Aub’s ultimate plan for the *Laberinto mágico* was the publication of all of the corresponding works in two volumes, including the five novels (*Campo cerrado*, *Campo abierto*, *Campo de sangre*, *Campo del Moro*, and *Campo de los almendros*), as well as the film treatment *Campo francés* and multiple stories, including “Ruptura.” Along with the thematic parallels explored here, the inclusion of both “Ruptura” and *Campo francés* (though not “Librada”) helps to emphasize the significance of imprisonment as a clear manifestation of exile for Aub. For more on his plan for the complete *Laberinto mágico*, see Valeria de Marco’s introduction to *Campo francés*, in particular p. 8-13.

with Mexico as a space of exile. Isabel eventually remarks to Damián that: “Me parece que voy a añorar la cárcel. Por lo menos allí podía una hablar de lo que le daba la gana” (187). Though she will inevitably miss her home while confined, that home likewise offers a lack of support and desire for her presence. Within this condition, Aub expresses the fragmentation of the home environment for the exiled or otherwise removed individual; the homeland has moved on, while the exiled individual has remained relatively static. The personal “success” of the exile thus depends in large measure on the ability to compartmentalize the two spheres of the home and the site of removal. This success can be determined in psychological, professional, or myriad other forms, yet continually returns to a severing of the national sphere and the individual’s ability to comprehend and cope with this shift.

In diminishing the necessity of the geographic relationship to the nation, Aub in effect de-territorializes Spain in a much more literal form than expressed in Deleuze and Guattari’s discursive presentation of the concept. His position as a French-born, adopted Spaniard helps to reassert his cultural and personal connection to the national space, and encapsulates his affinity with a national space that is only somewhat tenable for him, while at the same time demonstrating decentered forms of culture. Aub asserts the consequence of his foreign birth as a link to extra-Spanish social forms, as he was fully conversant in French and German literature and culture, and bore a personal link to Judaism through his mother (though he only embraced his Jewish identity at certain points in his life). In his diaries in 1945, Aub reinforces his cultural position:

¡Qué daño no me ha hecho, en nuestro mundo cerrado, el no ser de ninguna parte! El llamarme como me llamo, con nombre y apellido que lo mismo pueden ser de un país que de otro... En estas horas de nacionalismo cerrado el haber nacido en París, y ser español, tener padre español nacido en Alemania, madre parisina, pero de origen también alemán, pero de apellido eslavo, y hablar con ese acento francés que desgarró mi castellano, ¡qué daño no me ha hecho! El agnosticismo de mis padres –librepensadores– en un país católico como España, o su prosapia judía, en un país antisemita como Francia, ¡qué disgustos, qué humillaciones no me ha acarreado! ¡Qué vergüenzas! Algo de mi fuerza –de mis fuerzas– he sacado para luchar contra tanta ignominia. (*Diarios* 128)

This passage is in part a reflection of Aub being somewhat too generous with his background. He opens by claiming that he is from no specific place, yet his entire output following his exile reflects on his often vociferous assertions that he is nothing but a Spaniard. Faber writes that “in a sense he had been an exile all his life” (*Exile* 221), though it might be more precise to claim that the structures of territorialization had shifted on Aub from at least the point of his move to Spain at age eleven, if not during

his childhood in Paris, and had persisted in continually greater forms of instability as his consciousness of geographic and cultural displacement increased through his life. For as much as exile is an implicitly deterritorializing event, Aub's connection to Spain and the idea of Spanish identity presented him with distinct consequences than those faced by most other Republican exiles; the result is a persistent attempt to justify his position as a member of the nation, while at the same time revealing the deterritorialization of exile as a consequence of his own decentered link to his point of origin.

Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari's turn to Kafka as a representative of the deterritorialized consciousness is ultimately instructive in the case of Aub, for while his works would seem to be too close to the collective consciousness of Spain to fit under the label of a "minor literature," his inability to find stability in the forms of nationalism and culture present in his adopted Spain results in multiple points of inversion of a nationalist-inspired consciousness. If the symbols of language or discourse for Deleuze and Guattari are in a continual state of deterritorialization, being reterritorialized through the machines of the state, then Aub's exilic production is unique among the output of the Republican exiles through his maintaining the discourse of exile in a position of decenteredness by deterritorializing exile from its connection to a geographic space. In this regard, his literature of exile is simultaneously a literature of imprisonment and a literature of the discipline of the state, seeking the relationship between Francoism as punishment for political opposition, and the effective prison of literature that confronted Aub. He was ultimately faced with no other possible recourse to freedom or to an ideological opposition to the regime that removed him from his homeland. If the onset of exile represented Foucault's "discipline-blockade," then the outcome of exile persists as the "discipline-mechanism," self-reinforcing the discipline of the state, and Aub will not be able to escape the consequences of exile throughout his life.

Aub's entire body of literature is remarkable in this sense, as it appears as a perpetual variation of the theme of and response to exile, whether as precipitated by the Civil War or as experienced in its aftermath. At the same time it is configured by the structure of feeling that rewrites his consistently shifting relationship to Spain, and thus presents an entirely diverse approach to the deterritorialization of the individual in the face of the political machines of modernity. It would be unfair to the other individuals involved in the Republican exile to claim that Aub felt his exile more markedly than his contemporaries, yet there is little question that exile for Aub was a profoundly different experience due precisely to the distinct relationship he had with Spain, and to the uniqueness of his process of entering into that exile. Deterritorialization as a whole responds to the political configuration of modernity, and to the writings of exile necessarily intertwined with the decentering of national origin in the modern age. Exile thus exists as a discourse that must reconcile the deterritorialization of the individual as

a subject of the processes of modernity who subsequently finds the reinscription of his or her relationship to the nation-state in crisis.

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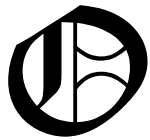
Fashioning the Other, Fashioning the Self: the Inquisition v. Elena/o de Céspedes

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Abstract: This article reevaluates the trial of Eleno de Céspedes by the Spanish Inquisition through an analysis of the arguments and rhetoric used by both the plaintiff and the court officials. The purpose of this reevaluation is to present an analysis that is not based on the assumption that Eleno's case constitutes an act of resistance to cultural and institutional norms.

Keywords: Spanish Inquisition, Intersexuality, Cross-dressing, Passing, Eleno de Céspedes



In the 17th of July 1587, an Andalusian slave girl, a self-proclaimed hermaphrodite, and a dark-skinned surgeon who had served the empire during the Alpujarras rebellion of the “moriscos” stood before the Inquisition of Toledo. The charges included bigamy, making a mockery of the sacrament of marriage, and sodomy; but on a more elemental level the crime was that of cultural illegibility - the inability of the court to read and write the subjects involved into a developing institutional-societal discourse. In extraordinary fashion, this case both illuminates and obfuscates the concept of what I will cautiously refer to as “early modern identity,” but it also stretches the ideological construction of “self” to its very limits. Each of these “selves,” frequently deemed to be “other,” can be inscribed with relative ease on separate bodies, but in this case the inscription falls short because there is only one body to be inscribed upon; a body which already carries the deep physical and social marks of discursive praxis.

This is the case of Eleno de Céspedes whose body, riddled with meaning, almost proved too laden with signification to be read and, therefore, be judged by the members of the inquisitional court.¹ The course of this enigmatic human cipher through early

¹ In this aspect, Eleno, as a sign within a semiotic system, functions much like the Don Quixote of Foucault's reading in *The Order of Things* and further demonstrates the break between resemblances and signs during the Renaissance, “*Don Quixote* is a negative of the Renaissance world; writing has ceased to be the prose of the world; resemblances and signs have dissolved their former alliance; similitudes have become deceptive and verge upon the visionary or madness; things still remain stubbornly within their

modern Spanish society and, ultimately, its legal system traces a path of both an attempt to normalize/be normal and its ultimate failure, which is twofold because both Eleno and those that judge him are engaged in a failed project of simultaneous cultural authorship and readership.²

Unlike some of the other scholars who have brought this extraordinary case to light, I have chosen not to debate the gender of Eleno de Céspedes nor read his existence as a subversive act.³ Instead I am intrigued by the difficulties encountered by the court in prosecuting this case and the important role that storytelling plays within the juridical procedures of early modern Spain. If we consider the Inquisition of Toledo to be part of a developing regulatory infrastructure within the Spanish Empire existent *a priori* to the rise of the modern nation state, the problematic enactment of institutional power (or what could be identified in this case as bio-power à la Foucault) demonstrates a case of growing pains within the institution's structure in relation to its control over certain aspects of the production of identity and "culture."⁴ On the other hand, the desire to impose a set gender identity upon this body points to a pronounced desire to adhere to an image of human "self" as a product of dialectical opposition ("Self" and "Other"), which is, in part, a departure from some of the preceding epistemological modes.⁵ Furthermore, the practice of the "discurso" (an autobiographical account of the defendant's life) lies at the center of the Inquisition's proceedings thereby showing the inextricable importance of judging narrative; deeming it as acceptable to be incorporated into the developing societal discourse or as unacceptable and, therefore, not fit for the public sphere.⁶

ironic identity: they are no longer anything but what they are; words wander off on their own, without content, without resemblance to fill the emptiness; they are no longer the marks of things..." (47-48).

² A conscious choice has been made to refer to Eleno in the masculine when referring to him after his decision to adopt the male role in society. In every other case Eleno will be referred to as female.

³ Israel Burshatin, whose excellent work helped begin the discussion of Eleno, has written several essays that discuss this case. He will be cited frequently, but I urge anyone interested in this avenue of inquiry to consult Burshatin's work. The present analysis departs from Burshatin's work on this point because this project asserts that this type of "cross-dressing" can be seen as either an act of subversion, assimilation, or both simultaneously.

⁴ William Warner and Clifford Siskin look to Raymond Williams and his assertion that the concept of culture used today dates back only to the late 18th century (102). With this in mind I utilize the term with caution and suspicion.

⁵ Many classical epistemological systems allow the possibility of a third - or at least ambiguous - gender identity. The Greek sage Tiresias and the creation myth of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* number among the literary examples and later it will be shown how the medieval medical tradition, based mostly on classical works, proves problematic in Eleno's case because a third gender and gender transformation is not seen as an impossibility. As an interesting side-note the early Christian theologian Tertullian suggested that Jesus was a eunuch (Moxnes 85).

⁶ This judgment of narrative is present in several literary texts of this time period. The constant interruptions of Berganza's story by Cipi3n in Cervantes' "El coloquio de los perros" show that the

As a word of caution, the goal is not to construct a set and inviolable diagnosis of the historical progression of Renaissance Spain toward the modern nation state, nor to claim that identity was constructed in an absolutely different manner prior to or after this period. This would be just as irresponsible as proclaiming Eleno definitively male or female. Instead this case will serve as a point of departure for the consideration of the “failures and successes” (also dangerous terms) of identity production and cultural discursivity in Spain at this time.

“Naming” a Slave

Eleno was born in Alhama near Granada without a name. Of course, she - Eleno was born a female - was called something by the people around her but it was not a name in the true human sense of the word. It was more a pragmatic linguistic placeholder used to signal toward a possession than a name that identified and encompassed some sort of essence. It remains unclear what series of sounds called her attention from her birth in approximately 1545 until she was given the name Elena de Céspedes nearly ten years later when the mistress of the household (also Elena) passed away (Burshatin 421). Perhaps it was merely “slave,” which would correspond to the two symbols burned into her cheeks to identify her as property. Perhaps it was something that the little girl liked. We may never know but what is patently clear is that this name (or lack thereof) was temporary and malleable, and that even in Eleno’s childhood the acts of naming and inscribing were central to her personal history.

With this new name came a new life; one of relative freedom - Eleno was freed at this point - and, more importantly, mobility (both geographic and social). Israel Burshatin astutely reflects upon the effect this must have had on Eleno, “Nevertheless, the *mulata* Elena de Céspedes gained her freedom and along with it came the notion that bodies tell stories - even conflicted ones - and that they convey history, legal status, and cultural boundaries” (Burshatin 422). And yet, despite the fact that her body - more specifically the color of her skin and her face - told a fairly concrete story, she began a voyage that would test the limits of social inscription.

It appears unknown if her next step in life was a personal choice or a matter of necessity, but in the end it proved to be quite determinant in her story’s future trajectory. Her training as an apprentice in the garment industry provided her with the means to support herself economically, but it also taught her a set of skills that would be useful in her future social - and physical - transformations.

It would still be several years before Elena became Eleno, but the seed of metaphysical transformation had already begun to germinate. In the end, it was a purely

readers and the audiences of the late Renaissance were far from passive and that their judgments had a distinct impact on how a story was told (Hessel 11-13).

heterosexual relationship that supposedly galvanized the physical transition.⁷ The pregnancy that resulted from her short-lived marriage to Christóval Lombardo - a stonemason from Jaén - who allegedly passed away before or shortly after the birth of the child, was the cause of the subsequent hermaphroditic transformation.⁸ Eleno states in the Inquisition documents - always through the mediating voice of the scribe - that the strain of delivery caused her to give birth to a male member:

When she gave birth, as she has said, with the force that she applied in labor she broke the skin over the urinary canal, and a head came out (the length) of about half a big thumb, and she indicated it so; in its shape it resembled the head of a male member which when she felt desire and natural excitement it would come out as she has said, and when she wasn't excited it contracted and receded into the place where the skin had broken. (Burshatin 435)

Unfortunately, there is little that communicates Eleno's reaction to this life-altering event. Any sense of personal reflection that the Inquisition let slip into their records is notably marked by Eleno's perspective in 1587, after spending twenty years living as a man. Instead of an emotional account of personal transformation, the reader finds a particularly cold series of medical observations.⁹ Marie Catherine Barbazza notes how this relative detachment can prove troubling to a modern reader, "Para nosotros, lectores del siglo veinte, este relato largo y circunstanciado queda a menudo muy incompleto, porque nos presenta una serie de hechos objetivos que no revelan claramente las motivaciones personales profundas" (19).

Perhaps due to a desire to get to the point of the proceedings (the crimes), Eleno's long process of personal social transformation is glossed and reduced to a few notable events. First, Eleno left her marital home entrusting the care of her newborn child to Catalina, a maid in a nearby household (Kagan 39). Employed in various jobs in the garment industry, Eleno moved around Andalucía without significant incident until she arrived in San Lúcar de Barrameda. It was there that Eleno's project of self-fashioning met with its first and perhaps most important "success."

⁷ All the information presented on Eleno's transformation must be taken with a grain of salt since it comes from the testimony given to the court (which frequently inserts its opinion into the record). It also must be noted that just as we cannot trust the word of the court in its accuracy, nor can we believe everything that Eleno is reported to have said.

⁸ I will continue referring to Eleno's case as one of a hermaphrodite because this is the terminology used at the time, but in the contemporary nomenclature I am referring to a case of an "intersex" individual.

⁹ As I have previously stated, Eleno's account is always inherently mediated by the Inquisition, but I would also like to suggest it is also deeply affected by the temporal distance between the events and the context of the courtroom that may have caused Eleno to modify the account to his benefit (or perhaps detriment).

While working in the home of Hernando de Toledo (a linen merchant), she found herself attracted to Ana de Albánchez; the merchant's wife. Their love affair began when Eleno kissed Ana and explained that she possessed "two natures." After a failed attempt at sexual congress, Eleno sought the help of a doctor named Tapia who specialized in surgery:

He examined me in secret and told me I was a hermaphrodite. With a probe he put inside me he made a cut above the piece of skin which had begun to come out. With this cut there emerged a male member ... It came out bent in an arch, so the surgeon cut it a little bit. With that the member straightened out. He told me it was badly constructed and weak at the root, and he cured me of this. In fifteen days he made me well. I kept this ability to have relations with women and went back to Ana de Albánchez and had relations and dealings with her as a man many times. (Kagan 47-48)

This physical fashioning allowed Eleno to adopt the habit of a man in the most intimate and determinant manner; the role of the male in coitus. The creation of a functional phallus was an inscription of an unavoidably determinant nature, and in accordance with it Eleno began to see herself as a "himself." The preceding account states clearly that the role of manhood is adopted in this moment - "relations and dealings with her as a *man*" - and thusly the state of hermaphroditic ambiguity and the accoutrement of femininity began to fall to the wayside.

Yet the process of transformation and gender adoption was by no means complete. Another major step was taken as a result of the events that transpired in Jerez de la Frontera. There Eleno was arrested and put in jail after stabbing a *rufián* (which in this period could mean pimp or scoundrel) who had attacked her (Kagan 40). Burshatin claims this attack was motivated by Eleno's "queer" style," though I myself have found no evidence of this in the testimony I have read (436).¹⁰ Nonetheless, this attack did push forward Eleno's transformation of appearance. The adoption of full male garb was the result of this run-in with the law. In this case the adoption of the role of the male in practice was not enough to put to bed the issue of Eleno's gender. Another level of fashioning was required to "be" a man. The hidden phallus was in truth little help in determining Eleno's nature in the societal context. The requirement of masculinity incorporated much more than it's supposedly most important feature.

The "disguise" itself (as the Inquisition would characterize it) appears to have met with limited success. Surprisingly, it was initially successful in a situation thought to exemplify the masculine arts. Eleno became a soldier in the company of Ponce de León

¹⁰ I do not wish to discredit Burshatin's claim. I, merely, have not yet encountered evidence of this.

and served in the War of the Alpujarras (Kagan 41). Shortly after the company disbanded the disguise met with a relatively shocking failure. Eleno, the former soldier, was certified by the tailor's guild, but was also required to place "sastra" or seamstress on the shop's sign because (and I quote Eleno) "they knew I was a woman" (Kagan 41).

How did they know this? Unfortunately, no explanation is provided, but it is peculiar that Eleno lived among men as a peer presumably hiding his dual nature and yet was unable to fool a panel of guild representatives. There are many possible explanations, but none can be founded securely on the historical evidence. Nonetheless, it does seem permissible to claim that Eleno's attempts at self-fashioning were not always successful (or perhaps that they didn't always need to be).¹¹

Over the next several years Eleno oscillated between the life of a tailor and the life of soldier, reenlisting several times. During a 2 year period spent in Madrid, Eleno learned the trade of surgeon and gave up tailoring in order to pursue the more respectable field of medicine.¹² This led him to Ciempozuelos where he would meet his future wife and thus begin the series of "crimes" that would land him in front of the Inquisition.

During this long period of time - almost 20 years - Elena had become Eleno and the small orthographic change had been accompanied by years of personal inscription ranging from the medium of fabric and thread to the medium of flesh and blood. The constant flux of identity and place allowed Eleno to construct himself differently when circumstance required in order to better navigate society. As Burshatin notes, Eleno controlled his appearance as a means to the end of social mobility:

With all the nimbleness he had developed in the manufacturing, cutting, sewing, and tailoring of cloth Eleno was able to style and shape his androgynous figure so that it would seem sufficiently masculine to gain him entry to occupations barred to women. His medical technique and other techniques of the self produced a body that was a site of resistance to the implied subservience in the subject positions slave, woman, and even hermaphrodite. (431)

Burshatin's assertion that the goal of Eleno's various stylings and shapings were predicated upon a desire for self-controlled social mobility is well put, but by

¹¹ It is clear from the particulars of the case that some of Eleno's comrades in arms knew of his double nature. How many and who knew is another question all together. In addition the issue of public-institutional vs. private self-representation enters into play. The assignment of a title - albeit mundane (*sastre*) - carried a considerable amount of weight at this time. One merely needs to recall the plethora of titles that Carlos V had to realize their simultaneous importance and ironic triviality.

¹² Though medicine and surgery are not always fully synonymous during this period it is safe to say the Eleno was more than a run-of-the-mill barber. His later appeal to medical knowledge in his defense suggests that his training was extensive and based in both practice and theory.

characterizing the body as “site of resistance” he fails to note that Eleno’s body can also be seen as a site of assimilation.

Perspective is of great importance in this aspect of Eleno’s case. To the Inquisition, Eleno’s styling and shaping of a “sufficiently masculine” figure is a transgression of the societal order, but to Eleno it is a pragmatic aesthetic assimilation that affords him an opportunity to better fit in. As will be seen later, it is Eleno who frames these actions as vehicles of social assimilation instead of willful resistance to the institutional values of the time.

By the time Eleno married, he himself had taken control of, to the best of his abilities, his own identity. Though the marks that others had inscribed upon him would never fully fade, their determinant nature had been diminished (he was actually able to lessen the appearance of the slave scars on his face). Yet we must not forget that the traces of these imposed inscriptions were always present and producing meaning. Eleno never enacts a truly radical break with his previous (yet also present) identity. The process of naming that so defines this individual is not a story of drastic and complete inscriptions and erasures, but rather subtle modification.

“Taking” a wife

Up to this point in the life of Eleno de Céspedes, his double nature had been problematic only in a limited sense. A few run-ins with the law had resulted from his “cross-dressing,” multiple affairs with single and married women, and the occasional physical altercation, but these were no more than small interruptions in his decades-long self-fashioning project. It is not until he decides to settle down and get married that his crimes become “heinous” enough to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

As I have already stated, Eleno met the woman he would marry in Ciempozuelos. Due to his lack of a beard he was asked by the vicar of Madrid, from whom he had solicited permission to wed, if he was a “capon” (Kagan 43). The doubt that Eleno could consummate the marriage led to a series of examinations to prove his masculinity. Lisa Vollendorf states that “Nine doctors and midwives examined him and unanimously declared him a man, upon which Céspedes received permission to marry” (17). This high number seems to lend credence to Eleno’s claim that he could not have committed a crime since he had been certified as an acceptable candidate for marriage, but the specifics of these examinations in conjunction with the pre-trial exam paint a complicated picture.

The, at times confusing, testimony given by Dr. Francisco Díaz, who had checked Eleno at the time of his pre-nuptial examinations and also at the time of his arraignment, further frustrates any attempt to clearly identify the physical gender identity of Eleno. He affirmed that at the time of the first examination Eleno was fully male (not even a hermaphrodite), yet the second examination for the court showed Eleno to be fully female.

The shocking revelation that Eleno no longer possessed a penis had drastic consequences on the course of the trial. Though Eleno stuck with his original defense, the testimony of Dr. Díaz made it much easier for the Inquisition to ignore the difficult issue that occupied the center of this case; what was the place of a hermaphrodite in society? The accusation of trickery and deception seemed to be more plausible if Eleno was unable to present his male genitalia as evidence to the contrary. Therefore, the issue of the absent phallus supplanted the issue of hermaphroditism as the central issue; had the phallus ever existed?

Eleno explained the loss of his penis in this manner:

What happened is that before last Christmas I suffered a flow of blood through my woman's parts and through my rear end, which caused me great pain in my kidneys. I'd hurt myself while riding horseback and the root of my member became weak. The member became spongy and I went cutting it bit by bit, so that I've come to be without it. It just finished falling off about fifteen days ago or a little more, as I've said. (Kagan 49)

The court appears to have highly doubted the veracity of this statement because the final decision came down against Eleno and he was sentenced to 200 lashes (given on 2 separate occasions) and 10 years of confinement, but the strength of Eleno's defense before the crushing blow delivered by Díaz points to some difficulties the court experienced in coming to a final verdict.

Eleno justified his decision to marry in accordance with religious and moral codes when he stated:

Since I found I had a man's member and could have relations with women as a man, and since I'd gone around with so many women, I wanted to leave off sin and marry, and not have relations with anyone but my wife. It was because of this that I married. I didn't think I'd erred, but rather that I'd married in God's service. (Kagan 48)

In this passage Eleno presents himself as someone who had passively developed a penis and, in order to better follow God's will, he, after a time, chose to live his life as a God-fearing man should. This argument is only strengthened by his appeal to the medical beliefs of the time period. As Burshatin notes, the medical component of the defense relied heavily on a fairly standard reading of book 7 of Pliny's *Natural History* which accounted for such gender transformations (447). The court could not deny the sound reasoning of Eleno's appeal to the humoral theories since it still was a foundational part of the medical knowledge of that time period. Therefore, if Eleno had had a penis it

would have been much more difficult to condemn him as a sodomite and *burladora* (trickster).¹³

In a sense, Eleno used traditional and institutionalized discourse in such a way as to write his situation into a realm of “normalcy”; the very same discourse proposed by the Inquisition. Despite the fact that the Inquisition was not a fair and balanced court, and that they would have had little desire to justify the existence of an intersex individual, doubts are visible throughout the text. One of the most telling is the oscillation of the narrating voice between gender pronouns as applied to Eleno (Kagan 37, 40). Even those who desired to prove that Eleno was a deceitful woman seem to be unsure as to where to place him in the discourse. This is particularly peculiar when we consider the discursive purpose of the Inquisition in the larger context of nation-building. Barbara Fuchs comments on the problematic nature of this project when she states:

Given the various pressures of centralization, imperial ambition, and religious dissidence, the construction of national identity in early modern Spain was an enterprise fraught with difficulties ... It is important to underscore that this sense of early modern Spain as a homogeneous nation reunited through the Reconquista was a myth, challenged not only by the prominence of hybrid subjects ... in many areas of public life but also by the many tensions between local allegiances and centralized forces. (1)

Despite the fact that the Reconquista is mentioned instead of the Inquisition, it is quite safe to say that it continues the same project that was central to the military forces that retook the Iberian Peninsula; a pure Spain (in body, mind, and spirit). But as Fuchs observes, the facts did not match the discourse.

According to the final assessment of the inquisitorial court, the body of Eleno may have been undeniably feminine, but the person as a whole challenged that assessment and by doing so forced the court to reduce gender to a biological feature instead of a larger function of discourse and fashioning. Everything else that supposedly constitutes masculinity at this time must be left outside of the scope of consideration since Eleno is capable of exhibiting the majority of these features; but why was this the case? Why not place Eleno in the 3rd gender category of hermaphrodite that he presents with such convincing rhetorical and stylistic skill? To explore this question the scope of our investigation must be expanded in order to consider the larger currents in both society and the institutions of early modern Spain.

¹³ The *burladora* was a figure similar to the legendary literary archetype of Don Juan. Fear of women who would lead other women astray appears to be fairly commonplace at this time since literary and historical examples can be found with minimal effort.

Institutions and Society at Large: Reflections on Early Modern Gender Identity

The difference that Eleno exemplified was not invisible to society at large. In Eleno's case, many people were aware of his peculiar nature and the spectrum of reactions was wide. Therefore, the question of how peculiar Eleno was is an issue of particular importance. How prevalent were hermaphroditism and intersex births at this time and what was the social perception of them?

Due to the fact that statistical records were not accurately kept on this issue, we work with the assumption that the percentage of hermaphroditic or intersex births has not changed significantly in the past 4 to 5 centuries.¹⁴ Unfortunately even today there is no set number that accurately represents the population (one factor being the various definitions). The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) claims that approximately 1% of all children born exhibit sexual ambiguity (Anne Fausto-Sterling's estimates reach 1.7%) while statistics that center on ambiguity at the chromosomal level place the percentage around 0.018% (Sax 174).¹⁵ The discrepancy in numbers does paint a very different picture but it is obvious from both that this was most likely not an unknown phenomenon.¹⁶

Other cases can be found in the textual records of the time period, such as the one with which Lisa Vollendorf opens her chapter on Eleno de Céspedes in *The Lives of Women: A New History of Inquisitional Spain*. The 1605 case of doña Magdalena Muñoz presents some strong similarities to the case of Eleno, but the primary difference lies in the conclusion. A manly woman (*mujer varonil*), Magdalena entered a convent due to the fact that she was "unfit for marriage" (Vollendorf 11). One day while carrying a load of grain she experienced a pain in her groin and subsequently developed a penis. This transformation disqualified her from participating in life at the convent but interestingly it now made her fit for marriage, albeit from the other side of the gender spectrum. Vollendorf cites the account of Fray Torres who reported on the family's reaction to the news:

[T]he father is very happy because he is a rich man and he didn't have any heirs and now he finds himself with *a very manly son* and one who can marry, and *she*, too is happy because after twelve years in jail [the

¹⁴ Examples of intersex individuals *a priori* and *a posteriori* to this period do not show major discrepancies that would signal a decrease or increase of these births.

¹⁵ The difference between Fausto-Sterling and Sax boils down to the consideration of which features make a person "intersex." Fausto-Sterling's book *Sexing the Body* (2000) presented this higher percentage because, unlike Sax, cases beyond chromosomal intersexuality were included.

¹⁶ I have chosen to focus only on intersex births because it is limited to a fairly biological assessment of the infant and, therefore, is easier to ground in the historical record. The numbers I have presented do not take into account cases such as Eleno's in which the transition occurs later in life or other individuals who do not physically manifest gender ambiguity, but rather choose to undertake a transition for emotional and psychological reasons.

convent], she knows liberty well, and *she was a woman and now a man*, which out of all things and timely events no better favor could have been paid her by nature itself. (12)

This case within the society at large presents a positive assessment of gender transformation (female to male) that would seem to be strangely at odds with the case of Eleno. Of course, many factors could theoretically be at the root of this difference: the presence of the penis, their racial heritage, and their families' social status. But in these cases of gender transformation a provocative possibility exists in the difference between the discourse of various local institutions/social settings and the developing institutional discourse at a national/imperial level.

As has already been noted, Eleno had little trouble in navigating society, even when his attempts at masculinity met with failure. It is not until the increasingly institutionalized sacrament of marriage comes into play that larger problems arise. Despite the fact that Eleno is cleared for marriage at a less institutionalized and more local level, he is brought before the Inquisition; an institution that was governed in part by the church and in part by the crown.¹⁷ Here, Eleno is no longer subject to the Spanish society at large, but rather a governing entity with a deep desire to organize society at a more universal level. This project is of central importance when the macro-management of the Spanish Empire is considered; a macro-management that is, in part, based in the micro-processes of the human body.

Michel Foucault dates the genesis of what he labels "bio-power" to the 17th century, but the roots of the thinking that facilitated its rise in the modern world precede its full manifestation. These "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" may not be delineated into well-regimented programs but they are undeniably present in the 16th century (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 139-140).¹⁸ The population crisis that racked Spain throughout the 16th and 17th centuries seemed to call out for some sort of program, institution, and/or code that would encourage procreative sexual relations.¹⁹ This combined with the prohibitive statutes that endeavored to expunge the non-Christian population from the Spanish past, present, and future produced the germination of a specific trajectory among the existent institutions of both church and crown.

¹⁷ Vollendorf does not present evidence that suggests that the case of Magdalena Muñoz was considered by the Inquisition or any other non-local institution for that matter.

¹⁸ It could be argued that "bio-power" in some form or another has been omnipresent. Foucault makes the distinction by identifying projects, programs, and institutions that facilitate its enactment. The 15th and 16th centuries constitute the beginning of formation for these larger entities and the Inquisition itself is a prime example of an institution that subjugates the body and controls populations.

¹⁹ In *Cuidad Real, 1500-1750: Growth, Crisis, and Readjustment in the Spanish Economy* Carla Rahn Phillips points to the crises caused by the decline and uneven redistribution of the Spanish population during the Renaissance. The combination this phenomenon with a mismanagement of resources placed Spain in a precarious position (1-4, 17-18).

Nonetheless, other issues had to be dealt with first. Old Medieval traditions and relatively newer ideas that abounded during the Renaissance required some filtering in order to make them fit the social-centered programs of the emerging new world order. In a sense, the Inquisition is participating in the same process as Eleno; a process that centers on the fashioning of self through narrative, story, and inscription. This contest of molding self finds itself on an interesting playing field in the case of Eleno because neither side appears to possess an absolute and infallible control of identity production.

It is here, in this aspect of identity production, that Eleno's case poses the largest threat to the developing power structure exemplified by the Inquisition. To an organization charged with rooting out those that do not fit the bill of pure Spaniards in body and mind, the combination of the complicated body and the astute mind of Eleno, which threatens to write itself into the larger discourse of institutional society, is quite a wrench in the works of "progress." Though there may be no subversive motivation to Eleno's self-fashioned identity - in fact it could be seen as an act of drastic assimilation to the society at large - the effect of the encounter with the Inquisitional institution contains a subversive potential that can be allowed to do what it may or, instead, be eliminated. In the end, it is the absence of the phallus that allows the Inquisition to dismiss the question without going against the ideas it holds as foundational (i.e. the value of marriage and the medical laws of the humors), thusly nullifying the dangerous potential of Eleno's case.

In the case of the Inquisition v. Eleno de Céspedes, the fashioning of the other that the Inquisition attempts to enact upon body and identity comes into direct conflict with the self-fashioning Eleno has enacted upon himself within the realm of society at large. The shifting nature of identity production and discourse from an individual navigating their surroundings to the chambers of institutions is visible, but so is the shakiness of the transition. Instead of a cut-and-dry enactment of a new type of institutional power which greatly defined the subsequent rise of the nation-state and the later forms of colonialism, we witness in this case the ragged edges of this project and the growing pains it experienced before it became the new world order.

Eleno in Elena's Clothes

Eleno de Céspedes survived the *auto de fe* - a public punishment determined by the Inquisition - including the 200 lashes he endured after being marched through the streets of Ciempozuelos dressed in woman's clothing. Once again his body had been deeply marked with the scars of imposed signification. He was then sent to the Hospital del Rey in Toledo to serve out his 10 years of confinement. News of his surgical skills and peculiar nature spread quickly. Burshatin states, "Her notoriety drew many to her care. The sick and injured were eager to be healed by a woman who had lived as a man and was reputed to have both male and female genitalia, her powers now the stuff of an

auto de fe” (436).²⁰ In fact, the influx of patients was so extreme that only a year into the sentence the hospital director petitioned to have Eleno sent somewhere else. This request was granted and Eleno was dispatched to the small town of Puente del Arzobispo.

It is there that the documentation runs out. Like Eleno’s birth name, no evidence appears to exist to communicate his fate. The trail has grown cold and as readers we find ourselves without “remedio” or recourse, but with the story that has been left to us we can better understand the complexities of this person’s life and the equally complex forces that imposed meaning upon it (something of which I myself am also guilty).

I would like to end by reflecting on the “successes and failures” of early modern identity production as they relate to the case of Eleno. The glimpse that it affords us into the turbulent evolution of our contemporary concept of identity presents a complex story that still requires our attention and rigorous research. Long before Judith Butler suggested that gender is primarily constituted by a series of performatives (repeated signifying actions within a social context) and gave a theoretical framework for understanding the processes of the expression of gender, the lines of conflict were drawn between the individuals whose actions defined them and the institutions that desired to determine their identities.²¹ Long before the first acts of resistance to these imposed identities, the power struggle began as institutions initiated their programs in order to control a society at large. Long before the rise of social institutions that fashioned the other, there were individuals like Eleno fashioning themselves.

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²⁰ I agree that many patients were drawn to Eleno with positive intentions for his skill and peculiarity, but I do not wish at this time to deny the possibility of voyeurism since at this time so-called “freak shows” frequently attracted sizeable audiences.

²¹ “In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporal signs and other discursive means” (Butler *Gender Trouble* 173).

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Crisis y catarsis en el teatro calderoniano. Del rito de paso a la tragedia española

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Abstract: Este artículo explora dos aspectos de la tragedia clásica, definida por Aristóteles, que prevalecen en el teatro del XVII y más concretamente en el teatro calderoniano: el rito de paso y la catarsis. Ambos elementos dependen de la participación activa del público y se identifican claramente en *La vida es sueño* y *El médico de su honra* de Calderón.

Keywords: catarsis, tragedia, rito de paso, Calderón, La vida es sueño, El médico de su honra

Aristóteles determina en su *Poética* las características formales que debe poseer una obra para ser considerada trágica. Así, para entender la tragedia como género teatral es importante la figura de un héroe, las tres partes de las que debe constar, la unidad de acción, conceptos como la *hamartia*, la diferencia con la épica o el valor del coro, pero realmente es su efecto sobre la audiencia lo que indica que, realmente, se trata de una tragedia.

El efecto buscado y magistralmente conseguido en las tragedias clásicas es el de proporcionar una catarsis colectiva a los espectadores de la obra. Los términos catarsis y tragedia, de hecho, han ido íntimamente unidos a la hora de explicar, desde una perspectiva literaria, la experiencia de la representación. Aristóteles expuso su propia teoría, definiendo tragedia mediante el estudio exhaustivo de una estructura que rodeaba y potenciaba el momento de la catarsis. Los espectadores veían proyectadas en los actores sus bajas pasiones y asistían al castigo que éstas merecían; de esta manera se producía en ellos un efecto purificador. A través de ella, el público sentía al final de la representación dos sentimientos contradictorios: pena y miedo, piedad o terror. La estructura definida por Aristóteles en su *Poética* permite establecer las características del género trágico en su época: un protagonista que refleja los valores tradicionales de la *polis*, un evento que cambiará la suerte del protagonista y que llevará a éste o a otros a la muerte, la ignorancia por parte del héroe de su error.

En el siglo XVI de la España renacentista, autores como Alonso López Pinciano (1547-1627) rescatan la teoría de la tragedia aristotélica¹ y vuelven a comentar la importancia de los elementos que componen la estructura trágica de la antigüedad incluyendo la catarsis: “temor y compassion se hallen juntos, como en la verdad se pueden hallar mezclados, y yo los percibo en muchas acciones tragicas” (342). Sin embargo, la catarsis es considerada como un elemento más, si bien el último, de toda una serie de rasgos. A pesar de estos tratados explicativos, en el teatro del siglo XVII español, se antoja difícil trasladar este modelo neo-aristotélico, principalmente por la renovación que llevó a cabo Lope de Vega con su *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*. De modo que, la eliminación de la unidad de acción, la división de la obra en tres actos y la búsqueda de lo que deleita al público complican la posibilidad de una tragedia en el sentido clásico formal, dentro del teatro del Siglo de Oro español. No obstante, hay dos factores que contradicen esta afirmación categórica. En primer lugar, la presencia de la palabra “tragedia” en algunas comedias invita a pensar que el concepto era considerado como un valor importante para la literatura de la época, eso sí, desprovisto de la categorización aristotélica, pero con el mismo trasfondo de acción, narrando las aventuras del hombre que explora los abismos y vericuetos del alma. No se habla por tanto de tragedia como género, sino como experiencia diaria que entronca con la historia personal de cada espectador. En segundo lugar, debemos señalar el elemento de muerte que rodea a estas obras. Sin embargo, cuando la muerte no es explícita como en *La vida es sueño*, ¿se puede seguir hablando de tragedia? La respuesta a priori, y desde una estricta perspectiva genérica sería negativa, ya que en mayor o menor medida lo trágico y la muerte comparten una relación de causalidad. Sin embargo, la muerte no tiene que ser literal, ni siquiera física ya que el dolor psicológico, llevado a límites extremos, también activa la catarsis en el espectador.

De modo que, para establecer la validez de una tragedia en el teatro español del XVII será necesario antes definir lo trágico, descubrir su relación con la muerte y localizar sus características en obras que se separen de los preceptos tradicionales aristotélicos.

Lo trágico especifica un estado del ser que, aplicado a una obra de literatura, requiere que las emociones se reproduzcan tanto en los actores como en los espectadores o mejor, en los espectadores por medio de los actores. Así, cuando los críticos realizan sus numerosos estudios sobre el género trágico manifiestan la multiplicidad de perspectivas que se pueden tomar para afrontar el tema de la tragedia clásica. Pero este estudio no pretende hacer un recorrido sobre las posturas que los

¹ “Tragedia es imitacion de acción grave y perfecta y de grandeza conveniente en oracion suave, la qual contiene en si las tres formas de imitacion cada una de por sí hecha para limpiar las passiones del alma, no por enarracion, sino por medio de misericordia y miedo” (López Pinciano 327).

críticos han desarrollado respecto a este tema,² sino demostrar que el sentido de lo trágico ha de comprenderse en su generalización y no en la concreción de un estereotipo, producto de una época determinada. Mi planteamiento se acerca a las intuiciones de Oostendorp sobre la tragedia española, cuando afirma que “la tragedia consiste en primer lugar en un modelo de acción que como tal no se limita a presentarse en el subgénero literario que, según la tradición, llamamos tragedia” (184). Es un modelo de acción en el que el público no es un mero receptor sino un miembro activo de la propia obra. El espectador, según Aristóteles o el Pinciano, deberá experimentar dos sentimientos, temor y piedad, al ver estas obras, con lo que nos alejamos de las convenciones y posibles estructuras propias de la obra trágica para centrarnos en la perspectiva del receptor quien, finalmente va a ser quien decida el “carácter” de la obra representada. La estructura misma de la obra se manifiesta como resorte que permite el momento final de la catarsis en el espectador, o lo que es lo mismo, la estructura de las obras prepara al receptor para el momento trágico. Si es el receptor quien define lo trágico a través de la catarsis, los elementos formales de la tragedia clásica quedan relegados y pasan a ser accesorios y dependientes de la época y los gustos.³ El espectador, al contemplar y vivir lo trágico en una obra literaria y a través de su participación anímica en la misma, queda sometido a profundos sentimientos en relación con su papel en la vida. Estos sentimientos sirven para cambiar, como afirma Cassirer en boca de Abdulla, no “in the character and quality of the passions themselves but a change in the human soul. The soul experiences the emotions of pity and fear, but instead of being disturbed and disquieted by them it is brought to a state of rest and peace” (5). La sensación liberadora de la que habla Cassirer invita a pensar en un cambio radical a nivel individual, en cuanto a la posición del sujeto en relación con el resto y con su entorno. La catarsis, la liberación es el verdadero momento estructurante, conformado por la muerte (ya sea real o figurada) y que desatará como consecuencia dos emociones, miedo y piedad, en el espectador. Estas emociones liberadas por la catarsis alertan al individuo sobre su posición en el mundo, le hacen tomar conciencia de su papel en la sociedad, en continua crisis. La tragedia separa el antes y el después del individuo en relación con esta crisis, o en otras palabras, separa la inconsciencia de la toma de conciencia, lo que hace de la catarsis un elemento liberador ya que la concienciación del entorno por parte del sujeto supone su propio ordenamiento y comprensión. Se produce, por tanto, una evolución en el sujeto, un cambio en su

² No obstante, es necesario destacar las ideas de la escuela inglesa sobre la tragedia española del XVII, definiendo ésta en relación a la derrota del hombre y a la trascendencia. Si tenemos en cuenta esta postura, *La vida es sueño* no podría ser considerada tragedia, ya que no expone la derrota sino la victoria final de Segismundo. Prefiero abordar el análisis de la tragedia en relación al receptor y no al personaje principal de la obra, o lo que es lo mismo, concibo que la obra trágica queda incompleta y por tanto no es tragedia sin un receptor que la considere así.

³ En el caso concreto del teatro español del XVII estos gustos vendrán determinados por el “vulgo” al que hace referencia Lope en su *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*: “como las paga el vulgo, es justo / Hablarle en necio para darle gusto” (285).

percepción de la realidad. En esta línea Turner asocia, en el siguiente comentario, teatro y crisis en un esfuerzo por establecer conexiones entre representación y sociedad: “Originally theatre was concerned, among other things, with resolving crises affecting everyone and assigning *meaning* to the apparently arbitrary and often cruel-seeming sequence of events following personal or social conflicts” (114). Crisis y teatro parecen estar interconectados con la comunidad. El teatro representa un reflejo del mundo real o una distorsión del mismo si se prefiere. Si tomamos en cuenta la relación que Aristóteles hace entre tragedia e imitación de la acción, se puede afirmar que la obra teatral (en general, y la tragedia en particular) es una imitación de la realidad, pero una imitación, como apunta el Pinciano, verosímil.⁴ Con esto se señala que la representación debe poner de manifiesto una situación no necesariamente real, sino probable. El espectador se ve sometido a un mundo ficcional, con rasgos reales que permiten contrastar la visión que tiene de la sociedad con aquella otra representada en el escenario.

La tragedia es, quizá, el género que guarda un mayor vínculo con este antiguo modo de representación del que habla Turner, en donde el espacio y el tiempo toman una nueva dimensión, como comprobaremos más adelante. En estas obras, la lucha contra un destino inexorable, que determina la vida de los mortales y el conflicto que se abre entre el hombre, el poder, las pasiones y los dioses, serán temas comunes. Pero, estas características no son propias del género trágico, al menos no originalmente, sino de una representación ancestral que ha sido práctica común en todas las comunidades y que aún hoy se sigue manifestando, aunque de manera más velada o transformada, para señalar la incorporación a la sociedad de un nuevo miembro, el inicio de una etapa en la vida, un final, un reencuentro..., en lo que denominamos ritos de paso. Por medio de estos ritos de paso se acentúa un determinado comportamiento en los jóvenes miembros del colectivo social y la comunidad participa de este acontecimiento hasta llegar a la catarsis.⁵ Por medio de los diversos ritos de paso –fiestas de cumpleaños, Primera Comunión en el rito católico o el día en que puede votar por primera vez- el niño se separa de su sistema de vida anterior y mediante el rito intemporal va transitando en un tiempo imaginario, cambiando de mentalidad para volver a incorporarse a la sociedad convertido en adulto, tomando responsabilidades, aprendiendo su función en la sociedad. En una palabra, madura, lo que, no obstante, le ha provocado tensión, temor al fracaso y pena por la vida que deja atrás. Su comunidad, grande o pequeña, participa en pleno de los acontecimientos, lo que les reafirma en sus propios valores por el hecho de participar activamente. El rito puede ser entendido como un momento de transición, de puente entre dos mundos, o quizás de dos

⁴ “La fábula es imitación de la obra. Imitación ha de ser porque las ficciones que no tienen imitación y verosimilitud, no son fábulas sino disparates” (8).

⁵ “Ritual cannot be divorced from the changing pattern, which is society; it shares society processional, dramatic form” (Grimes 151).

percepciones distintas del mismo. La vuelta al mundo real, el regreso al presente viene provocado, a menudo, por una experiencia dolorosa (circuncisión, perforación...), hecho que entronca con una de las características fundamentales para entender lo trágico y que ya dejé señalado al principio de este trabajo: la muerte o el momento de dolor, que permite hacer al lector consciente de su vivencia, y de la que es testigo la comunidad y a su vez recordada por todos.

Levi-Strauss alude al rito en los siguientes términos: “Ritual is not a reaction to life; it is a reaction to what thought has made of life. It is not a direct response to the world, or even to experience of the world; it is a response to the way man thinks of the world. What, in the last resort, ritual seeks to overcome is not the resistance of the world to man, but the resistance of man’s thought to man himself” (681). Es decir, el ritual no es una consecuencia de la vida misma, no forma parte de ella, sino que responde a una necesidad de la comunidad. Con el ritual el individuo comienza un viaje que dejará de lado su estado anterior y le someterá a la toma de conciencia, a la responsabilidad de formar parte de la comunidad. Con el rito se produce la muerte del individuo anterior y el renacer del nuevo yo, aceptado previamente por la comunidad. Del mismo modo, la tragedia provoca una confrontación entre la percepción de la realidad del individuo y otra percepción distinta, llena de fallas, en continua crisis que avoca a una multiplicidad de reacciones en el receptor, de forma tal que, pese a estar contextualizada en un marco histórico determinado, retrata la personalidad del ser humano y la fluctuación de sus emociones, las contradicciones universales, las dudas, los anhelos y un cúmulo de sentimientos que escapan de todo límite temporal-espacial.

¿Es posible, por tanto, entender la tragedia como entorno ritual? El espectador, definitivamente, se ve sometido a un nuevo espacio y tiempo, el de la representación. Esta entrada y salida del espacio de representación implica pensar necesariamente en un antes-durante-después de la experiencia trágica. Victor Turner, a propósito de esta línea temporal y en relación al rito comenta las tres fases de las que consta:

Three phases in a rite of passage: *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation*. The first phase of *separation* clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and time (it is more than just a matter of entering a temple—there must be in addition a rite which changes the quality of *time* also, or constructs a cultural realm which is defined as “out of time”). (24)

La entrada en el escenario por parte del público implica un corte entre el mundo real y la imitación de la representación. Se produce, por tanto, la separación y la entrada abrupta en el espacio teatral. En este espacio de transición es donde se confrontarán las distintas visiones de la sociedad para finalizar este estadio en un momento de dolor, en la catarsis, tras la que se pasa a la fase de incorporación al mundo real.

El ritual provoca un corte radical con la experiencia anterior. El iniciado pierde todo contacto con la experiencia temporal mundana y se adentra en un tiempo distinto, proteico, en el que todo parece suceder a la vez, como en un sueño. La espera y la memoria funcionan de forma inconexa dando una sensación temporal de eternidad.⁶ Finalmente, el sujeto incorpora a sí mismo la experiencia del rito y a la vez se reincorpora a la sociedad. Cuando el sujeto vuelva a la comunidad lo hará transformado y comenzará para él una nueva forma de vida.

Es importante destacar el valor comunitario y colectivo del rito de paso y, por tanto, de la tragedia en relación al espectador. En la obra de teatro y, en concreto, en las tragedias, el espectador asume dos funciones: por un lado, se concibe como colectivo que enmarcará la acción y el espacio teatral como lugar sagrado; por otro, cada espectador será capaz de entender, deleitarse o dar una mayor importancia a un aspecto u otro de la obra en sí, por lo que asume un papel individual que permite la inserción de cada sujeto, por medio del plano de la imaginación, en la obra a través de los actores. Como afirma Juan Luis Suárez,

la imaginación del público va a ser el blanco del poeta, puesto que de lo que se trata es de ‘afectar’ al espectador, mover sus pasiones, aunque sólo sea para curarlas. Y para ello nada mejor que las maravillas, la admiración que únicamente se produce cuando se ‘sufre el efecto sin conocer la causa’, y que convierte al teatro en un espacio para el desenvolvimiento de los afectos humanos. (22)

De manera que, el teatro barroco es capaz de abrir puertas para que el espectador explore, se pierda y se haga uno con la obra, todo ello de modo inconsciente, mediante la imaginación, pero no le permite volver atrás en sus sentimientos y conceptos sobre la sociedad porque, como colectivo, como público, tiene formado un marco referencial espacio-temporal del que no puede excluirse a lo largo de la representación de la obra. Ambos planos del espectador, el individual y el colectivo, funcionarán a un tiempo durante la representación teatral.

Las tres fases del rito por las que pasa cualquier espectador de una obra de teatro son, también, la separación, transición e incorporación. La separación sólo puede producirse entre dos términos: por un lado el sujeto, el espectador, y por el otro el plano simbólico en que vive. El espectador deja a un lado su vida habitual para sumergirse en el mundo del teatro. Una vez dentro, comienza el rito de paso propiamente dicho. El individuo entra en el mundo imaginario, transita por las arenas movedizas de la multiplicidad de sentidos y sentimientos, en las trampas temporales y espaciales que se superponen en la obra. Por último, el espectador, una vez termina ésta, volverá al plano simbólico, volverá, cambiado, a incorporarse como un miembro activo de la

⁶ “Everything is said in the simultaneity of eternity” (Saint Augustine 226).

comunidad. Esto sucede con todas las obras teatrales, ya que imponen un mundo alternativo, un paréntesis en las vidas de los individuos. Sin embargo, la tragedia añade un elemento especial que es la incorporación de lo real en lo imaginario y su continuación en el plano simbólico. Es decir, en las tragedias irrumpe el elemento real y aquello que está más allá de la palabra, aquello que no puede racionalizarse, que escapa a cualquier control. En el contexto del rito de paso esta irrupción correspondería al momento doloroso del sacrificio entendido como dolor injustificado. El novicio debe realizar algún acto, estipulado socialmente, que no tenga ningún sentido y que sirva como recordatorio del nuevo estatus social, de sus nuevas obligaciones. En las tragedias se establece una relación similar al producirse la muerte del protagonista o del inocente. El espectador, que también se sabe vulnerable, ve plenamente confrontada su visión del mundo con aquella visión verosímil que es representada. Se pone en lugar del actor y siente terror por la situación por la que está pasando. Entonces, sólo entonces, se produce la piedad o compasión, que definió Aristóteles, provocada por el dolor o el sufrimiento del otro y el sentimiento real de que lo mismo podría haberle sucedido al espectador. Por ello, es posible experimentar la catarsis, esa sensación de pena y rechazo que el espectador tiene individualmente. La visión de la muerte como única salida posible del protagonista se traslada a la imaginación del espectador. La violencia es el remanente del plano imaginario, es aquello que no puede ser simbolizado ni racionalizado ya que nadie conoce lo que hay tras ella. Durante la tragedia, la ausencia de tiempo es fundamental, ya que, como acabamos de comprobar, el espectador se mueve de un espacio a otro, de un plano a otro distinto sin continuidad. Lo imaginario permite la multiplicidad de espacios, el sueño como medida. Sin embargo, la muerte lleva al espectador al encuentro con lo real, con el fin de la temporalidad. Ese choque abrupto genera una crisis en el espectador, que se manifestará en forma de catarsis o purificación de sus propios temores, entendiendo un poco mejor su lugar en el mundo.

Para estudiar la importancia de estos elementos en relación con la catarsis, he escogido dos obras de Calderón que no se ajustan al canon neo-aristotélico de tragedia. *El médico de su honra* y *La vida es sueño* carecen de un héroe trágico, no poseen una única línea argumental y, por supuesto, no acaban con la muerte del protagonista. Sin embargo, ambas obras revelan una voluntad trágica que permite al espectador experimentar la catarsis tal y como Aristóteles, en el año 334 a.C., nos indica. El filósofo griego explica que la obra trágica, mediante una serie de circunstancias que suscitan piedad o terror, debe ser capaz de lograr que el alma del espectador se eleve y se purifique de sus pasiones. Ésta es la purificación interior que logra el espectador a la vista de las miserias humanas, que le permite vivir, en definitiva, su rito de iniciación a la vida moderna.

Espacio y tiempo van relacionados. Del mismo modo que el rito de paso requiere de un lugar especial en donde el iniciado debe entrar, tanto en *El médico de su honra* como en *La vida es sueño* se presenta un espacio especial ajeno al espectador. En *El médico de su honra* la acción comienza con la caída del príncipe desde un caballo en medio

del bosque.⁷ El infante queda inconsciente en el suelo. Las palabras de don Arias muestran la situación: “A un tiempo ha perdido / pulso, color y sentido. / ¡Qué desdicha!” (76). Además, la acción se desarrolla en la corte de Pedro I “el Cruel”, durante el siglo XIV, época muy alejada en la mente del público, pero a la vez cercana a través de los romances que sobre el rey Pedro se escribieron. Por otro lado, en *La vida es sueño* Rosaura abre la primera jornada con las palabras: “Hipogrifo violento, / que corriste parejas con el viento” (75). La alusión de Rosaura al hipogrifo expone el espacio en que se va a desarrollar la obra, un espacio mítico donde la existencia de un hipogrifo es posible.⁸ Rosaura, vestida de hombre, entra en la torre donde está retenido Segismundo. En su interior tiene el primer encuentro entre Rosaura y el príncipe polaco o, en otros términos, el encuentro con la animalidad, con los instintos y, en definitiva, con la naturaleza humana.⁹ Desde el principio, Calderón enmarca sus obras en un lugar concreto, los alrededores de Sevilla para *El médico de su honra* y Polonia en el caso de *La vida es sueño*.¹⁰ Pero, en el primer caso éste es un lugar tan alejado de la realidad española que abre paso a la imaginación del espectador. En ambas obras el espectador se encuentra con un espacio hostil inicialmente, rodeado de peligros. En una perspectiva global ambos dramas se caracterizan por situarse en lugares desconocidos, en un tiempo anterior o bien por desarrollarse en un país alejado de la realidad española. El uso de estos elementos prepara al espectador para explorar este espacio desde el plano de la imaginación, así que el receptor estará constantemente participando de la acción. En el caso de *La vida es sueño* se refleja con más claridad el aspecto temporal. De ninguna manera se puede deducir a qué fecha corresponden los hechos contados. Es más, no importa la fecha, la narración de la historia puede valer en cada época ya que expone problemas (la educación, la imagen y lo real entre otros) que son universales. En *El médico de su honra* la acción se retrotrae constantemente a tiempos pasados en que el hermano del rey pretendió a doña Mencía o el marido celoso de ésta cortejaba a doña Leonor. El espectador, por tanto, se sumerge en un mundo posible, el del teatro, en el que tendrá que hacer uso de la imaginación constantemente para completar la historia que está viendo.

⁷ La oscuridad y el bosque lleno de peligros se unen aquí para exponer la soledad y ruptura con la vida real. El espectador se ve inmerso en la acción desde el primer momento.

⁸ El uso del mito rompe completamente con cualquier continuidad posible del espectador con su vida real. Desde el principio de la obra el espectador está solo ante el nuevo espacio de la torre y la corte de Polonia. Queda enmarcado el espectador en el plano imaginario.

⁹ Pues la muerte te daré,
 porque no sepas que sé
 que sabes flaquezas mías.
 Sólo porque me has oído,
 entre mis membrudos brazos
 te tengo que hacer pedazos (*La vida es sueño*, 180-185, 82).

¹⁰ “Mal, Polonia, recibes / a un extranjero, pues con sangre escribes / su entrada en tus arenas” (*La vida es sueño*, 17-19, 76).

Estos elementos vienen acompañados, en ambas obras, por una narrativa constantemente sesgada, por hilos argumentativos que no tienen aparente relación con la trama principal, lo cual impide elaborar una consecución lógica de elementos y, finalmente, un tema fundamental que es capaz de explicar el conjunto de la obra. El espectador se encuentra totalmente sumergido en el orden imaginario del teatro, en donde su percepción está constantemente atrapada en un laberinto de paradojas.

El caso de *La vida es sueño* resulta significativo. En ella Calderón define los papeles de cada personaje en relación, no con lo que el público espera, sino con una realidad posible. El rey Basilio es en la obra un tirano que acude a los astros para tomar sus decisiones;¹¹ el consejero y padre de Rosaura, Clotaldo, alaga a su rey en lugar de aconsejarle; Segismundo, el príncipe heredero, es encerrado en una torre como un animal; Rosaura debe disfrazarse de hombre para restaurar su honor. Este cambio de papeles expone la inutilidad de una realidad idealizada y, por lo tanto, el triunfo del mundo de las apariencias. Sin embargo, este cambio de papeles es tan sutil que el espectador lo concibe como posible, como real. Una vez asumida esta posibilidad, el tema de la obra queda oscurecido por las motivaciones de los distintos personajes, que confluirán en una guerra civil. Se pueden trazar al menos dos grandes tramas a lo largo de la obra: la historia de Segismundo y su venganza por un lado y la lucha que Rosaura tiene por recuperar su honor por otro. Ambas tramas llevan consigo la posibilidad de distintos temas. Si nos centramos en Segismundo podríamos interpretar la obra como una defensa del rey prudente, o bien como maquiavelismo, o a través del tema de la educación del príncipe. Centrarse en Rosaura implica establecer la honra como tema principal. Ambas posturas están lo suficientemente alejadas para que sea imposible explicarlas por medio de un solo elemento.

El médico de su honra, que expone el consabido problema de la honra, mantiene una estructura narrativa que, a diferencia de la obra anterior, aparece perfectamente construida. No obstante, del mismo modo que en *La vida es sueño*, las paradojas internas de los personajes transmiten al espectador una tensión y un continuo cuestionamiento de la realidad y los ideales sostenidos. Los personajes principales, Gutierre, el rey don Pedro y doña Mencía, parecen ser fieles a las leyes del honor porque sus actos muestran justicia, lealtad y un estricto comportamiento que causa respeto. Sin embargo, esta actitud se contradice, en momentos específicos, con sus actos. Por ejemplo, la forma de proceder del rey ante su hermano, el infante don Enrique resulta, desde el principio, paradójica, como cuando al comienzo de la obra don Enrique sufre un accidente y el rey lo abandona en manos de sus criados, reaccionando con las siguientes palabras: “todos

¹¹ Pues dando crédito yo
A los hados, que adivinos
Me pronosticaban daños
En fatales vaticinios,
Determiné de encerrar
La fiera que había nacido (730-735).

os quedad aquí, / y dadme un caballo a mí, / que he de pasar adelante” (17-19). Estos versos permiten una doble lectura del concepto de la honra, llena de engaños. Para reforzar la imagen de rey honrado y justo se muestra esta doble lectura en su intervención ante el conflicto de Leonor y don Gutierre, como seguidor de las leyes de la honra: “yo haré / justicia como convenga / en esta parte; si bien / no os debe restituir / honor, que vos os tenéis” (680-684). Aquí, aparece claramente el honor como valor moral que lleva al cumplimiento de los deberes y, por lo tanto, no depende de apariencias sino de un modo determinado de vida. Éste es el mensaje que el propio rey predica, sin embargo, posteriormente es incapaz de mantener un criterio firme. Es más, parece dar mayor importancia a las apariencias que a su deber. Muestra de esto es su primer encuentro con Leonor y el doble engaño ante don Gutierre y durante el interrogatorio de su hermano. De hecho, en la conversación entre hermanos el rey don Pedro trata de impedir que don Enrique diga la verdad, porque sabe que es observado por don Gutierre. Dice don Enrique: “Pues yo, señor, he de hablar: / en fin, doncella la quise. / ¿Quién, decid, agravió a quién?” (2235-7), de manera que incumple su deber como buen juez y rey, aunque intenta ser justo. Esta doble actitud no es más que un mecanismo que Calderón utiliza para difuminar la información, para descentralizar el texto, para mover al espectador en el enrevesado orden simbólico y perderlo en la representación. Alberto Castilla comenta sobre el concepto de la honra que “se plantea en este drama en términos de reputación, de opinión y, en definitiva, de apariencias” (404), así será fácil entender ambas actitudes del monarca. Por una parte, aparenta que la honra es una cualidad moral personal que puede o no dar lugar a la aprobación de la sociedad. Por otra, se descubre la verdadera motivación del rey.

El caso de don Gutierre resulta similar. Su actitud hacia las leyes del honor es convencional y, aunque él las considere injustas, las obedece: “el honor es una injusta ley” (1657). El respeto y amor que siente por su esposa son dignos de un hombre íntegro y honrado. Comenta a doña Mencía, “¿[p]uede en los dos / haber engaño, si en vos / quedo yo, y vos vais en mí?” (550-552). Incluso parece intachable su comportamiento ante Leonor. Sin embargo, los versos anteriores se contradicen con sus actos. Don Gutierre no sólo desconfía de su esposa, sino que, después de vigilarla por la ventana, la engaña al entrar a oscuras en su habitación (1970-2046). Este comportamiento está muy alejado de aquel ideal que promulga. Su deber como caballero y como marido se ve oscurecido por la sospecha, los celos, el recelo y la imaginación, que no hacen sino propiciar conclusiones precipitadas sobre su esposa. Él mismo confiesa al rey: “[q]ue hombres como yo / no ven; basta que imaginen, / que sospechen, que prevengan, / que recelen, que adivinen” (2126-30). No defiende, por tanto, su honra, ni la imagen que su mujer refleja de él, sino la sospecha de algo que sólo sucede en la imaginación del protagonista. Para que Gutierre esté en lo cierto, es decir, para que su sospecha sea una realidad es necesario estudiar el comportamiento y acciones de doña Mencía, sin embargo, la información que ofrece no explica la crueldad

de su marido. Y es que don Gutierre, cuando dice “[m]édico de mi honra / me llamo, pues procuro mi deshonra / curar; y así he venido / a visitar mi enfermo” (1871-4) se convierte en otro Gutierre, en un personaje, como comenta acertadamente Cruickshank, que toma su vida como metáfora y, por tanto, deja de distinguir entre la realidad y las apariencias.

Si la narración viene determinada por un antes y un después, si el presente de la narración se establece por una causa racional, podemos afirmar que ambas obras carecen de esta continuidad propia de las narrativas tradicionales. La arbitrariedad de los actos de los personajes principales refleja este vacío en la narrativa lo cual evidencia la ruptura de la temporalidad en estas obras. También se hace patente en estas obras la inutilidad del lenguaje para entrar en los recodos de la memoria. Así, la actitud de Segismundo al final de la obra resulta convincente, ya que el protagonista ha descubierto que debe actuar con prudencia o será castigado de nuevo. Sus actos son consecuencia, por tanto, de la primera entrada en palacio, sin embargo, la decisión posterior de encerrar al soldado rebelde desestabiliza toda secuencia lógica.¹² En *El médico de su honra* ocurre lo mismo. Gutierre asesina a su esposa sin un verdadero motivo. No hay, por tanto, causa alguna que prediga la situación final de violencia. La acción sucede sin control.

En ambas tragedias la ocasión tiene un papel preponderante. El gracioso Clarín es el ejemplo del triunfo de la ocasión y también de su fracaso. La ocasión se presenta sin previo aviso, no tiene un pasado ni un futuro, es un punto que se produce en el presente y que al aparecer se desvanece. Clarín hace constantemente uso de la ocasión que se le presenta para seguir con vida. Se hace pasar por Segismundo en la torre,¹³ hace de consejero de éste, sin embargo, en el momento que quiere controlar el destino cae muerto en mitad de la batalla. Dice Clarín: “Soy un hombre desdichado, / que por quererme guardar / de la muerte, la busqué” (3075-7) “pues no hay seguro camino / a la fuerza del destino / y a la inclemencia del hado” (3089-91). Esta escena se puede leer como una toma de conciencia por parte del gracioso de la situación que está viviendo, lo cual le lleva inevitablemente a la muerte. A la luz de la ocasión y la fortuna se puede entender la decisión de Segismundo, quien toma la ocasión presentada por el soldado rebelde cuando éste le pregunta:

Si así a quien no te ha servido
honras, a mí que fui causa
del alboroto del reino,

¹² Mucho se ha discutido sobre la decisión de Segismundo. Algunos califican su sentencia como acto maquiavélico o como parte del prudencianismo cristiano. Parker señala el concepto de justicia poética aplicado a éste, sin embargo ninguna de estas posturas demuestra necesariamente una correlación entre la experiencia de Segismundo y su actitud con el soldado rebelde.

¹³ “Segismundo dicen, ¡Bueno! / Segismundos llaman todos / los príncipes contrahechos” (2263-5).

y de la torre en que estabas
te saqué, ¿qué me darás? (3292-6)

La respuesta permite al príncipe aparentar su buen juicio ante los demás. Por su parte, el gracioso en *El médico de su honra* sigue un patrón parecido a Clarín, aprovechando la ocasión para decir lo que piensa.¹⁴ Gutierre, por su parte, aprovecha la ocasión que le brinda su esposa para reforzar su imagen de la honra ante la sociedad. Podemos concluir, por tanto, que la falta de conexión narrativa, la ausencia de un antes, está determinada por la ocasión, por un elemento azaroso que es necesario aprovechar.

Pero aunque hemos observado las discontinuidades en los discursos de ambas obras, desde el plano estético responden a un orden que las enmarca. En *La vida es sueño*, los flujos de información provienen de las relaciones entre los personajes y su disposición en la obra. De hecho, Rosaura y Segismundo, personajes principales, tienen una escasa relación pero dispuesta de manera estratégica a lo largo de la obra. El primer encuentro sucede al comienzo con Rosaura vestida de hombre (1-277); el segundo, con ropa de mujer, coincide con la mitad de la comedia (1548-1664) y, finalmente, el último encuentro tiene lugar al final de la obra, cuando Rosaura viste de manera andrógina (2690-3041). Estos encuentros proporcionan una información fundamental para comprender las tramas de ambos protagonistas y aportan una consecución de acontecimientos que permitirán que el espectador cree su propia narrativa de la obra. *El médico de su honra*, por su parte, está construido alrededor de paralelismos, que llevan al espectador a perderse entre el presente y el pasado, pero a su vez puede establecer relaciones. Como ejemplo, existe un paralelo visual entre la premonición que tiene Mencía de su propia muerte (1377-85) y la que don Pedro tiene de la suya (2266-75). Existe otro paralelo cuando el rey esconde a doña Leonor en la primera jornada y cuando lo hace con don Gutierre, en la tercera. En la primera, el rey trata de impartir justicia mediante el engaño. En la segunda, se pone él mismo en evidencia al tratar de impedir que su hermano hable. Por último, don Pedro, como expone Cruickshank, “amenaza con sacar prematuramente los dientes sanos del lacayo Coquín, de la misma manera que don Gutierre hace sangrar prematuramente el cuerpo sano de doña Mencía”, de modo que se relaciona la amenaza con la muerte del inocente. Pero, además, existen otros relatos paralelos, como los diálogos entre don Enrique y doña Mencía en la primera jornada (381-424 y 483-494).

El desorden establecido durante toda la obra, el ir y venir de personajes y los cambios de espacio en *La vida es sueño* contrastan con la última escena. Segismundo castiga al soldado rebelde a la torre de donde él venía. Este hecho implica una muerte en vida, que el público reconoce. La decisión de Segismundo es, aparentemente, sabia, sin embargo, las consecuencias provocarán la perpetuación del sistema de injusticias

¹⁴ “No volver allá. / ¿No estás bueno? ¿No estás sano? / Con no volver, claro ha sido / que sano y bueno has salido” (1260-3).

expuesto durante toda la obra. Esta repetición cíclica se muestra como afirmación del espacio de la torre, como recordatorio al espectador de la realidad caótica que está viviendo. El público como colectivo, como comunidad integrante de esta realidad distorsionada, se unirá a esta repetición cíclica impidiendo la salida del sistema, no dejando opción alguna. La única esperanza es, paradójicamente la muerte. El espectador, como individuo, como novicio del rito de paso, cerrará el círculo del plano imaginario con la repetición de la historia una y otra vez. Esta repetición da lugar al orden del desorden, explora las incoherencias que plantea veladamente la obra y eso queda de manifiesto por vez primera en la decisión de Segismundo. El individuo es entonces consciente¹⁵ de su incapacidad para cambiar la sociedad, pero su visión sobre ella ha cambiado, ya que ahora es capaz de predecir lo que pasará y encuentra la lógica a la obra, de modo que aprenderá a sobrevivir, como hace Segismundo, en la sociedad, mediante el aprovechamiento de la ocasión y el cuidado de la imagen.

El médico de su honra, por su parte, recrea la misma situación al finalizar con la vuelta al orden justo establecido por el rey Pedro, promoviendo el casamiento de Gutierre y doña Leonor para restañar la antigua afrenta infringida por aquel y al mismo tiempo vengar el asesinato de doña Mencía: “Gutierre, menester es / consuelo; y porque le haya / en pérdida que es tan grande, / con otra tanta ganancia, / dadle la mano a Leonor; / que es tiempo que satisfaga vuestro valor lo que debe, / y yo cumpla la palabra / de volver en la ocasión / por su valor y su fama.” (2880-9). También aquí la realidad caótica viene expresada por la afirmación del rey al conocer el crimen de Gutierre: “Gutierre sin duda es el cruel que anoche hizo una acción tan inclemente. No sé qué hacer. Cuerdamente sus agravios satisfizo” (2789-93). En dicha respuesta se confrontan dos juicios de valor, referidos, uno al campo de los sentimientos (“acción tan inclemente / de un marido cruel”) y otro al de la razón, al afirmar el rey que don Gutierre, dando rienda suelta a su espíritu de venganza, “cuerdamente / sus agravios satisfizo”. La confrontación de diferentes perspectivas tendentes a iluminar al público, cuyas expectativas condicionan las pautas morales y estéticas con las que opera Calderón, son en esta obra los elementos que la comunidad de asistentes tendrá que repetir continuamente para encontrar una salida. Salida lógica, ya que ese público, que moralmente rechaza el asesinato, ha podido constatar cómo Mencía ha sido fiel a su marido en todo momento; que las sospechas de éste son infundadas; que sus rasgos neuróticos le han hecho ver certezas donde sólo había signos casuales interpretados sesgadamente por una mente ofuscada y enferma; que el asesinato ha sido llevado a

¹⁵ Como expone Abdulla, “the catharsis presupposes an emotional arousal on the part of the audience. The emotional arousal ends in intellectual understanding or cognition” (8). Es decir, incluso si durante la obra el espectador no es capaz de sufrir la catarsis, cuando piense sobre los últimos acontecimientos comenzará a comprender este tiempo cíclico, esta decisión de Segismundo. De esta forma, la catarsis se extiende en esta obra más allá de la obra misma implicando una comprensión intelectual por parte del público, una vez que rememore la obra.

cabo con premeditación, simulación y crueldad propias de un psicópata; que la mujer muere inocente y resignada.

La mano ensangrentada que el médico deja en la puerta de la casa de Gutierre tras la sangría es el elemento traumático incapaz de ser racionalizado. Es el encuentro con la muerte sin palabras, con la violencia de una imagen. Este contacto con el orden real expone la interiorización de la violencia de toda una sociedad en la figura de don Gutierre. Éste se convierte en un monstruo¹⁶ que debe cometer actos como el asesinato de su mujer para mantener su imagen y estatus respecto a la sociedad. La mancha en la pared es el símbolo de lo que no se puede borrar, de aquello que marca la vida de un individuo. El espectador, tras este encuentro con lo real, es reincorporado al mundo simbólico. El dolor causado por la catarsis garantiza el recuerdo de este encuentro con lo real y asegura que el individuo pensará posteriormente sobre lo expuesto en la obra.

Las continuas trampas presentes en ambas obras desestabilizan necesariamente los estereotipos del espectador, provocando en éste la expectación y preparándolo para el momento de la catarsis. El ideal de un mundo ordenado, regido por unas normas sociales estrictas, se ve amenazado por la realidad verosímil expuesta en estas tragedias. El caos y la apariencia envuelven la realidad de estas obras, en diálogo con la realidad que el espectador vive diariamente. Pero, al fin, el eje central de toda obra trágica será el restablecimiento doloroso del orden, y el alumbramiento traumático del deber, que como hemos visto se cumple en ambas.

La apariencia explica el comportamiento de estos personajes. Doña Mencía y don Enrique incumplen las leyes de la honra aunque aparentan seguirlas hasta que son descubiertos. Sin embargo, el honor como apariencia no es capaz de explicar la actitud de Coquín ante su amo y el rey. A mitad de la obra abandona a don Gutierre y se niega a volver a la prisión con él. “Señor, yo llego a dudar / (que soy más desconfiado) / de la condición del Rey; / y así, el honor de esa ley no se entiende en el criado; / y hoy estoy determinado a dejarte y no volver” (1270-6). Y cuando don Gutierre le pregunta “Y de ti ¿qué han de decir?” él responde: “Y heme de dejar morir / por sólo bien parecer?” (1279-80). Debería, por esto, recibir un castigo pero no sucede así. Es más, al final de la obra reconoce el disfraz que lleva el rey y se atreve, arriesgando su vida, a hablarle en estos términos: “Aunque me mates, / habiéndote conocido, / o señor, tengo de hablarte” (2723-5) “Esto es una honrada acción de hombre bien nacido, en fin” (2728-9). Coquín se niega a actuar según convencionalismos y sale airoso en su propósito. Sólo pone en peligro su vida por algo que realmente merece la pena, y nunca por las apariencias.

Sin embargo, los personajes “honrados” reciben castigos. Doña Mencía muere a manos de su marido. Doña Leonor y don Gutierre se casan, con lo que la situación del

¹⁶ “The way that sensitive people brutalize themselves in order to survive in a brutal work. The irony, or rather the tragedy, lies in the fact that, in so doing, they earn the esteem of their society” (Dollimore 41).

principio de la obra se repite, con un matrimonio sin amor, lo cual proporciona la posibilidad de que se vuelva a cometer otro asesinato por deshonra. Para defender su honor, don Gutierre asesina a su mujer y se casa con Leonor, a quien había rechazado previamente. Don Enrique tiene que abandonar Sevilla y huir del lado de su hermano, el rey, quien morirá en Montiel.

La salvación de Coquín la podemos entender, dentro de la interpretación ritual, como personaje inferior que no está inserto en las estructuras sociales, en definitiva, que no forma parte activa de la sociedad. El gracioso sobrevive por su carencia de compromiso con la sociedad a la que pertenece. No se tiene que regir por las normas que la comunidad impone, esto es, la apariencia de la honra en *El médico de su honra*, sino que es una figura marginal, morisca y, en definitiva, extraña al propio sistema al igual que sucede con Clarín.

En resumen, *La vida es sueño* y *El médico de su honra* preparan al espectador para el momento de enfrentamiento entre su visión del mundo y la visión que expone la representación teatral. Durante la obra, el espectador participa activamente en ella experimentando la ruptura con lo simbólico y sumergiéndose en el plano imaginario. El acto violento de la muerte o la decisión del castigo hacen tomar conciencia al espectador de su posición en el mundo, de la importancia de la apariencia y terminan experimentando la catarsis, es decir, piedad y temor. Piedad porque los personajes que participan en la acción son víctimas de la propia sociedad y, para ser reconocidos por ella, llegan a cometer actos violentos como los narrados en *La vida es sueño* y *El médico de su honra*. El temor procede de este mismo hecho, de la posibilidad de que el propio espectador llegue a estos extremos por buscar reconocimiento. En ese momento el espectador ordena su visión de la sociedad en crisis, lo cual le proporciona las herramientas adecuadas para convertirse en un miembro más de la sociedad, de pasar su rito de iniciación y ser útil a la misma. El espectador ya sabe que la apariencia y la ocasión pueden servirle de ayuda, aun con el riesgo (asimilación de la violencia social) que conlleva jugar al juego de los espejos.

Para finalizar, es necesario puntualizar, brevemente, el elemento claramente distintivo entre las tragedias españolas y el género clásico. La ruptura de la forma clásica de la tragedia, como subraya Walter Benjamín, se corresponde con “la crisis de la trascendencia provocada por las catástrofes de la historia. El drama barroco se diferencia de la tragedia clásica por no desarrollarse en un tiempo mítico, sino en un tiempo histórico que equipara la obra de teatro a una crónica” (198).

Y, así como desaparecieron los originarios coros (que en el barroco español vuelven a aparecer en la figura del *gracioso* (Coquín y Clarín en nuestras obras), como portavoz del sentir público), Tespis reemplazó el pintarrajeo grosero de los coreutas por una máscara de género estucado y Eurípides modificó la técnica del *deus ex machina* (procedimiento del héroe salvador: personaje que pasa casualmente por el lugar de la escena, ya sea para resolver una situación cuando ya todos creían que no había solución o bien, para justificar la conducta de un personaje dentro de la obra), Lope de Vega

cambia la forma de dramatizar sobre un escenario, sin que ello suponga merma de lo sustancial¹⁷ que, como ya ha sido expuesto, se mantiene en las obras estudiadas de Calderón de la Barca, pudiendo afirmar que son verdaderas tragedias de la era moderna.

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¹⁷ La catarsis y el contraste entre el plano imaginario y el real, provocado por un hecho doloroso.

La crianza de los hijos en los tratados de educación de Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo y Elio Antonio de Nebrija

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Abstract: En el *Tratado sobre técnica, método y manera de criar a los hijos, niños y jóvenes* (1453) de Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo y el *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos* (1509) de Elio Antonio de Nebrija se le asigna una importancia de primer orden a los procesos de la procreación y el amamantamiento de los hijos. En el examen de los capítulos iniciales de esos tratados se destaca la contribución de esas obras y su posición precursora en el proyecto de educación familiar articulado por los humanistas españoles.

Keywords: Sánchez de Arévalo, Elio Antonio de Nebrija, procreación, lactancia materna, crianza

Con el origen de los conceptos de la familia, la vida privada y la domesticidad a inicios del Renacimiento, en Europa proliferaron las obras sobre los temas del matrimonio y los deberes de los padres en la crianza y la educación de los hijos. Escritas por autores masculinos, la mayoría de ellas estaban dirigidas al jefe de la familia (Wiesner-Hanks 149). Durante el periodo moderno temprano, la familia dejó de percibirse sólo como una institución de derecho privado para la transmisión de los bienes y el apellido. A los padres se les asignó una función principal en la formación del cuerpo y el alma de los hijos (*El niño* Ariès 541).

En las obras de los humanistas españoles que elaboran los temas de la crianza y la educación de los hijos, la infancia se concibe como un terreno fértil que contiene en germen “una fuerza de gran virtud para el resto de la vida” (Cárceles 409). En la España renacentista, la exposición temprana de esas ideas se registra en las dos primeras obras dedicadas expresamente al tema de la educación de los hijos: el *Tratado sobre técnica, método y manera de criar a los hijos, niños y jóvenes* (1453) de Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo y el *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos* (1509) de Elio Antonio de Nebrija. Es pertinente aclarar, sin embargo, que de acuerdo con los consejos formulados en los dos capítulos iniciales de esas obras, las actuaciones vinculadas con la paternidad responsable preceden la etapa de la infancia de los hijos; se inician, en efecto, previo a la contracción

del matrimonio de los progenitores y el nacimiento de la prole. En conexión con esos aspectos, en la primera parte de este ensayo se analiza la rearticulación de las medidas higiénicas de la pedagogía prenatal de la Antigüedad clásica en los tratados de Sánchez de Arévalo y de Nebrija. Se pone énfasis en ilustrar la pertinencia que cobran esos consejos en la visión humanista que intentaba armonizar las leyes biológicas y éticas como uno de los principios pedagógicos y metodológicos de su programa educativo. Para los humanistas, la elección de una esposa sana y virtuosa, la salud física y mental de los progenitores, la atención a la mejor edad para procrear a fin de evitarles enfermedades a los descendientes junto a la sobriedad y el ejercicio de la templanza en la economía sexual reproductiva consisten factores que contribuyen a forjar la complejión física y la inclinación moral de los hijos y a configurar, por ende, los buenos cimientos del futuro pedagógico del educando.

En la segunda parte de este ensayo se analiza la recomendación de amamantar a los hijos con la leche de la madre biológica. En complemento con el fin que persigue la prescripción de los consejos de la pedagogía prenatal clásica, esa recomendación está vinculada también con la buena formación de los cimientos físicos y morales del futuro educando. Además de continuar la formación iniciada por la sangre durante la procreación, Sánchez de Arévalo y Nebrija le atribuyen a la leche de la madre biológica la propiedad de conservar en los descendientes la pureza de la complejión física y moral heredada de los padres y de evitar la transmisión de atributos extraños mediante el amamantamiento y la crianza con amas de leche. En lo concerniente a ese tema, en este ensayo se reconoce la posición inaugural ocupada por los tratados de Sánchez de Arévalo y de Nebrija en la articulación de la defensa de la lactancia materna en España. Se destaca, a su vez, el papel precursor de Nebrija como difusor de las ideas médicas que sustentaban la transformación de la sangre uterina en leche materna con el fin de proyectar a las nodrizas como agentes que corrompían las buenas condiciones naturales de los infantes. El influjo perjudicial atribuido a la leche extraña de las nodrizas en la formación física, moral y espiritual de los hijos de otras familias se constituyó en uno de los argumentos principales de la retórica de la lactancia materna divulgada posteriormente en España por otros humanistas. Esas ideas alcanzaron una amplia reelaboración y difusión en dos de las obras principales que prescriben la conducta de la esposa y madre cristiana: *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* (1523) de Juan Luis Vives y *La perfecta casada* (1583) de fray Luis de León. En suma, en este ensayo se destaca la correspondencia que guardan tanto los consejos relativos a la elección de la esposa y la procreación de los descendientes como la prescripción de amamantar a los hijos con leche materna con el principio pedagógico humanista que visualizaba los buenos cimientos corporales y la inclinación moral como soportes del alma del futuro educando.

Al *Tratado sobre técnica, método y manera de criar a los hijos, niños y jóvenes* se le asigna el mérito de ser “el primer tratado de pedagogía del Humanismo español” (Ruiz y Calvo 43). Francisco Galvache lo considera “si no el primero, sí uno de los primeros tratados

humanistas de educación familiar” (153). López del Toro señala que las ideas educativas expuestas en ese tratado “flotaban en el ambiente” (260) pero le acredita a Sánchez de Arévalo la capacidad de presentarlas como cosa propia “después de haberlas elaborado en la oficina de su experiencia con tal habilidad que en las épocas posteriores y aún en la actualidad apenas si han sido modificadas por los pedagogos” (260). Poco más de medio siglo después de la publicación del tratado de Sánchez de Arévalo, Nebrija escribió el *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos*, a solicitud de Miguel Pérez de Almazón, secretario de Estado de Fernando el Católico, quien le pidió que lo asesorara respecto a “con qué reglas de conducta, con qué técnicas, con qué método, con qué inteligencia y con qué distribución regular se podía instruir a los hijos” (Nebrija 97).

Las semejanzas estructurales y temáticas que comparte el tratado de Nebrija con el de Sánchez de Arévalo no han pasado inadvertidas para los estudiosos de esas obras. En un intento por explicarlas, además de aducir a las fuentes comunes de las que se nutren ambos autores, López del Toro ha especulado sobre la posibilidad de que Sánchez de Arévalo y Nebrija se conocieran en Roma o Bolonia, donde coincidieron en el año 1493, y que hubieran conversado sobre el tema de la educación (262). Una segunda hipótesis sugerida por el mismo estudioso contempla la idea de que Nebrija se pusiera en contacto en España con algunos de los manuscritos del tratado de Sánchez de Arévalo “bien con el tratado existente en la biblioteca particular del que fué Rey de España o con el de la Biblioteca de Don Manuel de Roda y Arrieta” (263). A partir de las afinidades en la distribución de los capítulos y en las materias tratadas en el *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos* y el *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos*, López del Toro juzga que “Nebrija tuvo a la vista el tratado de Sánchez cuando comenzó a concebir o a escribir el suyo y de tal manera se acomodó a la distribución de aquél” (265). Lorenzo Velázquez, en su estudio introductorio a los tratados de esos autores, profundizó en la identificación de las similitudes que guarda el texto de Nebrija con el de Sánchez de Arévalo. Entre las más notables, enumera e ilustra la finalidad perseguida por ambos autores, la disposición estructural y temática de la materia tratada y la “coincidencia de muchas frases y títulos de los capítulos” (42). La evidencia aportada por el enfoque comparativo empleado por Velázquez abona a la probable deuda que tiene el tratado de Nebrija con el de Sánchez de Arévalo. Por otro lado, Velázquez observa también que existen diferencias substanciales entre esos tratados que obedecen a la época en que fuera escrito el de Nebrija. Indica que los cambios culturales se hacen notar claramente en esa última obra, “cambios más profundos si tenemos en cuenta que estamos hablando de la visión medieval, aunque ya en crisis, y de la renacentista” (24). Josué Villa Prieto destaca ese aspecto también cuando puntualiza que, a diferencia de Sánchez de Arévalo, Nebrija considera “cuestiones propias del humanismo renacentista, abordadas en profundidad sólo desde finales del siglo XV, como el valor de la escuela, de la figura del educador profesional y de las disciplinas seculares” (89). De manera similar, M.^a Isabel Del Val Valdivieso argumenta que Nebrija “se inscribe en la línea de Sánchez de

Arévalo, pero habría que considerarle más moderno, ya que se basa en Quintiliano y Aristóteles” (15).

La importancia que adquiere el tema de la crianza de los hijos en los tratados respectivos de Sánchez de Arévalo y de Nebrija puede vincularse con los cambios en la percepción de la niñez producidos a raíz del establecimiento de la familia moderna en Europa y con las innovaciones educativas experimentadas en el Renacimiento. Phillipe Ariès ubica el origen de la familia moderna en el siglo XIV y destaca la progresión correlativa experimentada durante esa época en los conceptos de la familia, la vida privada y la domesticidad (*Centuries* 375). Identifica el concepto del hogar como otro aspecto del concepto de la familia (*Centuries* 404) y señala que al debilitarse el valor atribuido al linaje en la estructura de las relaciones entre parientes en la Edad Media,¹ la institución de la familia moderna fue transformándose en la principal célula social (*El niño* 470). Lloyd de Mause sostiene, por su parte, que, aunque hubo muchas excepciones, más o menos hasta el siglo XIII la participación de los padres de los sectores sociales altos en la crianza de los hijos era limitada. De acuerdo con ese estudioso, el niño de padres acomodados “pasaba sus primeros años en casa de un ama de cría, volvía a su hogar para permanecer al cuidado de otros sirviente y salía de él a la edad de siete años para servir, aprender un oficio o ir a la escuela” (59). En contraste con el sistema de aprendizaje en contacto con los adultos prevalente en la Edad Media, en el Renacimiento la educación comenzó a realizarse con más frecuencia en la escuela, espacio que dejó de considerarse un recinto exclusivo para los clérigos y se transformó en un instrumento normal de iniciación social (Ariès *Centuries* 371). Junto a la secularización de las escuelas, Ariès indica la determinación de los pedagogos renacentistas de orientar sobre los peligros a que se exponían los infantes al criarse con extraños así como el deseo propio de los padres de vigilar más de cerca a los hijos (*Centuries* 371). El conjunto de esos cambios estrechó el vínculo entre la infancia y el sentimiento de la familia y ocasionó una concentración alrededor del niño. A tono con esas expectativas, tanto Sánchez de Arévalo como Nebrija dedican los consejos de los capítulos iniciales de sus tratados respectivos a los temas de la elección de la esposa, la procreación de descendientes sanos y a la buena formación física y moral de los hijos mediante el amamantamiento durante la infancia. Destinan los capítulos subsiguientes “a la formación de las dotes del alma” (Nebrija 111) mediante la instrucción formal del proceso educativo.

En la apertura al primer capítulo de su tratado, Sánchez de Arévalo justifica la pertinencia de incluir el tema de la procreación de los hijos en una obra destinada a la educación. Apoyándose en la autoridad de Plutarco, argumenta que “al hablar de la

¹ De acuerdo con Galvache en la Edad Media, “la privacidad se prolongaba en las relaciones sociales” y en “lugares que, lejos de oponerse al hogar, se convertían en extensiones del mismo, y por lo tanto, en ambientes teñidos de familiaridad en los que se desarrollaba la vida profesional, se asistía a los espectáculos, se participaba en los juegos, o, simplemente, se mantenían las conversaciones propias de las relaciones de vecindad” (24).

educación de los niños, ante todo y en principio pienso que no han de desdeñarse ciertos ejemplos sobre su procreación no ajenos al tema” (69). Como Plutarco, Sánchez de Arévalo destaca la importancia de que los hijos nazcan en el marco institucional del matrimonio y del vientre de una mujer honesta a fin de evitarles los reproches y el estigma social asociados a la filiación ilegítima en esa época. Tras identificar las virtudes morales como el criterio que debe primar en la elección de la esposa, Sánchez de Arévalo incorpora un ejemplo citado por Plutarco que destaca la condena impuesta al rey Arquelaos² por casarse con una mujer de baja estatura: “Ni ha de pasarse por alto aquel ilustre ejemplo de los lacedemonios quienes tuvieron a su rey, llamado Arquelaos, encerrado en la cárcel porque permitió tomar en matrimonio a una mujer de cuerpo muy pequeño, afirmando (los lacedemonios) que él no había pensado dañarse a sí mismo como rey, sino a su estirpe real” (69). La inclusión de ese ejemplo permite suponer que aunque Sánchez de Arévalo privilegia las virtudes morales no le resta importancia a la herencia de los atributos físicos de la madre que afectaría la apariencia de los hijos.

Al igual que Sánchez de Arévalo, Nebrija inicia la exposición del primer capítulo de su tratado con el tema de la procreación y exhorta al varón interesado en tener una buena descendencia a “preocuparse en procrear con la mejor posible mujer” (99). Homologa la prudencia que debe orientar al futuro marido a elegir una mujer de buenas costumbres para engendrar un buen fruto con la diligencia del labrador que “hace lo imposible para hacer su sementera en tierra óptima y fértil” (99). Galvache estima que por “una mujer de buenas costumbres,” Nebrija se refiere a aquella en posesión de “un cuerpo y su alma saludables y acondicionados para gestar y para luego criar con ejemplaridad lo que pariere” (174). Al igual que Sánchez de Arévalo, Nebrija desaconseja la procreación de descendientes con las meretrices y las mujeres deshonestas, con el fin de evitarles a los hijos el rechazo producido por “una indeleble marca de infamia que los acompañará mientras vivan” (99). Alude también a la anécdota relatada por Plutarco que reporta la multa impuesta por los lacedemonios al rey Arquidamo por haberse casado con una mujer de baja estatura. No obstante, la inclusión de ese referente textual, que concede particular importancia a la herencia de los atributos físicos, es empleado por Nebrija con el propósito de ponderar la castidad como el valor principal que debe adornar a la mujer seleccionada para engendrar una buena descendencia, como lo indica el propio humanista “¿qué piensas que habría que hacer con aquel varón que se unió con una mujer malvada por sus corrompidas costumbres y marcada con el estigma de la deshonra?” (99).

La devaluación de la importancia de la apariencia física como criterio a considerarse en la elección de la esposa aparece posteriormente expresada en *Los deberes del marido* de Juan Luis Vives. Aunque el humanista valenciano expresa “que con vista a la descendencia hay que tener en cuenta dos cosas: el cuerpo y el alma de la esposa” (77)

² En el texto de Plutarco el nombre del rey es Arquidamo (Velázquez 91).

aclara que en lo referente a los atributos físicos sólo debe procurarse que la mujer “no sea demasiado deforme” (77). Incorpora, como sus antecesores, la referencia a la multa impuesta al rey Arquidamo por seleccionar como esposa una mujer de baja estatura, pero en lugar de convenir con la supuesta acción tomada por los lacedemonios socava la importancia concedida en ese ejemplo a un atributo físico que, en su opinión, “no es tan primordial como para rechazar por ello a una mujer si posee en abundancia otras cualidades. Hemos visto jóvenes de gran elegancia nacidos de madres de poca estatura y cuerpo muy contrahecho” (77). Otro aspecto que merece destacarse es el énfasis explícito puesto por Vives en alertar sobre el daño irreparable ocasionado a los hijos por la transmisión de las enfermedades hereditarias portadas por los progenitores. Lo que debe precaver el candidato a marido es que ni él ni la futura esposa tengan “alguna enfermedad de aquellas que los médicos llaman hereditarias, que son las que se transmiten de padres a hijos entre las que hay algunas terribles que impiden llevar a cabo las actividades de la vida” (77). Similar a Nebrija, Vives utiliza la metáfora del agricultor diligente, pero la reenfoca al propósito de disuadir a los varones que desearan procrear descendientes sanos de elegir como esposa a una mujer que padeciera enfermedades transmisibles: “Y vemos, en efecto, que esto es a lo primero que atienden los diligentes e industriosos agricultores, a elegir un terreno de calidad semejante a la semilla, para que no se pierda su tiempo y su dinero, si el campo contaminado de alguna enfermedad produce frutos malos y degenerados” (76). En caso de que el candidato a marido fuera el acarreador de alguna enfermedad hereditaria, Vives le desaconseja la opción del estado del matrimonio, siempre y cuando pudiera evitar la caída en el pecado (76). En las obras humanistas los consejos dirigidos a orientar sobre la elección prudente del cónyuge femenino con vistas a engendrar un buen fruto no están dissociados del interés que cobra para esos autores la formación física y moral del futuro educando aun “antes de que la célula masculina se conjugue con la femenina, para dar origen al nuevo ser” (Hernández 69).

Las medidas recomendadas con el fin de procrear descendientes física y moralmente sanos no se agotan con la elección de la esposa adecuada. Tanto Sánchez de Arévalo como Nebrija alertan sobre la importancia de engendrar a los hijos en estado de sobriedad y prescriben la moderación y la templanza en la praxis sexual conyugal con fines procreativos. En sus consejos subscriben las creencias de la Antigüedad clásica que le atribuyen a la disposición anímica de los progenitores capacidad para influir en la formación física del feto y en la índole moral de los hijos al momento de engendrarlos. Platón, por ejemplo, destina un pasaje de *Las Leyes* a exponer las deformaciones producidas en el cuerpo y el carácter de los hijos a causa de haber sido engendrados por padres en estado de embriaguez. Advierte que el que se ha empapado de vino “se muestra vacilante y torpe en la procreación, de modo que es muy probable que tenga hijos anormales, indignos de confianza y carentes de un carácter o cuerpo rectamente dotados” (268). Para evitar esos daños, recomienda que “la procreación no se haga cuando los cuerpos están relajados por la borrachera, para que el feto se forme como

debe ser, firme, sólido y tranquilo” (268). En lugar de remarcar el efecto del alcohol en las deformaciones físicas del feto, Sánchez de Arévalo pone un énfasis mayor en las secuelas producidas por la embriaguez de los padres en el carácter moral de los hijos. Afirma que los hijos concebidos por padres embriagados, “nacieron ebrios y deseosos de vino” (70). Recomienda a los que deseen unirse sexualmente con la intención de procrear que “estén completamente sobrios o hagan el comercio carnal al menos libando vino de manera muy moderada” (70). Invoca las teorías aristotélicas con el propósito de explicar el proceso mediante el cual la sobriedad y la templanza de los progenitores se graban con una forma semejante en la materia tierna del hijo que se desea engendrar (70). Mediante la divulgación de las ideas clásicas que afirmaban la transmisión de las virtudes de los progenitores al momento de engendrar a los hijos, Sánchez de Arévalo alecciona sobre la posibilidad de los padres de contribuir a forjar la inclinación moral de los hijos mucho antes de que se iniciara el proceso educativo.

Como Sánchez de Arévalo, Nebrija subraya la importancia que cobra la sobriedad de los padres a la hora de concebir a los hijos, pero sólo se limita a divulgar el ejemplo citado por Plutarco que ilustra las secuelas producidas en la personalidad de un joven que fuera engendrado por un padre ebrio: “Con la sobriedad del varón se relaciona lo que se escribe sobre Diógenes el Cínico. Este habiendo observado a un joven descarado a causa de su ebriedad, le dijo, tu padre te ha engendrado borracho” (100). A diferencia de la parquedad con que trata ese tema, Nebrija se extiende en sus recomendaciones de la templanza y la moderación en la praxis sexual conyugal con fines procreativos y recurre tanto a fuentes clásicas como bíblicas para autorizar sus consejos. Comienza ponderando el modelo de templanza sexual prescrito en las regulaciones éticas aristotélicas: “Aristóteles nos muestra de qué manera debe actuar un hombre al juntarse con una mujer. Dice lo siguiente: Ha de aproximarse a la esposa con gran templanza y moderación, recato en sus palabras y sus obras que sean conforme a la ley natural” (100). En el pensamiento de la Antigüedad clásica la reproducción se concibe como una actividad natural y necesaria, que tiene como finalidad la supervivencia de la especie, pero “no por ello es menos objeto de inquietud moral” (Foucault 48). En esa formación discursiva, además de percibirse el placer como una fuerza virtualmente excesiva que debía ser encauzada mediante un ejercicio racional de autodomínio, se creía que la desmesura sexual de los progenitores penetraba el cuerpo y la mente del hijo engendrado y lo predisponía a manifestar una falta de control moral y de dominio.

Para aconsejar la moderación en la praxis sexual conyugal, Nebrija glosa un texto bíblico que sugiere la práctica de periodos de abstinencia, pero exhorta también al marido a no incurrir en la infidelidad conyugal: “Salomón en el *Libro de los Proverbios* escribe sobre la esposa: ‘cierva carísima, graciosa gacela, tus pechos te embriaguen en todo momento.’ Esto no ha de entenderse de manera que debamos dedicarnos siempre a la relación matrimonial, puesto que en otro lugar dice: ‘Hay momentos para abrazar y hay momentos en los que se está lejos de los abrazos, pero ha de condescender con la mujer propia mejor que con la ajena’” (100). Cabe mencionar que, de acuerdo con las

interpretaciones de algunos autores clásicos, practicar el coito con asiduidad constituía un factor perjudicial que impactaba adversamente el vigor de la prole engendrada. Esa idea se registra en una de las fuentes estudiadas por Foucault, quien señala que: “Según Jenofonte, para tener una descendencia vigorosa, los recién casados en Esparta no deben unirse con demasiada frecuencia. En estas condiciones, los esposos se desean más y los niños al nacer, son más vigorosos que si aquéllos se hartan uno del otro” (115). Nebrija no menciona explícitamente los efectos producidos por la frecuencia excesiva del acto sexual en la economía reproductiva, pero le concede una gran importancia al vigor corporal de los hijos que se engendren, como lo atestigua la atención que le presta a ese tema en el capítulo segundo, “De qué modo los cuerpos de los hijos llegan a ser más vigorosos”. Con el fin de orientar a los padres a engendrar una prole vigorosa, siguiendo a Aristóteles, Nebrija recomienda la adecuada combinación de las edades de los cónyuges: el hombre de cuarenta y dos años y la mujer de veinte. Destaca que tanto la anticipación como la posposición de esas edades produce la procreación de seres débiles y el engendramiento de hembras (103). A partir del legado del pensamiento clásico, para los humanistas la edad idónea para iniciar la unión sexual se determina prestando atención al momento de mayor fecundidad y vigor fijado por la naturaleza en cada uno de los sexos, y tiene como objetivo asegurar la procreación de una descendencia sana, bien formada y de buena salud. La edad en que el hombre se suponía capaz de producir la mejor descendencia casi doblaba la señalada para la mujer.

Como Nebrija, Vives aborda también el tema de la edad conveniente para contraer matrimonio e iniciar la procreación de los hijos. En el capítulo segundo de *Los deberes del marido* informa que: “Hesiodo, Platón y Aristóteles fijan la edad mejor para contraer matrimonio en los treinta y cuatro años para el varón y dieciocho para la mujer; porque si el varón es mucho más joven, no tiene toda la fuerza que es necesaria para engendrar descendencia y los hijos nacen enfermizos; y él mismo, teniendo que dedicarse a los hijos, carece de la fuerza suficiente para ello” (98). Además de pronunciarse sobre la edad adecuada para procrear una prole vigorosa, Vives exhorta a los cónyuges a practicar la moderación y la templanza en el acto sexual con fines procreativos. Interpela al marido que optó por el estado del matrimonio motivado por el propósito de procrear descendientes advirtiéndole que esa determinación lo obliga a dominar la pasión y a orientar la praxis sexual conyugal exclusivamente a la finalidad reproductiva: “Si tomaste esposa por el amor a tu prole, entrégate enteramente a ese amor, no a la pasión, imitando a aquellos santos que parecieron unirse en matrimonio sólo por esa causa” (153). Aunque en ese enunciado Vives se refiere en plural a “aquéllos santos,” comenta sólo la conducta de Tobías (Tob.6, 1,9; 8,18), de quien señala que aleccionado por el ángel Rafael tomó a Sara después de la tercera noche del matrimonio, “empujado más por el amor a la descendencia que por su deseo” (152). Exhorta también a que el marido realice el acto de engendrar descendientes “de tal manera que mientras el alma fiel se inclina a la tarea de la fecundidad, guarde al mismo tiempo con la ayuda de Dios la modestia de la natural honestidad” (158). Además de

prescribir la modestia durante el acto procreativo, aconseja que el marido prescinda del coito durante el embarazo de la esposa, a imitación de los santos padres, quienes “se abstenían de las relaciones carnales cuando ellas [las esposas] estaban grávidas” (153). Al igual que Vives, Pedro López de Montoya propone la conducta ejemplar de Tobías como modelo a ser emulado por los padres que desean engendrar un buen fruto: “hijos somos (dixo el santo Tobías), y por esta causa no podemos celebrar nuestro matrimonio con la disolución y desorden que los infieles que no conocen a Dios. Estas mismas palabras las han de poner en su corazón los cristianos, y conforme a ellas han de celebrar sus bodas para que dellas resulte la posteridad y la sucesión que desean y conviene a la república” (270). Sin restarle importancia al aprendizaje de las virtudes mediante los modelos ejemplares y el proceso educativo, los humanistas recomiendan la práctica de la sobriedad, la moderación y la templanza sexual de los progenitores al momento de engendrar a los hijos con el fin de que esas características se transmitan a los descendientes. Como puede observarse, tanto la prudencia de elegir como esposa una “mujer [sana y] de buenas costumbres,” y de seguir las medidas recomendadas en la Antigüedad clásica para procrear una prole físicamente fuerte e inclinada a las virtudes de la sobriedad y la templanza constituyen principios fundamentales de la visión pedagógica de los humanistas, quienes amparados en la convicción clásica de “que se hereda lo moral, así como lo natural” (Cárceles 426), intentaban armonizar las leyes biológicas y éticas para conseguir la procreación de un sujeto que portara cualidades que lo predispusieran para un buen futuro educativo.

La consecución de ese objetivo no se agota con la puesta en práctica de los consejos de la pedagogía prenatal de Antigüedad clásica. La exhortación a alimentar a los hijos con la leche de la madre biológica es otro consejo reiterado en los textos de los humanistas que revela la importancia que esos autores le atribuyen al proceso de forjar durante la infancia los buenos cimientos físicos y morales que contribuirían a sustentar la formación educativa. Tanto Sánchez de Arévalo como Nebrija destinan el capítulo tercero de sus tratados respectivos a exponer su percepción sobre la lactancia mercenaria y recomiendan que las madres amamanten a los hijos con preferencia a las nodrizas. Ambos proyectan a la madre como el agente más idóneo para nutrir y transmitirles a los hijos las buenas costumbres. Siguiendo a Plutarco, Sánchez de Arévalo pondera el vínculo materno-filial como un factor de carácter natural que induce a la madre a amamantar al hijo con amor y diligencia en contraposición con las nodrizas, quienes, alegadamente, amamantan animadas sólo por la recompensa económica. Cuando la madre no pueda amamantar debido a la falta de salud o “por cualquier otra causa” (71) -el autor alude probablemente a la procreación de otros hijos- la elección de la nodriza adecuada debe efectuarse acorde con los criterios codificados en el discurso médico y la literatura moralista. Amparándose en esas fuentes, Sánchez de Arévalo aconseja que se contrate una nodriza joven, saludable y productora abundante de leche dulce, cualidades asociadas con una alimentación adecuada y una vida activa.

Además de las características de orden físico, Sánchez de Arévalo apela a la autoridad de Plutarco y de San Jerónimo con el fin de prevenir a los padres sobre los daños morales ocasionados a los niños mediante el contacto cotidiano con las nodrizas de malas costumbres. Representa a la nodriza como “un espejo [en el que] se clavan sin interrupción los ojos de los niños” (72) a la vez que destaca la facilidad con que los niños absorben las costumbres y las graban debido a la facilidad con que en la edad temprana se fija lo observado (72). Vives formula una versión parecida de esas ideas, pero a diferencia de Sánchez de Arévalo, quien las emplea para instar a los padres a seleccionar una nodriza moralmente idónea, el humanista valenciano lo hace para exhortar a la madre cristiana a amamantar para que “lo primero en que abra los ojos su niño sea en ella, y de su rostro de ella se figure el rostro de él” (*Instrucción* 347). En *La perfecta casada* no parece ser a la mirada penetrante de los niños sino, al semblante y los ojos maternos a los que fray Luis de León les atribuye capacidad de imprimir las virtudes cristianas en el alma de los hijos: “la piedad, la dulzura, el aviso, la modestia, el buen saber, con todos los demás bienes que le habemos dado, no sólo los traspase con la leche en el cuerpo del niño, sino también los comience a imprimir en el alma tierna de él con los ojos y con los semblantes”(347).³ En esa aseveración, el fraile agustino se refiere también al traspaso de las virtudes cristianas de la madre a los hijos mediante la leche. Es importante reconocer, sin embargo, la posición precursora que ocupa el tratado de Nebrija en la divulgación de esas ideas.

En Europa, la lactancia mercenaria constituía una costumbre aceptada en los sectores sociales altos que se efectuaba con el consentimiento de la autoridad paterna. Además de responder a los estilos de vida de los sectores elitistas, la vigencia de esa práctica obedecía a las capacidades contraceptivas atribuidas al amamantamiento así como a la proscripción de sostener relaciones sexuales durante el tiempo en que la madre lactaba. Esa prohibición se fundamentaba en la creencia en que “both, sexual intercourse and pregnancy ‘damaged’ or ‘changed’ breast milk and thus would harm the child” (Fildes *Wetnursing* 8). La abstinencia sexual por el período de dos a tres años al que se extendía, generalmente, el amamantamiento en esa época, era incompatible con las demandas reproductivas de las élites económicas y sociales. La contratación de amas de leche liberaba a las madres de esos sectores de la tarea de amamantar y las dejaba disponibles para continuar la procreación ininterrumpida de los herederos de las propiedades y los títulos (Dillard 179). En la apertura al tercer capítulo de su tratado, Nebrija privilegia el papel reproductivo de la esposa de las clases altas sobre el deber de amamantar a los descendientes cuando identifica la necesidad de engendrar otros hijos

³ Julián Olivares se refiere a una creencia similar que consideraba que los rasgos de la persona amada se fijaban en el corazón del amante mediante la vista y la sangre se encargaba de imprimirlos en el cuerpo: “La transformación del amante en la amada fue creencia y no retórica: ‘los rasgos de la persona amada se fijan en el corazón de la que ama, donde pronto son reproducidos en la sangre; ésta que alimenta el cuerpo, hace que todos los miembros vayan adquiriendo poco a poco los rasgos del ser amado que la sangre lleva impresos’ (40

como una razón que, junto a la falta de salud, (104) exonera a la madre de la responsabilidad de lactar. No obstante, tras estipular esas salvedades, insta enfáticamente a la madre a lactar para preservar incontaminada la formación física y moral de los hijos. Esta doble posición discursiva puede relacionarse con la ambivalencia que Emilie Bergmann observa en los manuales de conducta: “advice literature warned elite parents that by entrusting their infants to women of the lower classes, they were exposing them to contamination by disease and poor moral character transmissible through the milk” (95). En el *corpus* de las obras analizadas en este ensayo es el capítulo tercero del tratado de Nebrija el texto que inaugura la exposición extensa y detallada de los daños provocados por la lactancia mercenaria. Nebrija suscribe un *corpus* de argumentos procedentes de la Antigüedad clásica y del discurso médico para disuadir la contratación de nodrizas y justificar el deber de la madre de amamantar a los hijos. La proyección de la madre que no lactaba a los hijos como un ser que exhibía las características de un linaje imperfecto, partido por el medio, procedente de la formación discursiva clásica, se transformó en un argumento ampliamente divulgado en las obras de conducta escritas por los humanistas. Nebrija lo emplea cuando sustenta que el acto de parir y no amamantar al hijo, “es propio de una madre incompleta reducida a la mitad” (105). Junto a ese argumento, y con el propósito de justificar el amamantamiento como un deber natural de la madre, apela a la aseveración aristotélica que estipula que la naturaleza no hace nada en vano. Sobre ese aspecto declara: “¿Es posible que pienses que la naturaleza ha dotado a las mujeres de los pezones de las tetas como si fueran unos lunares muy llenos de encanto? ¿Acaso los ha dado la naturaleza no para amamantar a los hijos, sino para adornar a los pechos?”(105).

Posterior a Nebrija, en *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*, Vives recrimina severamente a las madres que no amamantaban, alegando que el incumplimiento de ese deber contradecía las obligaciones inscritas en el cuerpo de la madre por la propia naturaleza: “¿Piensas por ventura que naturaleza dió de balde tetas a las mujeres y que puso allí aquellos dos pezoncicos como dos berruguitas no por más de por una cierta gentileza o hermosura de los pechos? Buenos estábamos por cierto. No lo hizo sino a fin que la madre habiendo parido tuviese con qué poder criar a su hijo, según hacen todas las otras alimañas” (138). Antonio de Guevara insiste en la misma idea cuando afirma que después del alumbramiento toda mujer debe criar al hijo a sus pechos “porque naturaleza no sólo hizo ábiles a las mugeres para parir, pero juntamente con esto las proveyó de leche para criar” (*Relox de príncipes* 507). De manera similar, fray Luis de León recalca que, tras el alumbramiento, la naturaleza “declara casi a voces su voluntad, enviando luego después del parto leche a los pechos” (346).

Con el fin de estipular la obligación moral de la madre de amamantar a los hijos, Nebrija destaca el poder similar contenido por la sangre materna y por la leche de la nodriza para modelar la complexión física y moral de los infantes acorde con las características del agente que los amamantara. Como ya se señalara, esas ideas tenían su procedencia en las teorías médicas vigentes en la época que postulaban la presencia de

una economía común en los fluidos del cuerpo y consideraban que la sangre uterina con la que se alimentaba el feto durante el embarazo y la leche materna no eran dos materias diferentes. Se le atribuía a la naturaleza la capacidad de transformar la sangre uterina en leche después del parto con el propósito de que el recién nacido continuara alimentándose y formándose con la misma materia con que se había sustentado durante la etapa fetal. Laqueur identifica a Isidoro de Sevilla como uno de los divulgadores más importantes de esa creencia durante el siglo XVI: “After birth, says the omniscient Isidore, passing on one millennium of scholarship to the next, ‘whatever blood has not yet been spent in the nourishing of the womb flows by natural passage to the breasts, and whitening, by this virtue receives the quality of the milk’” (36). En el pasaje del *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos*, citado a continuación, Nebrija subscribe esas creencias médicas e intenta ilustrar la capacidad de la leche con la que se amamantara a los niños para continuar el proceso de formación iniciado por la sangre de la madre durante el embarazo:

¿Acaso la sangre que estuvo en el vientre y la que ahora está en los pechos no es la misma? La que está en los pechos ha emblanquecido debido al abundante aire y calor. ¿Acaso no es evidente la habilidad de la naturaleza en este hecho? En efecto; después que la sangre, esa maravillosa artífice modeló todo el cuerpo humano en sus lugares más recónditos, al llegar el momento del parto, se presenta en la parte superior y ofrece a los que han nacido un alimento reciente, conocido y familiar. Y de la misma manera que la fuerza y la naturaleza del semen tienen poder para modelar las semejanzas del cuerpo y el alma, así también no hay duda que la naturaleza de la leche sirve de mucha utilidad para ese mismo fin. ...

¿No es una locura que el hombre formado de unos orígenes bien dispuestos por la naturaleza se altere con tal clase de injertos y con el inapropiado alimento de la leche ajena sobre todo si la que da de mamar al niño, es una sierva, una inculta, una malvada, fea, deshonesto, borracha? (106)

Aduciendo a la capacidad atribuida a la leche para modelar los atributos del cuerpo y del alma de los niños amamantados, Nebrija proyecta la leche de las nodrizas como un injerto que deforma los orígenes bien dispuestos por la naturaleza en la criatura engendrada. Naomi J. Miller señala la intensificación de las tensiones de clase producidas por las diferencias de estatus social entre las madres de clase alta y la baja extracción de las nodrizas en los tratados sobre la lactancia escritos durante el periodo moderno temprano (5). En el *Tratado sobre la educación de los hijos* esas tensiones se observan cuando Nebrija identifica la extracción social de la nodriza sierva entre las cualidades negativas que se traspasan mediante la “leche extraña” y consiguen alterar los

orígenes bien dispuestos por la naturaleza en el niño. Al igual que Nebrija, Vives califica, posteriormente, los daños causados por la “leche extraña” como una “desdicha” y carga la responsabilidad en los padres por no emplear los criterios adecuados en la selección del ama de leche:

¿Qué desdicha es ésta tan grande y estragar la nobleza y valer del hombre recién nacido y al ánimo y cuerpo suyo formado por tan hermosos principios, corromperle con embastardido y enjerido mantenimiento de leche extraña, en especial si el ama que le dierdes fuere esclava o tenga ánimo dello, si villana o labradora, si extranjera o de nación bárbara, si mala, si deshonesto, si fea, si beoda, según agora se usa, que sin más tener otra consideración, sino que por compadres y comadres se toma a ciegas la primera que viene a mano? (139)

Fray Luis de León sustenta, por su parte, que el ama de leche aporta durante un tiempo más prolongado la materia (leche = sangre) que permite continuar el proceso de la formación física y la disposición anímica del recién nacido. Debido a que la nodriza no es la madre biológica, juzga que esa formación más bien podría considerarse un acto de deformación. Estima que el adulterio que comete la madre que permite que sus descendientes se amamenten con la leche de esclavas o villanas, consiste en “venderle” al marido como si fuera de ella un hijo que, en el fondo, es hijo de la nodriza (345). La afirmación de que los niños con la leche de la nodriza maman también sus atributos físicos y morales, sus enfermedades y sus costumbres fue ampliamente difundida en los libros sobre cuidado infantil publicados en el siglo XVI en Europa. Valerie Fildes destaca que en esa época: “The nurse child was regarded as an extero-gestate foetus to whom the nurse's milk carried all her physical and mental qualities, her emotions, her food and drink, and her diseases . . .” (*Breast* 203).⁴ Consonante con lo señalado por Fildes, la proyección de la leche de las nodrizas como un influjo perjudicial que mediatiza la formación física, moral y espiritual de los niños lactados por ellas constituye el argumento principal empleado por Nebrija para persuadir a la madre de los estamentos altos a amamentar para garantizar la buena formación física de los descendientes iniciada por la naturaleza durante la etapa prenatal y para transferirles las virtudes morales a los descendientes. Como se ilustró en este ensayo, Vives, Guevarra y fray Luis, entre otros humanistas españoles posteriores a Nebrija, emplearon esos argumentos para prescribir el amamentamiento como un deber ineludible de la madre cristiana.⁵

⁴ Caro Baroja señala que en la época se creía que la “sangre y leche van unidas. Pero la leche prima, según lo dicho acerca de las nodrizas” (490).

⁵ Entre los difusores de esas ideas en España se debe incluir a Erasmo de Rotterdam. El monje holandés expresa la obligación de la madre cristiana de amamentar a los hijos en *Puerpera*, coloquio incorporado a la edición de *Familiarum colloquiorum formulae* que fue publicada en 1526. Conocido en

En resumen, de acuerdo con los consejos formulados por Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo y Elio Antonio de Nebrija, al igual que otros autores posteriores del Siglo de Oro, los deberes paternos preceden la contracción del matrimonio de los progenitores y el nacimiento de la prole, aunque se extienden a la etapa de la infancia y al periodo educativo de los hijos. La salud física y mental y la edad de los progenitores al momento de concebir, junto a las prácticas de la sobriedad y la templanza en la economía sexual reproductiva, consejos procedentes de la pedagogía prenatal de la tradición clásica, constituían para los humanistas factores que contribuían a forjar la compleción física y la inclinación moral de los descendientes y a configurar, por ende, los buenos cimientos del futuro pedagógico del educando. La recomendación de amamantar a los hijos con la leche de la madre biológica durante la etapa de la infancia persigue un fin similar. Además de asegurar la buena formación física de los hijos, iniciada por la sangre durante la procreación, Sánchez de Arévalo y, con mayor énfasis, Nebrija, le atribuyen a la leche de la madre biológica la propiedad de conservar en los descendientes la pureza de la compleción física y moral heredada de los padres y de evitar la transmisión de atributos extraños mediante el amamantamiento y la crianza con amas de leche. La articulación de esas ideas los convierte en precursores de la defensa de la lactancia materna en España. Aunque corresponden a etapas diferentes, la prenatal y la infancia, tanto los consejos relativos a la elección de la esposa y la procreación de los descendientes como la prescripción de amamantar a los hijos con leche materna responden al interés de lograr un mismo objetivo pedagógico en la metodología educativa humanista que intentaba armonizar las leyes biológicas y éticas y prestaba atención “al cuidado del cuerpo” y a “la formación de las dotes del alma” (Nebrija 111) en un orden sucesivo.

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español con el título *Puerperio*, ese texto forma parte la versión castellana de los *Coloquios familiares* editada por Alonso Ruiz de Virués, publicada inicialmente alrededor de 1529. En *Puerperio*, Jocundo alecciona a una joven madre de nombre Sofía sobre el deber de amamantar, advirtiéndole -“Por lo qual no pienses que has acabado de parir hasta que tu hijo ayas confirmado en las fuerças del cuerpo e fortificado en las virtudes del alma” (45). Para un análisis detallado de ese texto erasmiano, véase el ensayo “Funciones de la madre en la ideología del género articulada en el coloquio “*Puerperio*”.

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Os romances juvenis de Álvaro Magalhães

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Abstract: With his works translated in countries such as Spain, France and Brazil, Álvaro Magalhães is not only one of the great writers of Portuguese and Lusophone juvenile fiction, but also one of the most prominent names in European and world literature. Through the various thematic and narrative resources that he employs in the creation of a unique language, among the multiple and unusual senses of serious and humorous, among the elements of various domains of knowledge and universal culture that he invokes and contrasts, this author has a unique place in universe of novels aimed primarily at young readers.

Keywords: Álvaro Magalhães; Portuguese young adult novel; fantasy; realism; adventure; esotericism.



Quando, em 1989, Álvaro Magalhães (Porto, 1951) dá a conhecer o primeiro título da série juvenil “Triângulo Jota”, provavelmente ninguém arriscaria afirmar que, em 2006, o autor estaria a publicar o décimo sexto título da coleção. A sua reputação como escritor estava já generalizada, e não apenas na área da literatura infantil e juvenil, em que se estreara, em 1982, com a narrativa breve *Uma História com Muitas Letras*; é também na década de 80 que, com *Boca Única*, *Concerto para Cravo* e *Música Exausta*, Álvaro Magalhães inscreve definitivamente o seu nome na literatura portuguesa como poeta de muitos temas e intensidade expressiva, depois de, em 1975, publicar o livro de poesia *Entre uma Morte e Outra*¹.

O Olhar do Dragão (1989) não é, pois, a primeira ou uma das primeiras obras de um autor desconhecido e inexperiente; mas vem iniciar um novo ciclo numa atividade literária que continua a surpreender pela vastidão, diversidade e qualidade, e que, no género narrativo que aqui nos interessa, não se esgota na série “Triângulo Jota”. *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* (1998), *O Último Grimm* (2007) e *O Rapaz dos Sapatos Prateados* (2013) são romances que vêm confirmar a originalidade do autor no panorama da narrativa portuguesa e mundial destinada à juventude (e às idades mais avançadas da infância).

Romances mais ou menos extensos ou consideravelmente longos, nada têm a ver com a literatura a que a crítica e a teoria literárias convencionaram chamar

¹ São três os livros que Álvaro Magalhães publica em 1980: *Boca Única*, *Concerto para Cravo* e *Música Exausta*.

pejorativamente paraliteratura; e também em nada se relacionam com a língua aliteratada e rígida ou falsamente coloquial de muita da ficção juvenil nacional e internacional anterior e posterior ao surgimento do primeiro volume de *Harry Potter* (1997), que veio impulsionar quer o mercado livreiro infanto-juvenil quer toda a indústria cultural e tecnológica que se lhe associa (da televisão ao cinema e aos multimédia).

Álvaro Magalhães, que publicou já dezanove romances, criou rapidamente um estilo muito próprio e inconfundível, que, no essencial, não é distinto do que existe já num dos seus primeiros contos alargados, *O Menino Chamado Menino* (1983). Este estilo individual, reconhecível tanto na forma como no conteúdo, tem-se reinventado ou reajustado de romance para romance. A adaptação de “Triângulo Jota” para televisão veio aumentar o prestígio do autor, e trouxe mais leitores a uma série cuja elaboração cuidada e complexa não implica a diminuição da legibilidade. Prova imediata disso é o sucesso editorial de uma coleção que, no conjunto, tem mais de duas mil e quinhentas páginas, e que tem vindo a ser continuamente reeditada, a ponto de alguns títulos terem já mais de uma dezena de edições.

“Triângulo Jota” filia-se na tradição das narrativas juvenis de aventura e mistério, de que as mais célebres são as séries “The Famous Five” (“Os Cinco”, na tradução portuguesa), com vinte e um títulos publicados entre 1942 e 1963, e “Os Sete” (*The Secret Seven*), que inclui quinze volumes saídos entre 1943 e 1963, da inglesa Enid Blyton (1897 – 1968). Não incluímos aqui o caso *Harry Potter*, a que nos referiremos mais à frente, por se tratar de uma série que se inscreve sobretudo no género literário da *fantasy*. Mas “Triângulo Jota” tem pouco a ver com os livros de Enid Blyton e outros autores, a não ser no que é fundamental para definir o subgénero de “aventura” e “mistério”, que também incorpora elementos do romance “policial”: os protagonistas (três, não cinco nem sete, como em Enid Blyton) são jovens que se unem contra forças do mal. O herói dos romances de Álvaro Magalhães, sem deixar de ser coletivo, não é menos um herói individual moderno que lembra o protagonista dos mitos e das epopeias. A construção de uma consciência e de uma dinâmica de grupo, dirigida para o bem comum, a igualdade e a justiça, não impede a formação de uma identidade marcadamente individual. Cada uma destas três personagens é irredutivelmente diferente das outras duas, e por isso é que o leitor assiste a disputas constantes e às vezes ásperas. Mas é da articulação das ações e visões individuais dos três vértices deste triângulo que advém o sucesso do grupo.

O universo semântico e estrutural dos romances de Álvaro Magalhães é muito mais complexo do que os livros de Enid Blyton, e a intriga não é linear na construção nem na resolução. Não há desfechos previsíveis, nem finais felizes obrigatórios e excessivos. Os três heróis, coadjuvados por personagens mais ou menos da sua idade e/ou adultas, resolvem enigmas e repõem a ordem, mas nem tudo é explicado e resolvido. “Mordoz, o morto” de *O Morto Contente* “que queria viver”, “desapareceu misteriosamente” (*Morto 221*) do Instituto de Medicina Legal; e, n’*O Senhor dos Pássaros*, a indecisão ou a irresolução não são menores: «Mas quem era então a misteriosa e

“inexistente” mulher? Acabaram por concluir que ela era a própria morte, numa das suas formas possíveis. Afinal, a morte, que era o fim, também estava sempre ligada a um novo princípio e não admirava que naquela sua aparição ela tivesse usado o nome que dizem ter tido a primeira mulher sobre a Terra» (*Pássaros* 158).

Aqueles exemplos são suficientes para percebermos que, no “Triângulo Jota”, a intriga não se limita a casos típicos de detetives e de polícia, de coragem e ousadia. O que move este “triângulo” não é simplesmente a descoberta de um mistério e dos culpados de crimes ou ações mais ou menos nefastas. Os três heróis querem conhecer os seus medos e os seus limites, discutir as grandes questões da vida, encontrar caminhos que os ajudem a compreender o mundo e a fazer dele um lugar mais habitável para eles e para os outros. Fortemente enraizado no contexto cultural e social em que vivemos, o sobrenatural, em termos quer de psicologia individual e coletiva quer de ameaça aos fundamentos da vida organizada e livre, merece o respeito e o empenhamento destes jovens, que tudo fazem para compreender o melhor possível a realidade visível mas também a oculta (criaturas diabólicas, seitas religiosas secretas, rituais, magia...).

Álvaro Magalhães vai buscar à vida de todos os dias as soluções narrativas e discursivas para um projeto literário com esta complexidade. Nestes romances entra a matéria de que se faz o dia-a-dia, na sua vertente de realidade empírica e de imaginário, de burlesco e de trágico, de cómico ou ridículo e de dramático ou sério, de lirismo e de prosaísmo, sem concessões a artificialismos ou decorativismos de expressão e de estrutura. Estes elementos, que alternam a um ritmo constante e imprevisível, de acordo com as personagens e as situações em que elas se encontram, surgem tanto nos diálogos como no discurso do narrador, que, discretamente, organiza e verbaliza o que, por vezes, soaria a falso no discurso da personagem. É por isso que, num exercício de pensamento autêntico e metódico, e, verdadeiramente, de atitude filosófica (e até de ironia cósmica) perante as grandes questões existenciais, o narrador de *O Senhor dos Pássaros* prolonga a conclusão dos três jotas, a que já nos referimos, de que a mulher da “Casa dos Pássaros” “era a própria morte, numa das suas formas possíveis” (*Pássaros* 158): a morte, “afinal, não era monstruosa, malvada ou cruel, apenas uma espécie de funcionária pública da vida. Uma funcionária zelosa e cumpridora que não faltava a um único encontro” (*Pássaros* 158).

Nesta alternância e nesta combinação de procedimentos narrativos e de expressão tanto encontramos um momento de sensibilidade lírica e atenção às palavras, como em “Foi então, quase por acaso, que o Joel reparou que o nome dela, Eva, lido ao contrário, era Ave” (*Pássaros* 158), como somos surpreendidos com passagens em que a tónica é o acontecimento realista, prosaico, e mesmo burlesco e cómico, como, no final de *Ao Serviço de Sua Majestade*, em “Misturaram-se com os outros e jantaram fanecas fritas, um prato que os três detestavam profundamente. Como se não fosse heróis” (*Serviço* 141); e tanto deparamos com jogos de palavras e de conceitos como acompanhamos a visão própria do cronista atento aos costumes que, mostrando o que

nos rodeia ou o que somos, nos dá motivos para exercermos um espírito crítico saudável e não dogmático:

– Os mortos não fazem anos – disse a Sara. – Fazem não-anos, que são anos que não se fazem. E quantos mais não fazem, mais se afastam da sua antiga vida. Mas não são vivos. Li isto num livro de poemas. (*Morto* 219)

*

Mas não havia táxis à vista, só aqueles carros vagarosos com galhardetes e bonecos pendurados que levam a família inteira ao domingo, no tradicional “passeio dos tristes”. (...)

O motorista fez uma expressão de fastio e deu mais uma volta ao palito com os dentes. Depois, alisou o bigodinho com os dedos e arrancou. Mas devagar. Pressa é que não tinha. Estava muito mais interessado nos resultados finais da décima sétima jornada do futebol, na classificação geral e na lista dos melhores marcadores. (*Beijo* 116)

O símbolo geométrico (e numérico) do nome do grupo, que, para mais, aparece representado graficamente no título da capa, encerra assim uma riqueza que ultrapassa o que o leitor mais desprevenido poderá esperar. A leitura vem confirmar e ultrapassar o que é dito nos paratextos que acompanham cada livro (um resumo comum e um específico). Trata-se de um “triângulo muito especial” e de muito mais, e trata-se também de muito mais do que «Ação, mistério, suspense e algum esoterismo” nas “aventuras destes três jovens, cujos nomes começam todos por “J”» (contracapa). União e força, pela conjugação de três vértices, são termos que podemos associar imediatamente a qualquer triângulo e a este triângulo humano, que se orienta pela solidariedade e amizade, não pelo interesse e pelo proveito meramente pessoais (o que não implica, como dissemos acima, a desvalorização da identidade de cada um).

Os romances da série “Triângulo Jota” são inclassificáveis, ou não se prestam a definições simples de género. Não estamos perante romances de formação, pelo menos no sentido estrito da expressão. Os protagonistas não partem numa viagem e retornam com o estatuto de heróis, mas não é menos verdade que empreendem em cada livro, e no conjunto dos vários livros, uma jornada pela vida, e que em cada uma dessas viagens há aprendizagens e transformações. O pensamento de Jean-Paul Sartre, um dos principais fundadores da filosofia existencial, pode ajudar-nos a compreender o perfil destas personagens e a mensagem que os romances de Álvaro Magalhães veiculam. A questão da escolha e do livre arbítrio está bem no centro do pensamento de Sartre e também bem no centro destes livros, que sugerem que cada pessoa deve ser responsável pelas suas ações e pela (re)construção contínua da sua personalidade e da sua existência. As personagens Joana, Jorge e Joel lutam contra a apatia e o mal que existem nos

outros, na sociedade, mas também dentro delas próprias; criam a sua própria individualidade, não se colocam nas mãos do Deus cristão ou de qualquer religião (Sartre 15), e sugerem aos leitores que também eles podem mudar o mundo.

Daí podermos dizer que, como acontece na série *Harry Potter*, de J. K. Rowling, a base destes volumes é o “atheistic existentialism”, não o “Christian existentialism” (Green 4). Sartre lutou sempre contra a ideia de uma natureza humana universal, e viu na filosofia existencial um modo de contribuir para a mudança das mentalidades e para a denúncia de todo o tipo de “repressive political, social, economical, religious... policies or systems” (Anderson 56). A identidade de cada indivíduo não está preestabelecida em função de uma natureza humana genérica. A existência, para Sartre, prevalece sobre a essência, cabendo a cada um construir-se assumindo sempre a sua liberdade, em vez de atribuir a responsabilidade dos seus atos negativos a terceiros ou a uma qualquer conjugação de circunstâncias. Joana, Jorge e Joel hesitam muitas vezes, entram em conflito consigo e com os outros, mas nunca esquecem que devem agir e decidir como seres livres e tolerantes interessados no bem comum.

Um dos paratextos a que já nos referimos traça o perfil de cada um dos três heróis, e parece contradizer a leitura que acabamos de fazer: «Joel é a “cabeça”, o intelectual, dedutivo e lógico. Jorge é o “corpo”, a coragem, a ação, agindo mesmo antes de pensar. Joana (irmã de Jorge) é a “alma”, a intuição, o sexto sentido do trio» (interior da contracapa). Mas a contradição, apenas aparente, deve-se à necessidade de resumir o que distingue cada personagem das demais. Não se trata de afirmar que cada um dos membros do grupo apresenta características inatas e rígidas; trata-se, antes, de dizer que estes três adolescentes, dotados de uma vontade própria que se faz de inteligência, ponderação, planeamento, organização, amizade e tolerância, são um bom exemplo da “practical application of the atheistic existentialism in real life” (Green iv). As especificidades destas personagens são o resultado de opções e comportamentos individuais anteriores, como se confirma em cada um dos livros. Segundo a filosofia de Sartre, as escolhas passadas influenciam as escolhas presentes e futuras, e, através da repetição e persistência, geram um sistema de valores pessoais (Sartre 15).

Os três jotas encerram representações de temas arquetípicos muito antigos que incluem o herói clássico e a sabedoria feminina, e mesmo “the fool” (Garcia 268), se tivermos em conta que não são poucas as vezes em que sobretudo os dois protagonistas masculinos nos aparecem em situações comuns e burlescas. Joel e Jorge, segundo a definição do paratexto, constituem, juntos, o herói antigo à maneira de Aquiles e Ulisses, e Joana a heroína que vem equilibrar o masculino com sensibilidade e intuição. Estes três heróis representam as figuras básicas arquetípicas da mitologia antiga (Garcia 270), mas, porque valem como um grupo (que não despreza a individualidade de cada um), estão mais implicados com a sociedade do que os congéneres clássicos. Relativamente aos mitos antigos, nestas histórias verifica-se “a movement from the focus on the mono-hero to the focus on the poly-hero” (Garcia 270). Estes elementos permitem-nos inscrever estas narrativas de Álvaro Magalhães na “Radical Literature”,

que Herbert Kohl define deste modo: a “tale that shows young people involved in collective struggle and involves the community or small group rising to action for a social or racial cause” (47). A partir da sua individualidade, cujo valor depende da interação com as capacidades das outras personagens, cada protagonista age em benefício da comunidade, e por isso é que, como sucede em Harry Potter, emerge destes livros a consciência de que “caring and cooperation are not secondary values or signs of weakness so much as affirmations of hope and life” (Kohl 84).

É próprio da “Radical Literature” querer ter efeitos no real. Para isso, segundo Herbert Kohl, as narrativas contemporâneas que se inscrevem neste género “focus on collective rather than individual action [and] show that people have to cooperate, share what they have, and pull together if they are to survive with dignity” (68). Em cada livro e em toda a série é posto em prática um “communal power”: “there is a positive effect when people work together for the benefit of the community and the world in general” (Garcia 240). Na série “Triângulo Jota”, este princípio é possível graças às técnicas narrativas que Álvaro Magalhães usa com mestria e novidade para tratar os temas e os motivos dos livros. Estes romances raramente são apenas ou sobretudo realistas, nem muito menos apenas ou principalmente fantásticos. É muito estreita, na maioria dos títulos, a ligação entre o sobrenatural e o real. O fantástico, consubstanciado em “fantasmas”, “sombas”, “vampiros”, “espíritos” ou “luzinhas”, vem a ter, muitas vezes, uma explicação, mas nem sempre a solução é, como já vimos, completa. Como na vida de todos os dias, o visível e o invisível, e o ser e o parecer, são de difícil separação ou compreensão. O estranhamento que atravessa *O Morto Contente*, em que, como noutros livros, entram elementos esotéricos, místicos, ocultistas e fantásticos que envolvem seitas com os seus códigos e rituais, acaba por ser resolvido em grande parte:

Entretanto, soube-se que o Professor Luigi Fontana, afinal, era o chefe de uma quadrilha de ladrões de joias. Não havia nenhuma congregação de caçadores de demónios; eles eram um grupo altamente especializado em roubos de joias raras e valiosas. Se sabiam tanto sobre os Adoradores de Baal, era porque os tinham estudado ao pormenor para dar o golpe. (*Morto* 220)

Mas nem tudo é explicado no desfecho do romance, e por isso a coabitação entre o racional e o sobrenatural mantém-se. O leitor deve fazer uso da razão e intervir na resolução dos enigmas ou na sua discussão e avaliação, que implica o recurso a várias saberes e competências. Ele deve saber avaliar, por exemplo, se Joel, no final do romance, viu o demónio porque ele estava lá ou porque “o imaginara ali, naquele momento” (*Morto* 221). E deve saber discutir se é possível manter um corpo intacto, entre a vida e a morte, há mais de quinhentos anos, como se diz acontecer com Mordoz, o filho do demónio Baal, nascido da relação com “uma humana que ele amou loucamente” (*Morto* 129). Este comprometimento do leitor só é possível porque Álvaro

Magalhães trata a literatura para a infância e a juventude e os seus destinatários sem qualquer tipo de paternalismo ou condescendência. Basta vermos o modo como este escritor aborda a questão da morte para percebermos como para ele o romance juvenil é, como a literatura em geral, “o lugar onde fazemos a experiência mais intensa da perturbação” (Coelho 71). Num artigo publicado em 2012, Carlos Nogueira escreveu: “Álvaro Magalhães (...) is, in Portugal today, the author who deals most regularly and deeply with the theme of death in literature for children and young people” (98). Reforçamos aqui essa afirmação, e, para rebatermos a opinião, difusa e muitas vezes crispada, daqueles que dizem que há temas que não devem ser discutidos na literatura para a infância e a juventude, citamos estas palavras de Janett Goodall, pediatra, autora do livro *Children and Grieving* (1995), com larga experiência um pouco por todo o mundo no campo das emoções das crianças: “Teenagers appreciate discussion, both about medical management, and about the larger issues of life and death. (...). For them to be told untruths only builds barriers, though truth is better shared in stages than delivered as a bombshell” (*Grieving Parents* 236).

Não faltam motivos para reflexão a partir daquele episódio, que convoca questões filosóficas, médicas, antropológicas ou sociais, e, portanto, pede ao leitor um envolvimento sério e informado. Ao tema da morte ligam-se, nos romances de Álvaro Magalhães, e, em particular, n’*O Morto Contente*, os motivos da doença, do moribundo ou da velhice, que sempre atormentaram o ser humano e o levaram a querer encontrar a imortalidade. Quem conhece a literatura deste autor sabe que nela se sustenta que a vida e a morte, o princípio e o fim se constroem numa harmonia que importa compreender e aceitar. Querer tornar Mordoz imune à morte, para mais à custa do sacrifício de crianças (a quem era retirado todo o sangue), permite colocar questões de ética e metafísica (até que ponto é legítimo manter um corpo suspenso entre a vida e morte, e para isso sacrificar vidas, o que significa querer ser imortal ou querer servir alguém que venceu a morte, qual é o significado da existência, etc.).

O estatuto do Ser no tempo, do “ser-para-a-morte” (Heidegger 17), pode entrar diretamente num debate que se queira promover com adolescentes a partir de *O Morto Contente*, que faz sobressair “the ethical and learning value of death, which can only be contested by way of an intellectual, spiritual and free life” (Nogueira 106). Estas palavras de Bruno Bettelheim continuam válidas, e pedem-nos que olhemos para os romances de Álvaro Magalhães ainda com mais atenção: “Todos os profundos conflitos íntimos que têm origem em nossas pulsões primitivas e emoções violentas são negados em grande parte da literatura infantil moderna, e desse modo não se ajuda a criança a lidar com eles” (18). Bettelheim refere-se ao leitor (ou ouvinte) infantil, mas nem por isso a sua opinião é menos válida para os romances de Álvaro Magalhães, que também são lidos por pré-adolescentes (e mesmo por leitores ainda mais jovens). Estes livros, tal como o conto de fadas, levam muito a sério os “sentimentos desesperados de solidão e isolamento”, os dilemas existenciais” e a “angústia mortal” (Bettelheim 18) dos mais novos, e tratam esses problemas sem fugir à relação, complexa mas fundadora de uma

atitude mais segura perante a vida e a morte, entre “o amor pela vida e o medo da morte” (Bettelheim 18).

Também pode ser discutida a questão do estranhamento que atravessa todo este romance (todos os romances de Álvaro Magalhães). Este estranhamento tem muito a ver com o fantástico, tal como o definem Roger Caillois (1966) e Tzevetan Todorov (1976), enquanto forte indecisão entre o nosso mundo e o mundo sobrenatural, e enquanto conflito do eu com o mundo e/ou consigo mesmo. A Mordoz, “o morto que queria viver, nunca mais ninguém lhe viu o sorriso enigmático”, porque “o corpo dele estava morto” (*Morto* 221). Mas “faltava saber o que teria acontecido ao seu espírito” (*Morto* 221), e faltava avaliar a implicação das palavras dos Adoradores de Baal, que roubaram o corpo e escreveram «com sangue na parede da morgue: “Para Mordoz não existe morte, apenas vida” (*Morto* 221). Este, valendo-nos de uma expressão de Roger Caillois, é um caso extremo de «rupture avec la cohérence universelle» (9), e confirma plenamente outra das definições que este teórico nos fornece de literatura fantástica: “jeu avec la peur” (13) em que o sobrenatural não é mostrado, mas sugerido.

Não há verdades fáceis nem definitivas neste livro, nem a ridicularização do que parecerá o efeito de uma mente perturbada ou o resultado de arquétipos inconscientes, isto é, traços comuns a todo o ser humano, independentemente da cultura, os quais são constituídos por crenças, emoções, valores e certas disposições para agir em função de estímulos do ambiente (Jung). O fantástico parece começar por se impor a Joel, que, acordando “sobressaltado”, “Levantou-se, veio à janela do quarto, olhou o céu e, entre as nuvens rápidas que passavam, viu o demónio Baal, encerrado na sua torre de ar” (*Morto* 221). Joel pensa, como se pede a qualquer jovem, e conclui, num pensamento dialético, que “talvez ele tivesse visto o demónio porque o imaginara ali”, tal como os homens viam leões e dragões nas nuvens”, e “não os viam porque eles lá estava, mas apenas porque os queriam ver” (*Morto* 221). Apesar deste esforço de racionalização do arquétipo do demoníaco, a hesitação permanece, e é comum ao protagonista e ao leitor, «qui doivent décider si ce qu’ils perçoivent relève ou non de la “réalité”» (Todorov 48).

Por aqui já se vê como a escrita romanesca de Álvaro Magalhães não é simplista nem comercial, e como pode ser atrativa tanto para o público jovem como para o leitor adulto (e uma fonte de motivação para a leitura de outros romances e de outros textos). A riqueza destes livros reside, em grande parte, nesta associação entre diferentes formas de expressão e de conteúdo e entre elementos de subgéneros mais ou menos distintos, e na ligação entre arte e literatura e literatura e ciência: “aventura”, “mistério”, “policial” ou “fantástico”, e até “negro” ou de “terror”, mas também “ficção científica” (a ciência factual, e não apenas o dado pretensamente científico, aparece em muitos destes romances com grande rigor e pormenor). Mas a qualidade não diminui nos títulos que são exclusivamente “realistas”. *Ao Serviço de Sua Majestade* é um romance policial muito bem construído; “policial”, não porque exista um crime para resolver, mas porque há um crime a evitar, e porque a lógica e a racionalidade das personagens vêm lembrar ao leitor que a inteligência é um valor que deve ser cultivado e defendido, sobretudo

quando atua em defesa da verdade e da justiça, e de uma visão civilizada e informada sobre o mundo (a superstição comezinha e o aproveitamento das crenças de pessoas fragilizadas merecem a censura dos protagonistas). Basta dizer que Joel, Jorge e Joana se associam a um “caçador de nazis”, expressão, já de uso corrente, que designa quem, após a Segunda Guerra Mundial, se dedicou e dedica a encontrar e a levar criminosos nazis a Tribunal.

Os romances *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* (1998), *O Último Grimm* (2007) e *O Rapaz dos Sapatos Prateados* (2013) constituem um grupo à parte (não homogéneo), mas não marcam uma ruptura absoluta em relação à série “Triângulo Jota”, nem em relação à outra produção literária de Álvaro Magalhães. O leitor familiarizado com esta escrita identifica o estilo que se reinventa continuamente e deixa-se prender pela efabulação; e identifica as remissões para outros livros do autor, o efeito de eco que permite o prazer do reconhecimento e da discussão dos temas da grande literatura. No *O Último Grimm*, por exemplo, lemos: “– Não faço anos, mas faço não-anos, que são anos que não se fazem. E quantos mais não faço, mais não cresço” (*Último* 313). É evidente a relação intertextual entre esta passagem e a que transcrevemos acima de *O Morto Contente*. Mas agora o tema do aniversário, ou do efeito da passagem do tempo sobre a vida humana, é objecto de um tratamento filosófico com duas perspectivas. É com orgulho e sentido de superioridade que a Criança (maléfica) faz aquela afirmação e a reforça logo a seguir; mas William vê vantagens em viver a vida dentro das regras impostas pelo tempo (e pela morte), e por isso não só recusa o “tempo” que a Criança lhe oferece como diz, com convicção, “– Eu sei, mas quero fazer anos todos os dias” (*Último* 314):

William estendeu a mão.

– Os meus desparabéns!

– Obrigado – disse a Criança a cumprimentá-lo. – Aceito porque é isso que merece felicitação: não fazer anos. Não compreendo quem festeja os anos que faz e que os vão matando.

– Talvez festejem porque estão vivos, apesar dos anos. Às vezes é difícil – esclareceu William. (*Último* 314)

O leitor não acostumado com a obra de Álvaro Magalhães sentir-se-á também seduzido pela combinação de registos de língua e pela ocorrência de temas e motivos universais, e reconhecerá a originalidade da construção da intriga destes romances, que se filiam no subgénero a que se convencionou atribuir a designação de *fantasy* (de que *O Senhor dos Anéis*, de Tolkien, e *Harry Potter*, de J. K. Rowling, são os títulos de maior sucesso).

Como qualquer grande escritor, Álvaro Magalhães conhece bem a tradição literária, antiga e contemporânea, oral e escrita, dos mitos e das epopeias às lendas, aos contos e aos romances da *fantasy*; conhece muito bem, em particular, o folclore celta e britânico, e as criaturas (fadas, duendes, ogres, elfos, anões...) que hoje fazem parte do património literário e cultural ocidental (e não só). *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* articula todas

estas tradições e obedece às características da *fantasy*, e traz novidades, a primeira das quais é a integração dos protagonistas, Rui e Ana, no seu local histórico, de onde sairão para outros mundos, “o outro lado da vossa cidade” (31), e a Ilha do Chifre de Ouro, espaços situados noutras dimensões. Esta integração das personagens no seu mundo original é típica da *fantasy*, mas neste romance, como sempre acontece em Álvaro Magalhães, existe uma atenção a pormenores e a lugares do dia-a-dia que, regra geral, são afastados desta forma literária. O *incipit* mostra claramente que o real vai aparecer tal e qual o vemos, cru e despojado de quaisquer eufemismos:

O Senhor Mateus, que dirige uma pequena pizzaria no centro comercial *Via Catarina*, no centro da cidade, anda há uma semana para escrever um postal à irmã, que vive na Régua, e não arranja tempo.

–Agora vai! – disse ele a limpar a gordura das mãos a um pano.
(*Ilha* 9)

Prosaica, realista, é também a apresentação indireta do protagonista, que trabalha na pizzaria deste Senhor Mateus. Vêmo-lo a ser chamado rudemente pelo patrão, que lhe pergunta se está “mouco” e que lhe diz para largar a máquina de *flippers*. Não lhe pressentimos quaisquer habilidades ou poderes extraordinários, nem sequer uma postura de herói: “O Rui deu um último safanão à máquina, que fez *tilt*, e veio buscar as pizzas que o Sr. Mateus já tinha pousado no balcão” (*Ilha* 9).

Rui e a protagonista feminina, Ana, não dispõem de características inatas que os predisponham para o heroísmo e para o recurso a quaisquer artes mágicas, mas isso não os impede de lutar ativamente pela ordem universal. No final, aliás, regressam à sua situação de pessoas comuns no mundo de todos os dias, embora se deva dizer que eles não veem já esse mundo trivial do mesmo modo. A aventura uniu-os e fê-los descobrir o amor, e, por isso, de regresso ao “velho mundo” (*Ilha* 221) exatamente na noite de S. João, “Deram as mãos e misturaram-se na multidão” (*Ilha* 223). O amor é um dos grandes temas da literatura de Álvaro Magalhães porque é uma das grandes questões humanas. Muito em especial, é uma das vivências mais intensas dos leitores preferenciais dos romances de Álvaro Magalhães, que tem sublinhado muitas vezes a ideia de que “A literatura serve sobretudo, se é que serve para alguma coisa, para lidarmos com o desconhecido: o amor e a morte. Na minha obra infanto-juvenil, se a analisarmos, a maioria das histórias são de amor ou de amor e morte” (*Entrevista* 15). O tratamento do tema, que n’*A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* começa a ser delineado logo no início com o encontro abrupto entre Rui e Ana, permite estabelecer imediatamente uma cumplicidade segura entre o texto e o leitor.

Romance da forma *fantasy*, *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* articula vários mundos em que entram humanos de várias épocas e “criaturas” (*Ilha* 56). Estes seres não humanos, a “gente boa” (*Ilha* 56) (duendes, elfos...), foram injustamente banidos da Terra e

descobriram a Ilha do Chifre, a que também chegariam pacíficos “navegadores da Ibéria” que se perderam “num nó do espaço” (*Ilha* 56), mas nem aí puderam viver em paz. À Ilha aportou também, cerca de mil anos mais tarde, “Ildemiro Mil, o chefe de um clã poderoso que dominava a costa ocidental da Península Ibérica” (*Ilha* 57). Mil, como ficou a ser conhecido, e os homens e mulheres que o acompanhavam viram-se obrigados a ficar na Ilha. “E não era caso para menos”, porque aí estava “o secreto coração de vários mundos – uma pedra sagrada” (*Ilha* 56), a “Pedra da Vida” (*Ilha* 74), “um centro transformador de energia, que acumula, trata e irradia as energias cósmicas e controla as tempestades solares” (*Ilha* 73).

A nova ordem que esta “raça guerreira” (*Ilha* 59) vem impor é em tudo contrária à ordem da Natureza e à igualdade entre todos os seres, vivos e não vivos; os humanos, os «“Filhos de Anu”» (*Ilha* 59), que viviam em equilíbrio com o meio ambiente e com as “criaturas”, são obrigados a refugiar-se “na ponta mais estreita da ilha e aí ficaram, proibidos de se deslocarem para as outras zonas” (*Ilha* 59). Puderam permanecer aí porque os Mil sabiam que sem o oxigénio da “Ponta Verde” (*Ilha* 59) não poderiam sobreviver. É contra esta desordem, e em nome da ecotopia que os Mil destruíram, que Rui e Ana colaboram com a “gente boa” e se envolvem em acontecimentos desconcertantes e imprevistos. A intriga é complexa, mas o leitor pode acompanhá-la com relativa facilidade. O essencial da ação e de todos os antecedentes que a motivam vai sendo retomado com naturalidade no discurso do narrador e nas falas das personagens.

A distopia que os Mil trouxeram à Ilha, com a exploração de ouro, o extermínio de muitas formas de vida e a redução das “criaturas” a escravos, a «dependentes do pó de “ouro”» (*Ilha* 58) e a refugiados, remete, obviamente, para os problemas ecológicos, de consciência ambiental e de poder que o mundo enfrenta. No final, a ecotopia das “criaturas” é-lhes devolvida, e os políticos do “Partido dos Imbecis” (*Ilha* 95), que são derrotados, deixam de poder continuar a seduzir partidários para a vida materialista que os levou a transformar a Ilha do Chifre em Ilha do Chifre de Ouro; e também “a malta da seita do Chifre de Ouro” deixa de corromper as criaturas que viviam do outro lado da cidade, que desaparece (o refúgio das “criaturas” nasceu junto à estátua, encontrada por acaso, do Rei D. Pedro IV da Avenida dos Aliados, na cidade do Porto).

Tal como muitos outros livros que “apostam na capacidade dos jovens em criar uma nova sociedade” (Fragoso 110), *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* vem alertar para problemas ideológicos, políticos e ecológicos à escala mundial que põem em causa a vida na Terra. Neste romance de Álvaro Magalhães e noutros de autores ocidentais (e não só), o recurso a temas e motivos utópicos e distópicos visa a “transformative purpose: that is, they propose or imply new social and political arrangements by imagining transformed world orders” (Bradford et al. 6). Os temas da justiça e do direito emergem no livro como temas transversais, e a partir deles colocam-se outras questões como a do poder, da autoridade e da violência, do justo e do injusto, da lei e da legalidade, da política e do Estado. A atenção a estes tópicos e problemas variará de leitor para leitor, em função da

preparação de cada um e da leitura individual ou em sala de aula, ou em casa com a participação de algum adulto; mas a mensagem apreendida por todos será sensivelmente a mesma, mais ou menos marcada pelo princípio de que “Ainda não existe democracia digna desse nome. A democracia está por vir: por engendrar ou por regenerar” (Derrida 108): a necessidade de construção de comunidades que se regulam por uma democracia verdadeiramente participada e por modos de vida ecologicamente sustentáveis.

Manifestação da *fantasy* que hoje continua a seduzir e a conquistar leitores de todas as idades, *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* não trata apenas de luta pela liberdade individual e coletiva, de consciência ecológica (e política), e, indiretamente, de apologia da literatura. Faz parte da efabulação a defesa das histórias e do imaginário que elas encerram, difundem e as alimenta, num ciclo que não deve ser parado. Reside aqui a grande novidade do livro, que retoma um dos grandes temas de toda a obra de Álvaro Magalhães. O “Tratado da Lembrança” (*Ilha* 55-56), que os seres humanos haviam assinado quando as criaturas foram obrigadas a sair da Terra, e em que se comprometiam a lembrar-se delas em “histórias”, “canções” e até em “orações” (*Ilha* 56), deixou de ser cumprido, e isso teve implicações dramáticas para a “gente boa”. Afastados da Ilha pelos implacáveis e perversos Mil, as criaturas quiseram voltar à Terra, «mas encontraram as portas fechadas, porque os homens já os tinham esquecido há muito tempo, apesar do “Tratado da Lembrança”. A primeira criatura que tentou desfez-se em fumo e a segunda também. E a terceira. A partir daí, ninguém mais experimentou” (*Ilha* 59). Se não tivessem descoberto por acaso como “fundar um novo reino, onde nada havia”, ficariam “ali, amontoados, condenados a uma morte certa” (*Ilha* 60), e perder-se-iam a ética e a estética que as suas histórias contêm. Privados de memória cultural, os humanos ver-se-iam presos numa anti-utopia que negaria a possibilidade, tipicamente humana, de construção de um mundo melhor fundado na ideia de utopia (Bradford et al. 108).

O Último Grimm é, como *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro*, um romance misto protagonizado por personagens juvenis e por seres do maravilhoso, com uma ação empolgante que envolve muito mais do que mistérios e aventuras em que o mal é vencido. Inscrevendo na efabulação os Irmãos Grimm, que surgem não como personagens mas como figuras que fazem parte da ascendência das personagens principais William (a mais saliente) e Peter, Álvaro Magalhães retoma e prolonga o tema do lugar e dos significados da literatura na vida de cada pessoa e da comunidade (tema que acompanha toda a sua obra, em verso e em prosa).

Neste livro, que é o segundo mais extenso de toda a ficção romanesca de Álvaro Magalhães (mais de três centenas e meia de páginas), não faltam os outros temas que o autor tem explorado de livro para livro sempre com variações, mas é à volta da valorização do literário que a intriga se desenvolve. Os contos maravilhosos, ou as “histórias”, que “ganharam vida” no “Outro Lado” e são “Outra realidade” (*Último* 215), constituem a matriz temática e estrutural de onde nasce *O Último Grimm*, que, mais uma vez, une de modo muito inventivo aspectos do fantástico (espíritos...) e da *fantasy*

(personagens, objetos e situações do maravilhoso), do romance de aventuras e do romance policial ou de detetives.

A questão dos significados e das funções literatura, que tem ocupado escritores, críticos e teóricos da literatura de todas as épocas, é, como se sabe, complexa. Muitos autores trataram já este tema em livros dirigidos à infância e à juventude, mas nunca com a originalidade e a amplitude de *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* e, muito em particular, *O Último Grimm*, que também não incorre em monotonia ou na defesa inconsequente do valor da literatura. O leitor, que rapidamente se envolve no mundo ficcional deste romance, percebe desde o início que o grande desígnio de William, que vai ao “Outro Lado”, e do seu irmão Peter, que fica do lado de cá, é salvar “O Povo das Histórias” (*Último* 209) de quem o quer destruir e, a partir da “caixa da magia negra” (*Último* 105), impor uma nova era de medo e terror. O leitor também interioriza que proteger as “criaturas” (*Último* 43), das fadas, dos duendes e dos ogres às personagens dos contos dos Grimm como o Gato das Botas ou a outras não menos célebres como o Pinóquio, é salvar o mundo tal como o conhecemos. A reflexão dinâmica que várias passagens proporcionam torna o tema da palavra e do literário ainda mais sensível e apelativo:

– E então? – replicou o Gato. As palavras nasceram da magia, são sons mágicos anteriores à linguagem, têm poderes. Não foram elas que te guiaram na passagem: as palavras esquecidas, as palavras de ida e de volta, a Palavra Misteriosa? (*Último* 215)

Depois, abriu a primeira página do Livro em Branco, que estava agora a abarrotar de histórias, todas escritas à mão, numa letra miúda e certinha. Histórias e mais histórias, incluindo a história dele. Estavam cruzadas, misturadas, e competia-lhe depois a ele escolher as que mereciam ser contadas. (*Último* 331)

A memória das histórias como “foundational to community” (Bradford et al., 2008: 108) é um dos grandes temas de *O Último Grimm*, como se percebe bem nas transcrições que acabámos de fazer, e também, como vimos, de *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro*. Da memória depende a existência da utopia da ordem, da estabilidade e do progresso do grupo e de cada um dos seus membros. Sem as “palavras esquecidas, as palavras de ida e de volta, a Palavra Misteriosa” (*Último* 215), sem a memória cultural, histórica e afetiva que o guiou, William não teria podido tomar as opções corretas. O pensamento utópico de Álvaro Magalhães consubstancia-se em narrativas de ideias fortes e apelativas que, como qualquer boa utopia, influenciam as práticas culturais, económicas e políticas (Bradford et al. 2). Os espaços de liberdade que se geram no final destes romances vêm corrigir os elementos distópicos que pareciam querer impor-se como definitivos nos mundos representados. Transmitir ou redesenhar valores de identidade e pertença a uma comunidade, colocar ou reformular ideias sobre poder e democracia, liberdades individuais e coletivas, natureza e cultura, tecnologia e ecologia são objetivos plenamente conseguidos nestes livros porque há uma boa articulação entre temas,

motivos, modos de expressão e procedimentos narrativos distópicos e utópicos. Da distopia do desastre e da quase destruição do mundo transita-se para um mundo mais equilibrado e para a utopia de um mundo renovado.

A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro e *O Último Grimm* (e muitos dos títulos do “Triângulo Jota”) reclamam, como se vê, múltiplas abordagens teóricas e críticas. As perspectivas da ecocrítica são imprescindíveis, uma vez que este método crítico, que é também um discurso ético, tem, desde o seu início, uma vocação interdisciplinar, a partir do que é a sua matriz: “study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” que “negotiates between the human and the nonhuman (Glotfelty xviii-xix), e que, se nos lembrarmos da acusação de Glotfelty, que em 1996 escrevia que os estudos ingleses se haviam tornado “scholarly to the point of being unaware of the outside world” (xvi), também pretende libertar os estudos literários e culturais do seu fechamento ao mundo.

Os romances de Álvaro Magalhães *A Ilha do Chifre de Ouro* e *O Último Grimm*, porque fornecem uma compreensão muito alargada e profunda de como o ser humano e as sociedades se relacionam entre si e os mundos naturais, tornam-se “part of a larger ecological literacy” (Dobrin 234). A expressão “ecological literacy” “refers to a conscious awareness and understanding of the relationships among people, other organisms, and the environments in which they live” (Dobrin 233), e está sobretudo associada ao livro de David Orr *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World* (1992). Neste trabalho, o autor defende muito claramente que “all education is environmental education” (90), mas também que “most education now presents environment and nature as resources for people, as products for consumers, as things we as humans act upon rather than within” (233). Daí termos procurado mostrar, no nosso comentário, em que termos estes livros de Álvaro Magalhães são “ecocritical” (Dobrin 233), e em que medida têm subjacente uma motivação de literacia ecológica. Sem fundamentalismos e com (relativo) otimismo, estes romances imaginam um mundo assente em democracias efetivas e em modos de vida sustentáveis, sem escravos de qualquer tipo e sem refugiados de guerras ou de catástrofes ambientais; um mundo menos regido pelo antropocentrismo devorador dos mundos não-humanos, mais equilibrado no estabelecimento do diálogo entre a cultura e a natureza, e mais protegido pela “Grande Mãe”:

– A Grande Mãe não morre. Há-de estar sempre connosco. Só que agora não a vemos. Esta brisa suave é o hálito dela, esta beleza que nos rodeia é a beleza dela. A partir de agora podemos encontrá-la em todo o lado...

– Em todo o lado, onde?

– Nas sombras do bosque, num recanto escuro da cabana, no murmúrio das ondas, na música dos pássaros, no jorro das fontes, no desabrochar da anêmona-dos-bosques, na luz, no calor do fogo... (*Ilha* 191).

O Rapaz dos Sapatos Prateados aproxima-se e ao mesmo tempo distingue-se radicalmente dos outros romances de Álvaro Magalhães. A primeira grande diferença, imediatamente visível, tem implicações em todo o livro, e vai levar o leitor a colocar desde o início a hipótese de estar perante um texto heterodoxo e mesmo panfletário que narra a vida do escritor empírico Álvaro Magalhães. A enunciação narrativa é assumida por um eu personagem principal que recua até à idade em que tomou consciência de si e do que o rodeava, e que nos dá conta da importância que as palavras sempre assumiram na sua vida:

Tinha 6 anos quando percebi que o mundo não rimava comigo e experimentei a dolorosa solidão dos diferentes. Tudo, ou quase tudo, à minha volta me parecia estranho; a começar pela minha família.
Eu gostava de ler e tinha aprendido a ler e a escrever muito antes dos outros todos da minha sala. (*Rapaz* 7)

Este é um livro ousado e atrevido de um escritor que domina completamente a arte de escrever ficção para crianças, adolescentes e adultos, e que continua a não ter receio de tratar os leitores mais jovens com a seriedade que eles merecem. *O Rapaz dos Sapatos Prateados* é um romance em que, mais uma vez, as grandes questões existenciais constituem a matéria que dá solidez à linha narrativa, que está organizada de modo a poder acolher reflexões filosóficas circunstanciadas sem se distanciar daqueles leitores que, ou porque conhecem já outros livros do autor ou porque se deixam seduzir pelo título, pelos títulos dos capítulos ou pelo resumo da contracapa, esperam uma narrativa de aventuras.

Ao longo de grande parte do romance, Hugo, que quer ser poeta, faz uma pungente consideração sobre a sua vida e a sua família, e simultaneamente sobre a vida dos adultos em geral, ora em discurso narrativo, ora nos diálogos, em especial nos que desenvolve com o amigo Vasco e com o avô. É a realidade social e cultural portuguesa (e não só) que aqui se expõe, e é a partir deste quadro que se pede ao leitor o riso ou o sorriso cúmplices (leitor que até pode sentir-se implicado como alvo nas situações apresentadas). O título do primeiro capítulo, “Entre os Grunhos”, é elucidativo de um registo humorístico que não abdica da denúncia satírica: “Foi então que percebi que vivia no meio de uma família de grunhos, num bairro, numa cidade, num país, num continente, num mundo infestado por grunhos. Não havia saída. E eu ainda a começar a minha vida” (*Rapaz* 15).

Exímio na sátira e no humor, Hugo é também um mestre da expressão delicada e poética, como se vê nos momentos em que ele fala sobre a sua dedicação à poesia e às palavras ou sobre a infância e a velhice (a propósito do avô). Mas Hugo não é simplesmente um desalinhado egotista incapaz de se integrar numa família que não o compreende. Os episódios misteriosos do encontro na rua com o avô, que havia morrido há pouco, e da conversa, dentro do “comboio do futuro” (*Rapaz* 176), com

“um homem que aparentava ter por volta dos 80 anos” (*Rapaz* 177-178), constituem uma aprendizagem e pacificam-no. Álvaro Magalhães recorre de novo à fusão entre realidade e fantasia, ou, segundo a personagem, realidade e “sonho” (*Rapaz* 188). O homem, um poeta, que Hugo conhece no comboio, e que estabelece com ele uma conversa de grande profundidade e intensidade filosófica e lírica, é Hugo no futuro; é consigo próprio, como se tivesse vivido uma longa vida, que ele dialoga. Este procedimento de escrita permite que Hugo construa a sua identidade dentro de uma alteridade contínua, e vai também sugerir ao leitor que olhe à sua volta e se autoanalise:

- E ele [o pai de Hugo] continuou a não gostar de poesia?
- Gostava de mim. Era suficiente. E sabes o que te digo? Trocava todos os meus livros e poemas pelo calor de um abraço da minha mãe ou por um domingo de manhã de pesca com o meu pai. Acho que nunca cheguei a dizer-lhes o quanto gostava deles. Agora, estou sempre a dizer isso na esperança de que a alma deles ainda ande por aí e o ouça. (*Rapaz* 182-183)

Neste encontro, em que Hugo fica a saber que a avó, com quem ele tem semelhanças físicas, escrevia poesia, surge uma meditação de grande alcance sobre a criação poética e os seus mistérios, e, mais especificamente, sobre a qualidade, antes de mais, autorreferencial e estética de um certo tipo de poesia (sóbria, económica e despojada como a de Álvaro Magalhães):

- Está a escrever um livro novo? – perguntei, para o acordar daquele torpor.
- (...)
- Não. Acho que encontrei a Palavra Silenciosa.
- O que é isso? – perguntei.
- É um silêncio que só se pode ouvir através das palavras.
- Um silêncio que se podia ouvir? Através das palavras? Seria ela mesmo, a Poesia? Seria? (*Rapaz* 186)

O *Rapaz dos Sapatos Prateados* é o romance de Álvaro Magalhães mais difícil de classificar em termos de subgénero. Nele cruzam-se aspectos dos romances realista (inscrição num quotidiano facilmente reconhecível), lírico (presença de uma subjectividade que procura responder a sentimentos, emoções e inquietações), fantástico (Hugo vê a alma da mulher assassinada), de aventuras e detetives (há o desaparecimento de um gato e um crime), de amor e *fantasy*. No final, Hugo vai poder voar como o Rapaz dos Sapatos Prateados, o duplo que ele criara como personagem de ficção, no seu jogo de superação da realidade através do imaginário. Com uns “sapatos antigravidade” (*Rapaz* 200) que lhe apareceram misteriosamente no armário, e prescindindo da “máscara prateada”

(*Rapaç* 200), Hugo dirige-se com Zoé para o “País das Crianças Felizes” (*Rapaç* 201). No final, no que é “Uma realidade, outra realidade, sem uma única sombra” (*Rapaç* 201), as personagens transcendem-se e transcendem a realidade comum, e Álvaro Magalhães confirma a sua vocação para projetos literários ambiciosos e inesperados. Um romance que parecia orientar-se exclusivamente para a representação da desilusão e da perda de uma personagem de ressonância autobiográfica vai incluindo elementos supostamente inconciliáveis, e culmina num final imprevisto, que sugere que compete a cada um de nós conquistar o seu espaço de fantasia e liberdade.

Neste desfecho converge todo o imaginário de Álvaro Magalhães, a sua dedicação aos temas da infância e da juventude, a sua crença nas capacidades e nas virtudes da ficção, e, mais uma vez, a sua apologia do amor. Hugo e Zoé confirmam a definição que Robert J. Sternberg nos dá de amor e do enriquecimento espiritual que este sentimento implica, “o sentimento de que se encontrou a pessoa que é verdadeiramente certa para nós; o sentimento de que, de certa maneira, renascemos; o sentimento de que as coisas materiais já não nos interessam tanto; o sentimento de querer partilhar tudo com o amado” (21):

- E para onde vamos?
- Para o País das Crianças Felizes, onde podemos provar a doçura de todas as coisas.
- Qual é o caminho?
- Achas que o vento sabe?
- Talvez.

Toquei no atacador do lado direito com a ponta do outro sapato para desligar a propulsão e deixei que o vento nos levasse através do ar fresco da manhã, sobre ruas, casas, escolas, prados, herdades, autoestradas, lagos, rios, vales e montes. Foi então que percebi que as duas linhas da nossa vida estavam tão naturalmente entrelaçadas que eram uma linha só. (*Rapaç* 202)

Ao narrar uma vida que tem muito da sua vida, ao apresentar-se-nos numa autobiografia romanceada, Álvaro Magalhães procura estabelecer o seu “point d’équilibre” e passar da “conscience de soi” para a “connaissance de soi”, segundo a definição que Georges Gusdorf propõe nas suas reflexões sobre a autobiografia (VII-VIII). Há uma relação estreita entre a “conscience de soi” e a “connaissance de soi”, mas estes dois níveis são diferentes em termos de atividade metafísica e ontológica. A “connaissance de soi” transcende a “conscience de soi”; é “mémoire de mon être propre, plutôt que de mon activité passée (...) présence de moi à moi même qui me permet en même temps de m’assumer moi-même, de me mettre en ouvre” (Gusdorf VII). Neste processo de conhecimento de si, Hugo-Álvaro Magalhães reconstitui e procura decifrar a sua vida, apresentando-no-la como uma história que se nos impõe como uma vida empírica mas

também como muito mais do que essa vida, porque vem a ser a representação literária de uma vida. John Sturrock resume muito bem este processo, a que chama “process of conversion”, dizendo que “A human life can be brought to display a meaning only on condition of being turned into a story” (20). Recuperando o que o seu passado tem de mais significativo em termos afetivos e psicológicos, mais até do que em termos especificamente factuais, e dando-lhe uma ordem, o autor-personagem pensa sobre a sua biografia e a vida em geral, filosofa, aproximando-se de filósofos como Martin Heidegger. No capítulo 8, “Porque dá tanto trabalho ser feliz?”, Hugo mostra que a relação dos adultos com a vida é demasiado afetada por sentimentos de preocupação, angústia e complexo de culpa, e, como Heidegger, defende que cada pessoa só poderá atingir o seu verdadeiro “eu” se for capaz de se libertar da sua condição quotidiana:

Quando estamos sós, em casa, sem afazeres ou horários, fazemos descobertas surpreendentes. Uma delas é que, ao contrário do que os adultos estão sempre a dizer, há imenso tempo. Eles é que, na ânsia de poupar tempo, acabam por o perder e não chegam a gastá-lo (pelo menos, da melhor maneira).

A minha mãe, por exemplo, comprou um aspirador, uma máquina para lavar a roupa, um micro-ondas e todas essas maravilhas da poupança de tempo. Antes disso, ela varria a casa com uma vassoura, lavava a roupa à mão num tanque de plástico e aquecia a comida no fogão a gás, tudo coisas que demoravam o seu tempo.

Agora, com as suas belas máquinas, despacha tudo em poucos minutos. É uma poupança de tempo enorme, isso é. Mas eu pergunto: Para onde foi esse tempo, se ela tem cada vez menos tempo e anda sempre a correr? (*Rapaz* 61-62)

Ao mesmo tempo, não custa perceber que há também semelhanças entre o pensamento de Hugo e tradição filosófica taoísta, relativamente à qual Álvaro Magalhães já se referiu com admiração em algumas das suas intervenções (procurar o *Tao* significa buscar o caminho, visto como princípio de ordem universal, imanente à Natureza). Hugo nota que somos cada vez menos naturais e espontâneos, e tendemos a não saber encontrar um caminho de libertação: “Como só trabalham, estes Ocupadinhos da Silva são criaturas cinzentas, enfadonhas e neuróticas. E, se continuarem assim, também são criaturas enfadonhas, neuróticas e mortas. Ora, tudo isto é contra a ordem natural das coisas e impede que as pessoas se sintam serenamente felizes (*Rapaz* 63).

Para concluir, subscrevemos as palavras de Jalyn M. García, que nos lembra muito claramente que todos necessitamos de histórias e de heróis exemplares, e da imaginação e da inteligência, da sensibilidade e do conhecimento que a boa ficção (dita) juvenil como a de Álvaro Magalhães nos fornece a todos, crianças, jovens e adultos:

My hope remains that there will always exist stories of heroes, but a cadre of heroes placing value on the many facets of the psyche and the voices of the community. Further, my great hope is that as more stories of poly-heroes fill our future, we continue to move forward across the bridge of consciousness and that our path leads us further downward toward the earth. (271)

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Hagiographic Reformulation, Distinction and Symbolic Capital in Francisco de Quevedo's *Epitome* of Saint Thomas of Villanova

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Abstract: In 1620 Francisco de Quevedo wrote a hagiography called *Epitome of St. Thomas of Villanova*. This work was supposed to summarize the life of the Augustinian friar Tomás de Villanueva (†1555), beatified in 1618 and canonized in 1658. The *Epitome* is printed between these two dates as part of the effort to convince the Roman Catholic Church of the holiness of a man who had been archbishop of Valencia and after whom Villanova University was named. Yet in Quevedo's hands the text might have become a tool to attack his enemies, to display symbolic capital and to stand out in political terms showing off his independence and his agenda for an ethical regeneration of the government. In light of theoretical models of Cultural Sociology derived from the works of Pierre Bourdieu, the *Epitome*, like other Quevedo's works, may have acted as a display of *distinction* and ostentation of symbolic capital within the fields of literature and political power.

Keywords: Quevedo, hagiography, Thomas of Villanova, symbolic capital

After seven years serving as Secretary of the Spanish Viceroy in Italy, Francisco de Quevedo returned to Spain in 1620. Because his prestige as a politician had now been added to his reputation as a writer, the Augustinians asked him to write a brief hagiography: the *Epitome* of Tomás de Villanueva. This work was intended to summarize the life of Tomás García Martínez (†1555), who had been renamed Tomás de Villanueva after the town in La Mancha where he grew up, Villanueva de los Infantes. Santo Tomás de Villanueva or Saint Thomas of Villanova was beatified in 1618 and canonized in 1658. The *Epitome* is printed between these two dates as part of the effort to convince the Roman Catholic Church of the holiness of a man who had also been archbishop of Valencia. Yet in Quevedo's hands the text might have become a tool to attack his enemies, to display symbolic capital and to stand out in political terms by showing his independence and his

¹ The essence of this work was presented at the 2011 *University of Kentucky Foreign Languages Conference*. All translations from Spanish are my own.

agenda for an ethical regeneration of the government. His serious public discourse in opposition to his burlesque texts, which had begun with *Heráclito cristiano* (1613) and would open the path for him towards his future role in the national government, is here reinforced. In light of theoretical models of Cultural Sociology derived from the works of Pierre Bourdieu, the *Epitome*, like other Quevedo's works, may have acted as a display of *distinction* and ostentation of symbolic capital within the fields of literature and political power.²

This essay articulates several small pieces: a brief context of the textual reception of the *Epitome* and the political connections between Quevedo and Tomás; a reformulation of pagan classical topics into new Christian ones that serve to display symbolic capital within the literary field; and Quevedo's *distinction* as a way of flaunting his symbolic independence within the political field —with the treatment of *alumbrados* and especially the assistance to the poor. The first element discloses some links between the hagiographer and the saint; the second defines the rhetorical updating of classical content as humanistic reformulation; and the third displays his obsession for showing off political independence —hence he dares to offer his own Spanish translations of the Bible (forbidden by the Inquisition in 1559), and he deploys a strong attack against the ruling classes. My goal is to demonstrate that the social and political issues that lie beneath the *Epitome* emphasize how those characteristics of *distinction* that were already present in *Heráclito cristiano* survive and are enhanced in this later work.

Although today Saint Thomas of Villanova is not very well-known, between 1550 and 1900 he was a very popular saint. In Colombia a town was named in his honor, and the *Universidad de Santo Tomás de Villanueva* was founded in Havana, Cuba — which later became the University of Saint Thomas in Florida. Churches were built in his name in Castellón and Ávila, and the Church of *Santo Thomas de Vallanueva* [sic] in the Philippines ranks today as a World Heritage site. His most significant contribution in the Americas was that he sent the first Spanish teachers to the New World, and he inspired the birth of Villanova University in Pennsylvania. Villanova was the Latin spelling of Villanueva, and that is how he signed his letters: Fray Thomas de Villanova. Therefore, in spite of his current invisibility, he was a very influential character for more than three centuries. It seems significant that Quevedo was willing to celebrate this saint, for there were several characteristics of Tomás that might have deeply appealed to him and that he would have happily been associated with: his “apostolic freedom” (Quevedo's ironic phrasing for independence), his political responsibilities under the Emperor Charles, his attacks against the *alumbrados*, and his courage when dealing with the powerful.

If we look at Quevedo's work from a commercial perspective, the *Epitome* enjoyed great success. Initially 1,200 copies were printed; a second printing followed in

² The use of these concepts is here employed as stated in several of Pierre Bourdieu's works such as *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. For a general study on Quevedo and Symbolic Capital, see Carlos Gutiérrez, *La espada, el rayo y la pluma*.

1627. It competed in the publishing market with the *Libro de Santo Tomás* by the *converso* theologian Miguel Salón. Later on, Salón's work became the biographical text of reference for the Augustinian. The *Libro* was reprinted four times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in 1925 for the last time. After that, Salón completely disappeared from the market and Quevedo triumphed again; his work was published in 1955 and in 2006, in a commented edition by Rafael Lazcano.³ In the last years a critical edition has been finally published by Carmen Peraita.⁴ In 2007 Villanova University paid homage to this hagiography of their patron and announced it with these words:

Our Library celebrated Hispanic Cultural Heritage with presentations on the *Epitome*, a short biography of St. Thomas written by the seventeenth century humanist Francisco de Quevedo. Quevedo was well-known in the humanist circles of Europe, thanks to his widely circulated works. Printed in octavo format, the *Epitome*, pocket-sized and relatively inexpensive, became a favorite of contemporary readers. Of the 1,200 printed copies only three survive to this day.⁵

Quevedo's affinity for Tomás is undeniable. He praised him and quoted him in many works, suggesting intersections in their lives, actions and opinions: he called him *santo español y buen español*. Santiago Fernández Mosquera believes that Quevedo "utiliza sus sermones, con los que coincide ideológicamente" (25). Many critics have commented upon the biographic reflection between Quevedo and his works on the lives of heroes or saints. Riandiere La Roche defined this as "effet d'autobiographie" (78). Henry Ettinghausen says that Quevedo was "infected" by the virtues of the saints and heroes he wrote about (234). This characteristic is common to the rest of Quevedo's religious works. It is plainly evident that *La constancia y paciencia del Santo Job* includes many deliberate parallels between the situation of the Biblical Job and that of Quevedo, who was imprisoned while he wrote it. This shows that his personal interests modify the nature of both the hagiographic text and the genre. Similarly, he makes his own personal use of his hagiography on Paul the Apostle, *La caída para levantarse*. The Italian editor of this work, Valentina Nider, reproaches Quevedo for using this material for "propaganda política" (62). This auto-biographical insinuation is especially significant when Quevedo directly addresses Paul:

Since you are enjoying the reward for your divine merits in heaven, turn your eyes back to me, your devotee, who four years ago, in prison and

³ This edition by Rafael Lazcano is the one quoted through this article. For a comparison between Quevedo's and Salón's works, see Carmen Peraita, "Reescrituras hagiográficas".

⁴ See Peraita, *Gobernar la república interior*. It is the first edition with an organized study on historical context.

⁵ *News from Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University*. Winter 2007.

chains, began to write of your imprisonment and martyrdom, for your glory and consolation. (O.C. 1533)

Quevedo's last hagiography, *Father Mastrili*, was never finished. While imprisoned, he started to write it for the Jesuits who had educated him as a child, and to whom he looked for support in the most desperate moment of his life. In all these religious works, according to Fernández Mosquera,

Quevedo equipara siempre que puede su voz con personajes de gran nobleza moral o de probada e indiscutible ejemplaridad. Y ésta es una de las modificaciones esenciales que Quevedo inflige al género hagiográfico: el aprovechamiento personalizador de la vida ejemplar que relata. (32)

Since Quevedo identifies himself with (or takes advantage of) the exemplary life of saints, it seems legitimate to suspect that he accepts to write on Tomás because he feels some kind of affinity with him; it is important then to uncover what Tomás was associated with, for the general public around 1620. First, Tomás was a well-known enemy of *alumbrados*. Although recent scholarship has shown that the men and women called *alumbrados* were far from a homogeneous group in religious beliefs and practices, the skewed notion that they were frauds, sexual perverts, or hysterics, propagated in Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo's *History of the Spanish Heterodox* (1880), still persists.⁶ The extent and nature of the early *alumbrados*' contacts with specific Protestants remains a topic of debate. However, it is increasingly clear that they articulated the religious dissatisfaction that erupted all across Europe in the 1500s and gave birth to the Protestant Reformation. Despite differences among various groups, they shared a desire for a more affective, interior religiosity and a disregard for external rites and ceremonies. Some advocated access to the Bible in the vernacular translation and many practiced mental prayer. The danger these early sixteenth-century groups represented for the Spanish Inquisition was double: their apparent disregard for the meditation of the clergy and for the institutional church, and the fact that many of the *alumbrado* leaders were from Jewish-*converso* families. For some ecclesiastical authorities *alumbradismo* became a catch-all category for a variety of perceived dangers to the church.⁷ In the 1570s and again in the early seventeenth century, there were new outbreaks of *alumbradismo*, which were characterized by thaumaturgical enthusiasm and, in some cases, sexual libertinism. The common denominator between the early and later groups was the practice of

⁶ In this *History of heterodox groups in Spain*, Menéndez Pelayo called them “gavilla de facinerosos”, “brutos animales”, “ignorantes salvajes”, “de sórdido cinismo” (190).

⁷ For a study on how *alumbradismo* was used to attack *conversos*, Erasmus' admirers and reformers, see Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in 16th century Spain. The Alumbrados*.

mental prayer, which in turn was perceived by some church authorities as a presumptuous democratization of spirituality.

Tomás wrote and preached aggressively against *alumbrados*, especially in his work *Meditación y contemplación*, where he warns those who practice meditative or contemplative prayer about the errors they may fall into by the hand of the devil: “meditation has knocked many Catholics down, who have become perverts and heretics” (526). Quevedo was disgusted by the strongly popular, enthusiastic, lecherous, and miracle-worker character of the later *alumbrados*. This repugnance may well reflect the anti-popular religious sentiments of a lesser aristocrat like Quevedo, who desperately wanted to hold public office. Tomás’ sermons and *conciones* were considered to be perfect examples of neo-platonic homiletic art, which also were congenial to Quevedo’s philosophical affinity for neo-platonic, neo-stoic and anti-heretical orthodoxy.

Tomás was also very efficient in his responsibilities. Salón explains that when Tomás arrived in Valencia, the city was in turmoil: there were many divorces and widespread adultery, priests who lived with prostitutes, social riots, and *moriscos* acting openly as Muslims. Tomás reestablished order with efficiency, energy and eloquence, three virtues admired by Quevedo. Both men shared a love for books and a love for language. Both shouldered several political responsibilities: Tomás was prior in Burgos and Valladolid, General *Visitador*, prior of Andalusia, prior of Castile, confessor to the Emperor Charles, and educational authority to send the first Augustinian missionaries to the Americas, to teach Spanish and doctrine. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* calls him “Councilor of State”, especially for his role in advising both the Emperor and Prince Phillip on *moriscos*, problems with mass conversions, moral principles of society, legal jurisdictions of the Inquisition, and the pirates’ attacks against the coast of Valencia (696).

This love for language and eloquence made Tomás famous for convincing the Emperor to commute a death penalty (“the well-known case of Lord Lasso” (*Vida* 49) —Quevedo refers here to Pedro Laso de la Vega and the Revolt of the *Comuneros* of Castile against the Emperor Charles in 1521), as well as opposing obligatory religious conversions and preaching to large groups of *moriscos* in the recently occupied territories (mainly Granada, Almería and Southern Valencia) to accept voluntary Christian baptism. It is legitimate to cast doubt on the degree of the voluntary nature of the *morisco* conversions in an age where dialogue and tolerance were not common in the political landscape nor in the mental universe of the social agents, yet it is a fact that Tomás opposed violence and favored dialogue. It was usual to say that Tomás could even convince the stones (*hasta las piedras*, said the Emperor).

Finally, Tomás had moral courage. Quevedo praised his “apostolic freedom”: his capacity for rebellion, disguised under fear of God and the certainty of doing the right thing. That is why Tomás dared to offend many authorities, including the Emperor Charles, Phillip II, the Viceroy of Naples and several others. A good example of this freedom occurred after the English devastated the Balearic Islands, and the Viceroy of

Naples asked Tomás for 20,000 ducats from his church. Quevedo says: “our saint answered with *apostolic freedom* that God Our Lord had made him responsible for Valencia, not the islands” (62). The Viceroy became quite angry and threatened Tomás with telling the Emperor; according to Quevedo, this is what Tomás said to him: “I must warn His Excellency that I am still carrying with me the key of my cell in the monastery (he showed him the key), and every day I am more willing to return” (62).

Quevedo carries out a Christian reformulation of rhetorical topics from Classical Philosophy and Literature on three main subjects: human vanity, the inexorable passage of time, and the purpose of human writing.⁸ Vanity was a recurrent topic for the Greeks and Romans, who considered it a foolish desire to which death would put an end. Here is Quevedo’s description in the *Epitome*:

Those who try to extend their lives beyond their graves with statues, buildings and writing histories, or try to fool death with these witty works, will be twice as unfortunate, for they will face a second death, which quickly and secretly the diligence of days and the revenge of time will bring for them (33).⁹

This idea appears throughout the Christian tradition with several reformulations, as far as *Ecclesiastes* (“vanity of vanities, all is vanity”). Quevedo quotes the Bible by adding his own personal and forbidden translation: “*Ecclesiastes* uses these words: There are no memories of the first people, and there will be no memories of those still to come at the end of times; oblivion is the night of vanity, end and punishment of human madness” (33).

Moreover, time had been considered merciless by Classical authors. Quevedo points out that time wipes all empires away and that the memory of them is dim: if they are very recent, passion blurs objectivity; if they are very old, legitimate doubts arise about their authenticity. The Christian translation of this topic lies, according to Quevedo, in the New Testament: “the only memory that allows holy ambition is that one which the *Book of Life* gives to those who write their names on it” (34). This is a reference to the *Apocalypse* or Book of Revelation: “He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life” (Apocalypse 3:5).

On the purpose of human writing, Quevedo says that pretentious men hope everything which has been written down will achieve eternal memory. This relates to one of the conventions that, according to linguistic pragmatics, characterize literary

⁸ For a study on Quevedo’s engagement with classical rhetorical treatises, see Lia Schwartz-Lerner, “Re-creation of Satirical Patterns” (2010) on classical intertextuality, and Ariadna García-Bryce, *Transcending textuality* (2011), on politics as performance.

⁹ Quevedo puns here on two meanings of “diligencia”: effort (*diligencias ingeniosas*) and speed (*la diligencia de los días*).

texts: their atemporality or timelessness, which modifies the reception of all deictic references. An obvious example can be found in the verses of Quevedo's famous sonnet "Retired to the peace of this deserted place" (*Retirado en la paz de estos desiertos*), when he refers to his books by using this synesthesia: "I live in conversation with the deceased / and I listen with my eyes to the dead". Quevedo offers his Christian updating of this theme by affirming that the purpose of human writings must be moral exemplarity. This is a declaration of principles for the good hagiographer: "The intention of those who write lives of saints must be only for us who are alive, showing us, as a guide, habits and actions that can lead us on the right path. That way we help the saints to do good works even from their graves" (35).

It must be noted that for Quevedo miracles do not seem to be a priority. The little attention he pays to miracles relates this hagiography to the new models of sanctity that the Catholic Church in Rome was trying to promote. Quevedo had just arrived from Italy after seven years as a dynamic politician in that land, where he even served as an ambassador to Pope Paul V at the Holy See. In the new model of sanctity, which Quevedo will not miss the opportunity to underscore, it was said that an excessive love of miracles was not only counterproductive, but also showed a very poor faith, since true and sincere faith never requires any proof from God. Moreover, miracles were especially dear to the lower classes, and Quevedo was not fond of either of the two. He shows more respect for Tomás' superhuman capacity for austerity. One highlight in the *Epítome* is when a subordinate of Tomás commits some sins and, instead of punishing him, our saint decides to whip himself in front of the sinner, as having failed to guide him to the right path (62). Jodi Bilinkoff maintains that during this time the concept of male sanctity was modified, and Quevedo's view seems to join a new model of masculinity whose main features are self-control, ataraxia and neo-stoic austerity (172). By stressing Tomás' heroic virtues over his miracles, Quevedo makes references to the most recent trends emanating from Rome, and consequently he shows that his political and religious knowledge is *au courant*. Giulio Sodano says that the Council of Trent broke away from the medieval model of Christian saints because the Church wanted to replace the *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* with one, exclusive official voice (189). It was a way to fight Protestants and reformers, who considered the abundance of local patrons and saints a survival of polytheism. They prompted Rome to redefine canonization: the Council of Trent affirmed that Jesus was the only possible redeemer, and that saints were simple intermediaries. What Rome now wanted was a model of virtuous behavior that the faithful could imitate, or as Sodano affirms, the practice of heroic virtue became the condition for canonization (193). After Trent, the process of canonization became a more complex, bureaucratic legal operation, and the time this process took became much longer.

These changes in the new models of sanctity were known to Quevedo, as well as the new model of ideal bishops after Trent. Lutherans and Calvinists had shown extreme hostility against bishops, accusing them of being too worldly and unfit for their

pastoral duties. It is indeed a fact that for several centuries their duties had more to do with political and administrative responsibilities than with religious tasks. As Joseph Bergin states, “in the Holy Roman Empire the majority of bishops were also territorial princes, secular rather than religious” (30).

Reformists tried directly to suppress bishops in Trent, where the Spanish delegates, inspired especially by Tomás’ insistence, applied pressure to have bishops considered legally superior to priests in jurisdictional as well as in sacramental terms. The new model for bishops defined their duties as those of teaching, sanctifying and governing; praised the virtue of patience and discouraged overzealousness. It was also demanded that bishops go to college, as Tomás did, and study Theology and Law. Aristocrats were reluctant to embrace this idea, since they still identified university degrees with lower classes. In Ignacio Tellechea’s words, this new model was

caracterizado por el *onus* más que por el *honor*, y por funciones pastorales más que por la percepción de rentas. Reciben el refrendo conciliar y adquieren valor de norma o de compromiso colectivo, y al mismo tiempo están convalidados por ejemplos vivos de obispos empeñados en encarnar tal idea en su vida: fray Hernando de Talavera, el cardenal Cisneros, Santo Tomás de Villanueva, Giberti, Barozzi, fray Bartolomé dos Mártires, fray Bartolomé de Carranza. (220)

It is particularly interesting that the name of Tomás is included in a list of the ideal bishops for the Council of Trent, especially since he never attended the Council, and he died before it was finished. This is clear evidence that Tomás represented the perfect New Bishop for both the Church and Quevedo.

Furthermore, readers through the centuries have often admired Quevedo’s courage when dealing with rulers. He dared to address the king with bold words: “you kings are workers. Being king is hard work. Thrones make men sweat more than plowing fields” (O.C. 704). It is then no wonder that he admired Tomás, who in his sermons said things such as: “oh holy Church, *your guards are like locusts*: those who should feed the people are the ones who plunder the people with taxes” (Herrera 428). Tomás’ self-criticism could be very harsh indeed: “They do not seek out wise pastors today; they look for someone who can subjugate God’s people with power, rather than edify them” (Villanueva 117). And he knew no limits when bishops were to blame: “The devil said: ‘I want the souls’. The bishop answered: ‘I want no soul, I want the money’... Show me priests who are not interested in money, and I’ll stop talking this way” (118).

Quevedo shows admiration for the way Tomás refuses vanity and is indifferent to the powerful and the rich. In spite of that indifference (or maybe just *because* of that indifference) the powerful cannot but seek him out. He offends the Emperor twice, and in both cases not only goes he unpunished but increases the admiration that the most

powerful man on earth holds for him. As the Emperor travels to Valladolid to hear him preach, Tomás refuses to leave his room. Everybody is furious, but the Emperor says: “What shocks you all, teaches me a lesson, and I wish all priests were as free of vanity as Fray Tomás is” (50).

Both the Emperor and Phillip II insisted Tomás attend the Council of Trent, yet he refused in clever letters that seem to manipulate both monarchs. Between March and June, 1545, Tomás wrote five letters to both the Emperor Charles and to his son Prince Phillip (later Phillip II) in which he politely procrastinated his travel to Trent by inventing excuses (paperwork, health, distance) until the monarchs gave up. Then a new thread of five more letters started between 1545 and 1551: Tomás asked the kings to protect him from the criticism of other bishops who attacked him for not attending such important Council. In these letters he writes cunning sentences: “Your Highness knows that I wanted to go, but since eventually you told me not to go, you must defend me now from those who are attacking me for doing your Royal will” (Villanueva 593). Tomás was a seasoned, astute negotiator, who never really considered traveling to Italy and who, in this matter as in many others, ended up doing whatever he pleased.

On the other hand, Tomás was known as “father of the poor”. He created boarding schools for poor young men. For girls he provided dowries enabling them to be married with dignity. For the hungry, he created a soup kitchen in the bishop’s palace, and for the homeless he provided a place to sleep. In official pictures and in the *Epitome* he is traditionally portrayed as *el obispo limosnero* (“the alms-giver bishop”), with a bag in his hand, begging for alms for the poor. This epithet reflects Tomás’ humility, since bishops generally assigned to a servant (an almoner or *limosnero*) the task of soliciting and giving out alms.

The fact that in 1620 Quevedo insisted on the extraordinary virtue of Tomás’ obsession with alms implies more than today’s public would think. Giving money to beggars was not a random act of spontaneous compassion; it was the only substitute for our current systems of welfare and social programs. In Tomás’ time, the debate on models of assistance to the poor was heated. Throughout the Middle Ages this assistance had been an act of private charity, but a large part of Europe was starting to substitute that charity with public institutions. The social assistance to the poor had reached a deep spiritual transcendence that gave coherence to the whole medieval theocratic model. The Church had been building up this coherence upon a crucial text from the Gospel that refers to the Judgment Day: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat” (Mathew 25:35). This gratitude ends with the divine reward: “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mathew 25:40).

The religious transcendence of almsgiving lay in the fact that it was the most effective way to attain spiritual salvation, and that is why wills made by dying people in Europe during these centuries were packed with meticulously formulated legacies and donations. Even Quevedo himself states in his last will to whom each one of his shirts

and personal items should be donated, to an extreme that provokes perplexity in a modern reader. Maureen Flynn calculates that Madrid had a constant number of beggars at 30% of the total population, and many more in periods of crisis, such as in 1625 when the figure reached 50%. These terrifying numbers might have contributed to a transcendent view of the very existence of poverty, which for many of the faithful was not a problem that had to be solved but rather an essential part of life itself, paradoxically beneficial: a providential help sent by God to mankind in order to attain salvation. According to Flynn,

Poverty provided opportunity to exercise the virtues of resignation and humility to those who suffered, and compassion and charity to those who responded. It was considered a permanent, even a useful aspect of the human condition. The poor served as a medium for the wealthy to gain salvation, almost as significant as Mary and the saints in facilitating their entry into heaven. God made the poor to aid the rich, rather than the rich to aid the poor. (76)

It may seem odd to believe that God made poverty as a tool to help the rich, but that is just the concept that emerges when Tomás warns an assistant who was berating a beggar because he tried to eat kitchen soup twice: “that beggar who you think is fooling you, might be an angel from Heaven who has come here to test your charity and your patience” (Villanueva 71). That is not the only survival of the medieval spirit in Tomás and in Spain. After 1540 spontaneous charity was clearly not enough to mitigate poverty, and urban immigration from rural areas made many European cities centralize social assistance through secular authorities. The end of the Middle Ages marked the end of the integration of beggars into the normal order of things for many Europeans. Professional begging started to be seen as an undesirable activity due to a more positive attitude towards work, the loss of population due to the plagues, and the modern concept of increasing the wealth of nations. The idea was that healthy beggars had to start working.¹⁰ Even Quevedo allows such critics to speak up in the *Epitome*: “Someone warned Tomás that most were professional beggars, who in this condition became defiant vagrants” (67). The topic of debate in 1550 was then: private charity or state assistance? The philosopher Luis Vives claimed that poverty was no accident, but a consequence of bad government. The theologian Juan de Medina thought that healthy beggars had to work for the common good. Yet another theologian from the School of Salamanca, Domingo de Soto, defended the notion that begging was a human right and that it was not legitimate to limit people’s movements just because they were poor.

¹⁰ For a classic work on Picaresque Novel and poverty, see Javier Herrero, “Renaissance Poverty and Lazarillo’s family” (1979), where this change of perspective stems from an increased awareness of human misery, made visible by urban growth. Another relevant source can be found in Anne Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty* (1999), which examines the profound implications of poverty and social reform.

Northern Europe secularized social assistance without further discussion, probably because there was a powerful middle class that did not see the poor as a spiritual tool, but as a marginal group attached to crime and violence that had to be segregated from the population. In Spain, however, the opposite view survived, and people favored almsgiving. Maybe it was the Castilian repugnance for Government; as Soto said: “in the North, people are more inclined to common good, and respect the law more than we do” (120). The most important factor, though, could be the absence of a real middle class: for Michael Foucault, harshness toward the poor marked the triumph of the bourgeoisie and their capitalist dream of a world with apparent normality where all potentially dangerous or unwanted individuals such as homeless, sick, lazy, retarded or handicapped people were removed from contact with society. Certainly, promoting almsgiving instead of social assistance programs was an act of reinforcement of economic differences, and, at the same time, it stabilized the social structure of the ruling classes. As Flynn says,

In the same ironic manner in which the church’s incredibly high estimation of the ideal woman, the Virgin Mary, ignored the real status of women, the spiritual value attributed to the poor did not raise their position on earth. Ritual giving healed wounds in the social order, but in no way subverted that order. (78)

Quevedo advocates the system of indiscriminate distribution, offering as an example Tomás’ austerity and charity in a clear contrast to the squandering of kings and the wealthy. Yet the social status of saints and their families was not a comfortable issue. Peter Burke has said that most saints in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came from aristocratic families: “nobles had better chances of becoming saints than commoners” (49). Carmen Peraita, in her comparison of Salón’s and Quevedo’s works, points out that the first text by Salón says: “his parents were not of noble blood, but they were honest, clean farmers”. Salón’s second text, years later, changes this to: “his parents and grandparents were all important and honest folks, Old Christians, members of Military Orders and the Inquisition”. Finally, Quevedo says: “his parents were the most important *hidalgos* [noblemen of the lowest grade] of Villanueva, and they were relatives of the highest noble families of the region”. Both Quevedo and Salón seem determined to prove that Burke was right (“nobles had better chances”). This rise in the social scale may be seen as another sign of Quevedo’s anti-populism, for he always attacked social mobility and commoners’ efforts to attain prosperity. The social origin of saints is relevant because while biographies show more individual development, hagiographies expect that vocation identifies those chosen by God. In general, hagiographies since the Early Modern period promote models of masculinity that are different from violent archetypes, and therefore praise self-control instead of aggression, or chastity instead of sexual domination. But this self-control does not mean

lack of conflicts. A silent war takes place within the text between social classes, and that is why Sal6n and Quevedo are so concerned with Tom6s' social and economic origins.

On the other hand, while female hagiographies focus on concepts such as humility, simplicity, obedience and love, male hagiographies focus on charity. This is very accurate in our case, because although in Tom6s' life there is austerity and love, his obedience and humility are highly questionable, as we have seen in his exchanges with the Emperor and the Viceroy. This fact would have delighted Quevedo, who then might have used Tom6s' hagiography to criticize kings and bishops with devastating, brutal sincerity. The most recent biographer of Quevedo, Pablo Jauralde, maintains that our writer wanted to express his concerns about the ineptitude and corruption of both kings and prelates of the Church, and did so in very severe terms, using the passionate praise of Tom6s' poverty as a justification (414). Jauralde, like many of us, wondered how the powerful of this time must have read Quevedo's harsh words. He speaks with devastating sincerity in the *Epitome*: "being superior should not imply dignity, authority, rest or haste; but work and care to act so that you command by good example rather than by words" (46). Quevedo also compared our archbishop to the rest of prelates: "Tom6s, unlike others, was the treasurer of the wealth of the poor, not the owner" (57). And he went further: Tom6s says that "God entrusts me with His sheep, not with a palace" (59). And even further: "The church must support the poor, not the bishops" (81). And further still, up to a point where bishops had to feel uncomfortable: "His funeral was attended by more than eight thousand poor people who had been helped by him; the funerals of other bishops are usually attended by people ruined by them" (75). And, as if he had suddenly become aware of his own boldness, Quevedo writes: "I wonder how this will be read by those who spend the church's money" (62).

This final flaunting of *distinction* and political independence may have proved fatal for the politician and writer in the end. It is possible that in 1639, a few months before his sixtieth birthday, Quevedo found the answer to that question ("how this will be read by the powerful?") when, under secret accusations of high treason and connivance with the French, he was cruelly imprisoned in a cold, dark jail in Le6n. And it was then, sick and isolated, when Quevedo began to sign his letters from prison as "Fray Thomas of Villanova".

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El lugar heterotópico y la ética relacional en *Don Segundo Sombra* y *Pedro Páramo*

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Abstract: Este ensayo propone una lectura comparatista entre *Pedro Páramo* y *Don Segundo Sombra* a partir de los conceptos de la heterotopía (espacios que cuestionan al resto del espacio social) y la ética relacional (que sostiene los relatos que desarticulan la estabilidad del “yo”). A través del análisis textual, se explica además por qué las dos novelas deben formularse desde subjetividades y espacios “otros.” En sus consideraciones finales, este análisis establece que ambos textos consiguen narrativas que contradicen, mediante la compensación o la ilusión, la ficción identitaria de los discursos nacionales.

Keywords: Don Segundo Sombra, Pedro Páramo, heterotopía, relational ethic, uncanny

La literatura construye la historia de un mundo perdido. La novela no expresa a ninguna sociedad sino como negación y contrarrealidad. La literatura siempre es inactual, dice en otro lugar, a destiempo, la verdadera historia. En el fondo todas las novelas suceden en el futuro.

Ricardo Piglia, “Ficción y política en la literatura argentina”

Me interesa proponer un análisis comparatista que piense a *Don Segundo Sombra* de Ricardo Güiraldes y a *Pedro Páramo* de Juan Rulfo como textos que comparten algo más que una serie de imágenes vanguardistas. Al considerarlos a partir de la cita de Piglia, este análisis se hace posible. Ambos son textos difíciles de clasificar en cuanto a un contexto exacto, y también, a la línea literaria a la que pertenecen. Mientras la publicación de *Don Segundo Sombra* se dio en 1926 y su escritura alude a un momento impreciso en el siglo XIX, donde el trabajo del campo argentino aparece más o menos industrializado en distintas escenas; *Pedro Páramo* se publicó en 1955 y su narración refiere a la Revolución Mexicana, la guerra de los Cristeros y los inicios del proyecto de modernización del siglo

XX. En el caso de *Don Segundo Sombra*, su inexactitud contextual ha generado lecturas críticas imprescindibles que lo ubican, por ejemplo, dentro de la gauchesca (Ludmer) o las vanguardias (Beardsell). Por su parte, *Pedro Páramo* ha sido leída a contrapelo de la novela revolucionaria (Alba-Koch; Fenoglio Limón), como un integrante extraño del realismo mágico (Sánchez Salas) y una alegoría —algunas veces cercana a la épica (Fuentes) y otras, a la tragedia (Paz)— de la construcción de la nación bajo el proyecto revolucionario institucional.

Es por estas características que apuntan hacia la inexactitud que me gustaría leer *Don Segundo Sombra* y *Pedro Páramo* a partir del concepto de la heterotopía, lugar real e irreal a la vez, como lo explica Michel Foucault, que interpela y cuestiona al resto del espacio social (1575). En *Don Segundo Sombra*, la frontera es un lugar heterotópico, con una geografía intacta o “virgen,” donde a través de la tarea ganadera, es posible producir un espacio social pre-moderno que compense la relación moderna (y disfuncional) entre el cuerpo, el tiempo y el espacio. En *Pedro Páramo*, el pueblo de Comala es el lugar heterotópico de la muerte, desde donde se delata la ficción de la narrativa teleológica del progreso y del orden moderno. Aunque abundan las lecturas críticas sobre el tiempo y el espacio en *Pedro Páramo*, Filinich y Fiallega tienden a establecerse a partir de la narratología, es decir, un examen de las técnicas y los efectos textuales. Al optar por un análisis textual desde la heterotopía de Foucault, este ensayo busca vincular el estudio narratológico con los contextos que circundan los mundos literarios. Por lo tanto, propongo que, desde los lugares de la ruralía y de la muerte, ambas novelas devienen heterotopías literarias que, como lo reflexiona Piglia, dicen historias perdidas, narran desde la negación o la contrarrealidad, y así interpelan y cuestionan los procesos de construcción y afianzamiento de la modernidad.

Me parece además que los protagonistas en estos dos textos tan solo pueden acceder a los espacios heterotópicos a través del llamado o la invitación de sujetos fantasmales que sirven de guías. En *Don Segundo Sombra*, Fabio Cáceres nos narra las experiencias en la pampa que lo transforman de “guacho” en “gaucho-don” a través de la relación íntima con Don Segundo Sombra, “un fantasma, una sombra, algo que pasa y es más una idea que un ser” (17). Por su parte, en *Pedro Páramo*, Juan Preciado avanza en un viaje con la cabeza “llena de ruidos y voces” que lo acompañan desde “un más allá” hasta el lugar inexacto de Comala, “donde es esto y donde es aquello” (113). Estos sujetos o voces fantasmales pueden verse como ejemplos de lo siniestro o lo extrañamente familiar (lo “uncanny”), tal como Sigmund Freud denominó a las experiencias tenebrosas que nos regresan súbitamente a creencias o experiencias reprimidas (950). En este sentido, aquello que se ha dejado de lado, y aun se ha sacrificado, en el proyecto de la modernidad (la ruralía, los pequeños pueblos y las otredades indígenas y campesinas, por ejemplo) regresan para seducir al sujeto o “yo” que narra la historia (Fabio Cáceres o Juan Preciado) y hacerlo entrar al lugar heterotópico.

Tanto en *Don Segundo Sombra* como en *Pedro Páramo*, la seducción fantasmal y la entrada a la heterotopía tienen dos efectos fundamentales. En primer lugar, en las dos novelas se deshace la estabilidad del “yo” que inicia el relato y nos presentan, más bien, un “yo” relacional, es decir, un sujeto que necesita la interpelación de un “tú” (o múltiples “tú”) para acceder a una historia fragmentada, que nunca se da por completo. Concatenado a lo anterior, ambos textos delatan la artificialidad de los relatos y las identidades nacionales, así como del espacio social creado por el desarrollo moderno. Para comprender mejor estas ideas, propongo un análisis en tres secciones. En la primera, me dedico a explicar mejor los conceptos de heterotopía y de la ética del “yo” relacional, a partir de las ideas de Foucault y Adriana Cavarero. En las siguientes secciones, elaboro una lectura sobre los textos mediante esos dos conceptos y a través de un diálogo con la crítica más importante sobre *Don Segundo Sombra* y *Pedro Páramo*.

1. La heterotopía y la ética del “yo” relacional

En su ensayo “Des autres espaces,” Foucault distingue puntualmente entre los espacios de la utopía y la heterotopía. Mientras el primero nos refiere a lugares irreales que perfeccionan o desarticulan la sociedad tal como la conocemos, el segundo existe como lugar real e irreal a la vez que interpela y cuestiona al resto del espacio social (1574-1575). Para Foucault, las heterotopías se relacionan con el resto del espacio social en una de dos maneras. Pueden ser lugares de ilusión que subrayan a su vez lo ilusorio del espacio real: “un espace d’illusion qui dénonce comme plus illusoire encore tout l’espace réel, tous les emplacements à l’intérieur desquels la vie humaine est cloisonnée” (1580). Pero también pueden ser un espacio “otro” y perfecto que compensa las carencias del espacio real: “un autre espace, un autre espace réel, aussi méticuleux, aussi bien arrangé que le nôtre est désordonné, mal agencé et brouillon” (1580). Considero que la narrativa de *Don Segundo Sombra* construye el espacio de la frontera como una heterotopía de compensación, mientras que la Comala de *Pedro Páramo* es de ilusión.

Para comprender mejor cómo trabajan estos lugares que exponen o compensan, Foucault describe sistemáticamente una serie de principios. Ante todo, nos dice, todas las culturas construyen lugares heterotópicos, si bien cada sociedad puede darles significados y usos diferentes. Además, en una heterotopía pueden yuxtaponerse diversos espacios incompatibles, como el caso del jardín que une el adentro y el afuera (1577-1578). Por otra parte, una heterotopía se vincula a lo que Foucault llama una “heterocronía,” es decir, una brecha temporal que opera fuera del tiempo ordinario. En este sentido, una heterotopía funciona a plena capacidad cuando las personas salen de sus rutinas cotidianas o de sus tiempos regulares y entran en una especie de pausa. El tiempo en dicha pausa puede acumularse y extenderse, o por el contrario, puede ser que se escape y se signifique como transitorio o precario. Es interesante también que los lugares heterotópicos son abiertos y cerrados a la vez. Si bien pueden aparentar que tienen aperturas fáciles, siempre hay exclusiones escondidas. En general, sólo pueden

accederse por la fuerza o un evento inevitable, como a cárcel o el cementerio, o requieren un ritual de purificación, un permiso o el conocimiento de ciertos códigos, como los templos religiosos.

Tanto el espacio de la frontera como el pueblo de Comala pueden describirse a partir de estos principios. La frontera en *Don Segundo Sombra* es el espacio de la naturaleza, del ganado, de los indígenas y de los gauchos. Con la llegada de Fabio Cáceres, es también el lugar que acoge sujetos del afuera (el espacio de la modernidad), sus prácticas y formas de relacionarse. Por su parte, la Comala de *Pedro Páramo* es el lugar de la muerte, pero igualmente, cuando llega Juan Preciado al pueblo, es el lugar donde se vinculan la vida y la muerte. Además, en ambos lugares, el tiempo pareciera suspenderse. Cuando Fabio Cáceres y Juan Preciado llegan a estas heterotopías, suspenden sus rutinas cotidianas y entran en una brecha temporal donde el tiempo se acumula y se extiende, ya sea en esa planicie natural de la frontera o en la planicie de la muerte en Comala. Más aun, si bien ambos lugares parecieran abiertos y accesibles, de la única manera que Fabio Cáceres puede entrar en la frontera y Juan Preciado a Comala es a través de una invitación o un mandato. En los dos casos entonces el “yo” es interpelado por un “otro” que, a la vez, sirve de guía en cuanto a los códigos del lugar heterotópico.

En mi ensayo, me interesa particularmente explorar cómo la entrada al lugar de la heterotopía rompe con la concepción de un “yo” fijo, independiente e individual. En ambos textos, tanto el viaje como las “otredades” que guían al sujeto colaboran en una transformación del “yo.” Sobre esa transformación, la crítica ha desarrollado un número de lecturas muy provocadoras. En el caso de *Pedro Páramo*, por ejemplo, Chrystal Chemris se enfoca sobre el tropo del viaje de Juan Preciado a Comala y lo compara por antítesis con el desarrollo de la modernidad. En tanto, Jason Kemp Winfree se enfoca más en la ontología del ser, y para ello, utiliza el concepto del “Being,” siguiendo las ideas de Martin Heidegger. Por otro lado, Jytte Michelsen y Martín Camps han estudiado de maneras distintas cómo el viaje y el espacio de la naturaleza efectúan un cambio fundamental en la subjetividad de Fabio Cáceres. Sin embargo, al considerar el concepto de la heterotopía, mi lectura intenta no solo comprender el estrecho lazo entre el viaje, el lugar periférico y el “yo,” sino también como ya adelantaba en la introducción a este ensayo, colegir cómo la narrativa textual interrumpe la pretendida lógica del desarrollo moderno y de la construcción identitaria de un “yo” o un “nosotros” nacional.

Ahora bien, considero que solo a través de la ética relacional es que podemos comprender cómo la pretensión de un “yo” estable y autónomo es un relato que no se sostiene en ninguno de los dos textos, ni tampoco en las narrativas nacionales. Como lo explica Cavarero al examinar el texto autobiográfico y el sentido de la subjetividad relacional, el “sujeto narrable” (el que da cuenta de una historia o sobre el que se cuenta una historia) solo puede ser comprendido a partir de una ética relacional:

an ethic founded on the *altruistic* ontology of the human existent as finite. ... at the center of the narrative scene [there lies] a *who* which—far from enclosing herself within the pride of a self-referential ego meant to last forever—gathers the in-born matrix of an expositive and relational existence. She wants and gives, receives and offers, *here and now*, an unrepeatable story in the form of a tale. ... [This is] the necessary aspect of an identity which, from beginning to end, is intertwined with other lives—with reciprocal exposures and innumerable gazes—and needs the other's tale. (87-88)

Como ya decía en la introducción, los relatos de viaje y transformación de Juan Preciado y Fabio Cáceres tan solo pueden comprenderse a través de su relación con un “otro” que habita lugares periféricos, doblegados u olvidados por el orden del estado nacional moderno. Por lo tanto, en *Don Segundo Sombra* y *Pedro Páramo* las voces y las sombras de aquello que todavía cohabita incómodamente el espacio social creado por el proyecto de la modernidad—los muertos de guerras revolucionarias o de fronteras, las otredades indígenas y campesinas, la naturaleza y la provincia—regresan como lo siniestro a interpelar y cuestionar la pretendida estabilidad del “yo” protagónico, y metafóricamente, del “nosotros” nacional identitario. Es así que, tanto en la construcción literaria de las heterotopías de la frontera o de la muerte, como en la propuesta de una ética relacional entre el “yo” protagónico y el “otro” periférico, los textos literarios aquí analizados delatan el artificio ficcional del espacio social creado por el estado moderno. Me dedico ahora, en las siguientes dos partes de este ensayo, a analizar cómo cada una de las novelas efectúa dicha exposición.

2. Don Segundo Sombra o el “alma de horizonte” de Fabio Cáceres

Un puente hecho frontera abre la narración de *Don Segundo Sombra*: “el puente viejo tiende su arco sobre el río, uniendo las quintas al campo tranquilo” (11). Es interesante que este primer momento del texto refiera ya a ese discurso de la frontera que, según lo concebía Sarmiento en su *Facundo*, proponía un lugar de barbarie exterior y un lugar de civilización que debía expandirse hasta exterminar al “otro” completamente (264-265). Sin embargo, esta referencia vendrá a jugarse en una inversión, pues el pueblo, que caería según la frontera en el interior civilizado, es en *Don Segundo Sombra* “monotonía” y “encierro”, que no propone una educación cabal (11-12). En tanto, el “campo tranquilo,” aún desde la infancia del protagonista, aparecía como refugio —“había yo venido a esconderme bajo la sombra fresca de la piedra” (11)— y la promesa de algo nuevo, de “lo hermoso que sería irse” (15). Como se va viendo en el viaje que lleva a cabo el protagonista al lado de Don Segundo Sombra, además, el campo será el lugar que brindará una experiencia forjadora de carácter, y en ello

paradójicamente, los valores añorados por el proyecto educativo masculino de la modernidad letrada: la dureza física en las tareas con el ganado, la disposición constante para el trabajo en el campo y en la hacienda, el silencio reflexivo en todo momento, y si acaso hay que hablar, acudir a la parquedad, el desprendimiento material al estar dispuesto a rechazar la herencia, y el buen juicio al aceptarla de vuelta, porque había que centrar su “voluntad en los pequeños hechos” (135). De esta manera, el ideal moderno se desarrolla en el lugar heterotópico de la frontera, o el lugar asignado a la barbarie, y a partir de actividades relacionadas con un orden pre-moderno, es decir, con nociones distintas sobre las relaciones entre el cuerpo, el espacio y el tiempo.

Ante todo, en *Don Segundo Sombra* no hay escisión entre los dominios del cuerpo, el espacio y el tiempo. Desde antes de salir con el ganado, por ejemplo, los cuerpos y las vestimentas de los reseros están inscritos con el espacio y el tiempo que recorrerán:

Todos me parecían más grandes, más robustos, y en sus ojos se adivinaban los caminos del mañana. De peones de estancia habían pasado a ser hombres de pampa. Tenían alma de reseros, que es tener alma de horizonte. Sus ropas no eran las del día anterior; más rústica, más práctica, cada prenda de sus indumentarias decía los movimientos venideros. (43)

Ojos que saben del pasado atestiguan el futuro. Esta noción se refuerza con la aseveración de “alma de horizonte,” que viene a ser alma de un espacio y un tiempo eternos que se acumulan y extienden heterotópicamente. Es además, alma de un movimiento continuo y sin fin entre el “yo” de Fabio y el “tú” o “usted” de Don Segundo Sombra que guiará el relato hasta el final.

Es así que, en *Don Segundo Sombra*, Fabio Cáceres aprenderá los códigos de la heterotopía de la frontera a través de su cuerpo, en su experiencia del espacio y el tiempo de la pampa. Es en la pujanza con los animales, en el recibir las horas del sol sobre el cuerpo, en el aguantar la lluvia sobre la piel, como si fuera parte suya, y en el caminar a uno con la tierra que el narrador se transforma y se reconoce como rasero en la mirada del “otro”:

Un chico como de doce años se había sentado cerca mío y miraba mis espuelas, mis manos lastimadas en la jineteada, mi rostro cubierto por la tierra del arreo, con la misma admiración con que días antes observé yo a Valerio o a Don Segundo. Su ingenua prueba de curiosidad admirativa era mi boleta de resero. (53)

El proceso de transformación del “yo” protagónico tan solo puede darse gracias a la relación, primero, con la intimidad de Don Segundo Sombra, y luego, en el

reconocimiento de la mirada del chico. Más aun, hay un reconocerse a sí mismo en esa mirada, como un espejo que refleja el proceso de cambio del “yo.”

Para el aprendizaje del “yo,” “caminar, caminar, caminar” será el “ritmo contenido y voluntarioso” de la experiencia en la pampa (61). Este caminar hacia un horizonte siempre lejano, como si el territorio no conociera delimitación, retrata un paisaje inexistente en la Argentina del siglo XIX o del XX. La ruta ante la inmensidad de la tierra y el tiempo no se corta con alambrado, cultivos o ferrocarriles, métodos modernos de contención y producción del terreno y disminución del tiempo que ya existían para la fecha. Como lo observaron rápidamente los lectores críticos, incluso desde su misma publicación, más que la anacronía, en *Don Segundo Sombra* se percibe un lugar inexistente: “¿De qué ayer nos habla? ¿Cuántos lustros han pasado sobre esta pampa sin ferrocarriles, de estancias salvajes, de puestos enormemente distantes, pampa pastoril del gauchos de chiripá?” (Giusti 126). Sin embargo, es necesario considerar que las pocas referencias a esos elementos de la modernidad parecían quedar incorporados al paisaje intocado, como otras señales más de la geografía que se unen a la experiencia de esta temporalidad indefinida. Así, cuando el narrador describe el final de la primera gran lluvia que le tocó, comenta:

Los postes, los alambrados, los cardos lloraron de alegría. El cielo se hizo inmenso y la luz se calcó fuertemente sobre el llano. Los novillos parecían haber vestido ropas nuevas, como nuestros caballos, y nosotros mismos habíamos perdido las arrugas, creadas por el calor y la fatiga, para ostentar una piel tirante y lustrada. (61)

El tiempo de lluvia termina y el tiempo de sol comienza. Con este paso, unidos en un mismo espacio y un mismo tiempo, plantas, animales y hombres integran la experiencia. La prosopopeya de postes y alambres que “lloran de alegría” viene a integrar estos productos modernos en el orden pre-moderno que aquí se vive. De esta manera, si hay o no hay más alambrados o cultivos o ferrocarril, viene sobrando su mención, pues todo es una misma cosa con la naturaleza. El no lugar indefinido pasa a ser, sin importar cuántos elementos modernos pueda haber allí, una heterotopía y, justo allí, se consagra una contranarrativa al relato oficial de una modernidad nacional que divide la barbarie campesina (la frontera) de la civilización urbana.

En su excelente lectura de *Don Segundo Sombra*, Michelsen argumenta que esta narración se trata, más específicamente, de un viaje de identidad, que parte del pueblo y regresa al pueblo, donde el “guacho” se hará “gaucho” y, solo así, podrá ejercer como propietario: “Vuelve enriquecido y formado por sus experiencias de “mundo,” confirmado en la identidad que le es propia; vuelve por lo tanto en modo auténtico a sí mismo” (84). Pero, ¿qué significa ser “auténtico a sí mismo”? Vale la pena recordar que quien narra es ese “guacho” tornado “gaucho” tornado propietario o “don.” Dentro del

discurso de la memoria de Fabio Cáceres—discurso que guía el relato—, parecerían convivir nítidamente el gaucho y el propietario letrado. Incluso, la experiencia de la pampa, guiada por Don Segundo, se entreteje con el aprendizaje de los libros, de la mano de Raucho (un “don” tornado “gaucho,” es decir, el personaje parónimo de Fabio Cáceres).

Esta coincidencia de experiencias disímiles en una misma subjetividad, sin mayores conflictos que el deseo recio de volver a tomar camino, bien la analizó Josefina Ludmer al poner la novela *Don Segundo Sombra* en diálogo con el resto del género gauchesco. La voz del gaucho, Don Segundo, ha dado “el saber del trabajo y la prudencia... el alma y la vieja ley de la libertad y el valor del gaucho, *sin ley diferencial*” (262). Al unirse con el saber letrado de Raucho, y ya juntos los saberes, al producir el discurso de la novela, debe haber, sin embargo, una separación que ocurre con la partida de Don Segundo. Su partida pareciera desvincular a los dos gauchos que habitan la subjetividad de Fabio Cáceres: el gaucho del espacio heterotópico de la frontera y el “don gaucho” letrado del espacio social real del pueblo.

Sin embargo, antes de su partida, es Don Segundo quien debe bautizar como “gaucho” a Fabio, es decir, es ese “otro” fronterizo quien nombra e identifica o califica al “yo” del espacio moderno. En ese nombramiento queda la figura del gaucho de Don Segundo, si bien como una sombra que acompaña al “don gaucho,” Fabio Cáceres. Como bien lo explica Ludmer:

La alianza perfecta, única, en el mismo sujeto (que además es el escritor mismo), dividido entre el gaucho don y el don del otro testamento. La alianza económica, jurídica, familiar y didáctica de *La vuelta* [del *Martín Fierro*] encuentra en los signos despolitizados de la patria del don segundo (un fantasma, una sombra, una idea) su expresión más pura antes de la primera quiebra del estado en 1930. (262)

Me parece fundamental, en este momento, examinar los elementos narrativos que se utilizan en la construcción de esa subjetividad intermedia del “don gaucho,” que guarda dentro de sí a la sombra de Don Segundo. Ante todo, se trata de un texto que se constituye a partir de la narración autobiográfica, que mira al pasado para contarnos sus experiencias. Es decir, desde ese desdoblamiento subjetivo, ya se busca la interlocución (el “tú”). Más importante aún, sobre este elemento estructural, se articula el de la sombra íntima que llega de la muerte: Don Segundo Sombra. Al analizar el segundo capítulo de la novela con detenimiento, nos enteramos del temor que tiene el “yo” por la muerte, un temor que le es conocido: “Pasé al lado del cementerio y un conocido resquemor me castigó la médula, irradiando su pálido escalofrío hasta mis pantorrillas y antebrazos. Los muertos, las luces malas, las ánimas, me atemorizan ciertamente más que los malos encuentros posibles en aquellos parajes” (16). Esta sensación lo acompaña hasta que encuentra a Don Segundo, a quien percibe (como lo señalaba

Ludmer) como “un fantasma, una sombra, algo que pasa y es más una idea que un ser” (17).

La fantasmagoría de Don Segundo nos señala hacia lo siniestro, y como lo analiza Freud, hacia un trauma o evento del pasado irresuelto y reprimido. Encuentro que el trauma irresuelto —lo que no se nombra, pero sí regresa fantasmagóricamente— en la trama de *Don Segundo Sombra* es la guerra de la frontera, llevada a cabo durante gran parte del siglo XIX, donde no solo se libró el exterminio de grandes comunidades indígenas, sino también, el sacrificio de poblaciones campesinas fronterizas, utilizadas para las batallas contra los “bárbaros” (Christensen, 546-550; Ludmer 21). Si el *Martín Fierro* ha sido la épica que lanzaba el llanto del gaucho—que desde el discurso literario viene a ser el reconocimiento letrado del horror vivido por las poblaciones fronterizas en nombre de la fundación del estado de ley—por el destrozamiento sobre su tierra, su familia y su modo de vida, *Don Segundo Sombra* se constituye como un viaje de ida y vuelta al lugar heterotópico del trauma para buscar una posible reconciliación.

La ida de Fabio Cáceres con Don Segundo a la pampa, a ese lugar de la barbarie tipificada por Sarmiento, viene a retomar, entonces, el espacio de guerra y muerte para escuchar, sentir y aprender de las experiencias que quedaron fuera de la modernidad. En la travesía por esa memoria guardada en esta heterotopía, guiada siempre por Don Segundo, se produce una geografía y un tiempo inconmensurables, capaces de urdir, a su vez, la subjetividad intermedia que puede relacionar el “yo” y el “otro.” Recordemos también que ese “otro” ha pasado a ser el “tú” íntimo que interpela el relato de la memoria del “yo.” El viaje entonces no solo es una experiencia de aprendizaje que autoriza o que confirma una identidad. Este viaje parte de un pueblo despreciado, ubicado en la misma frontera entre la civilización (ciudad) y la barbarie (campo). Desde allí, y de la mano de los fantasmas o las sombras de quienes fueron sacrificados en la guerra de la frontera, la subjetividad letrada de Fabio Cáceres se adentrará a la heterotopía del campo y vivirá una experiencia inexistente ya también. Al entrar en esta heterotopía, y al transformar el fantasma reprimido de un “otro”-objeto en “tú” íntimo, la narrativa de la novela *Don Segundo Sombra* construye un espacio que compensa los crímenes del espacio real de la modernidad.

Es en este punto que me parece que el análisis de *Don Segundo Sombra* puede tomar un rumbo un poco distinto, tal vez, al que proponía Ludmer. En el discurso de la memoria del sujeto letrado que narra, Don Segundo ya no es sombra ni fantasma como lo era al inicio de su relato, sino “alma de horizonte”:

Don Segundo se levantó en señal de partida. Sujetándolo de un brazo le interrogué ansioso:

—¿Es verdad que no soy el de siempre y que esos malditos pasos van a desmentir mi vida de paisano?

—Mirá —dijo mi padrino, apoyando sonriente su mano en mi hombro—. Si sos gaucho en de veras, no has de mudar, porque

andequiera que vayas, irás con tu alma por delante como madrina'e tropilla. (176)

Ya no es sombra ni fantasma que va detrás del letrado, como un pasado de muerte reprimido que siembra el trauma de la barbarie y la guerra. Ahora es "alma" que va "por delante," "alma de horizonte," íntimamente amarrada a la existencia del "yo." Es por esto que el viaje de Fabio Cáceres debe extenderse desde el pueblo fronterizo hasta Buenos Aires, ciudad de las letras, para compensar allí la supuesta utopía de la civilización. Sin embargo, interesantemente, la subjetividad intermediaria del "gaucho don" que es Fabio Cáceres no se quedará en la ciudad, sino que regresará al pueblo fronterizo entre el campo y la ciudad.

3. Las voces de Comala o la muerte como denuncia de la ilusión moderna

Leído desde las voces de las mujeres de Comala, el discurso literario de *Pedro Páramo* habla una lengua distinta del mito y de la historia. Comprendo el valor de las lecturas de Paz, en *Corriente alterna*, y Fuentes, en "Rulfo, el tiempo del mito." Para Paz, Comala es el Paraíso muerto y *Pedro Páramo* el relato mítico sobre la caída del hombre que, alegóricamente, también refiere a un momento de quiebre en la Nación que lleva a un espacio de silencio y soledad. En su lectura, Fuentes analiza cómo *Pedro Páramo* responde a la estructura del mito, sobre todo en el viaje de Juan Preciado a la muerte, y sugiere que, en esta novela, se relacionan el mito, el silencio y la palabra para dar cuenta de la fundación, no sólo de la nación mexicana, sino del "Nuevo Mundo" en el continente americano. Sin embargo, considero que, en el *sonar del río* que lleva a Juan hasta la casa de Eduvigés Dyada, y luego hasta su muerte, se percibe el testimonio de las voces femeninas entrecortadas ofreciendo los trozos de la memoria de esa heterotopía de la muerte que es Comala, más que una cosmogonía o una explicación de los avatares del hombre que ha roto la ley divina. Entonces, mi lectura sigue la línea trazada por críticos como Laura García-Moreno y Patrick Dove, cuyas ideas posicionan al proyecto literario-intelectual de Rulfo como una "reelaboración poética" de los "ecos del pasado" que "subraya los límites de cualquier orden político o cultural que pretenda hablar por el Otro" (García Moreno 497), y también, como la posición incómoda frente a la tradición literaria (Dove 99).

La muerte de Dolores Preciado, la madre, es la matriz imperativa que genera el viaje de Juan a Comala, lugar inexacto y vacío, donde las voces de madre e hijo se entrelazan y van borrando las fronteras entre vida y muerte, presente y pasado: "*Allá me oírás mejor. Estaré más cerca de ti. Encontrarás más cercana la voz de mis recuerdos que la de mi muerte, si es que alguna vez la muerte ha tenido alguna voz. Mi madre... la viva*" (113). Desde el inicio del viaje, entonces, la subjetividad de Juan queda relacionada con un "tú"

íntimo (la madre) para configurar el relato de su vida. Muy pronto, este diálogo de voces se relacionará con muchas otras y, ya desde el camino, la cabeza de Juan se “llena de ruidos y voces,” acompañándolo desde *un más allá* hasta el lugar inexacto de una heterotopía “dónde es esto y dónde es aquello,” partiendo de las indicaciones equívocas de la madre (113). Desde la imaginación de Juan Preciado, Comala viene a ser, por un lado, el lugar donde se halla la posibilidad de satisfacer el reclamo de la madre: “No vayas a pedirle nada. Exígele lo nuestro. Lo que estuvo obligado a darme y nunca me dio... El olvido en que nos tuvo, mi hijo, cóbraselo caro” (109). Por otro lado, Comala es también la “ilusión” de Juan por compensar y restaurar su pasado mutilado, es decir, el desconocimiento de su padre y el olvido de sus primeros años de vida en su lugar de origen: “comencé a llenarme de sueños, a darle vuelo a las ilusiones. Y de este modo se me fue formando un mundo alrededor de la esperanza que era aquel señor llamado Pedro Páramo, el marido de mi madre. Por eso vine a Comala” (109).

Sin embargo, el viaje de Juan a Comala será el descenso a su muerte, y ese viaje estará mediado por la metáfora del agua. Como el sol en *Upon Epitaphs* de Wordsworth, según lo estudia Paul De Man en “Autobiography as De-Facement,” en *Pedro Páramo* el agua organiza el sistema continuo de vida/muerte. Más específicamente, el fluir del agua—llanto, lluvia, río, mar—anida en el cuerpo femenino y guía el viaje del “yo” protagónico hasta la memoria colectiva y trizada (hecha multitud de voces) de Comala. Es importante, además, que el agua fluyente de *Pedro Páramo* nunca devuelve el reflejo exacto del Narciso, como sí ocurre dentro de la propuesta ensayística de *El laberinto de la soledad* de Paz. Creo importante detenerme por un momento en una comparación entre ambas obras para comprender mejor, no solo el uso de la metáfora del agua, sino también la contestación que cada discurso formula ante el proyecto de la modernidad mexicana.

Justo en un momento cuando la economía avanza a pasos agigantados por la ruta del “milagro mexicano” (Aguilar Camín y Meyer 193) y cuando el Estado revolucionario vivía “los años dorados del mito” priísta (Meyer 93-98), Paz postula, en *El laberinto de la soledad*, un detente en la carrera celebratoria de la Nación. Para Paz, es importante volver a reflexionar sobre el rostro mexicano, como un Narciso adolescente asomado al río, pero esta vez, sin las máscaras discursivas que se han construido para atribuirle tales o cuales características:

... indescifrable a primera vista, como la piedra sagrada cubierta de incisiones y signos, la máscara del viejo es la historia de unas facciones amorfas, que un día emergieron confusas, extraídas en vilo por una mirada absorta. Por virtud de esa mirada las facciones se hicieron rostro y, más tarde, máscara, significación, historia. (144)

El problema para Paz vendría a ser la correcta interpretación del rostro mexicano, la traducción exacta de sus signos. Este problema atraviesa el ensayo como una angustia ante lo que han sido las máscaras que se han impuesto sobre ese rostro. Ante todo, Paz señala la discordancia entre forma (el rostro o la “realidad” mexicana) y fórmula (la máscara o el sistema para encauzar esa realidad) que ha venido dándose a lo largo de la historia mexicana: “Nuestras formas jurídicas y morales ... mutilan con frecuencia a nuestro ser, nos impiden expresarnos y niegan satisfacción a nuestros apetitos vitales” (168).

La novela de Rulfo propone un discurso también contestario al del “milagro mexicano,” si bien muy distinto al de Paz. En el murmullo de voces de *Pedro Páramo*, no hay un “yo” esencial, una interioridad sola, pues es necesaria la relación entre diversos “yo” y “tú” para atisbar un relato de vida y muerte, el de esa heterotopía que es Comala. El viaje debe hacerse “por el sonar del río,” ciego, siempre en movimiento y sin saber exactamente dónde desembocará. Juan Preciado no puede hallar un rostro preciso debajo de una máscara, sino que debe dejarse llevar por las voces “otras” que van inundando su subjetividad.

Así, “por el sonar del río” (113), llega Juan Preciado a la casa de Eduviges Dyada, primera mujer con la que la voz de la madre muerta se entrelaza. Eduviges, la que pudo haber sido la madre de Juan, habita la casa de los recuerdos de Comala, el almacén de los tiliches de “los que se fueron” (114). Mujer suicida —que conoce “cómo acortar las veredas” de la muerte hacia el cielo (114)— y casa “entilichida” de recuerdos: éstas son las rendijas por las que se abalanzan, como un incesante gotear, las escenas incoherentes que inundan los sueños de Juan. La incoherencia que experimenta el “yo” sirve como vínculo dialógico entre Dolores y Eduviges y, además, para el libre intercambio del rol de madre de Juan. Este diálogo e intercambio, a su vez, recuerda la multitud de cuerpos de mujeres relacionados con Pedro Páramo para, así, difuminar las fronteras entre presente y pasado, entre el “yo” del hijo y el “yo” del padre.

En el primer sueño-recuerdo de ese “yo” intervenido por el diálogo entre voces femeninas, aparece la lluvia murmurando entre las tejas del patio, sirviendo de trasfondo a la imagen acariciada de Susana. Susana San Juan será la mujer siempre deseada y jamás tenida por Pedro Páramo, la única mujer amada, como su tierra. En ella se contiene el mar, y sólo él la puede poseer (174). Para Pedro Páramo, ella es la esperanza de lavar los recuerdos de todos los muertos que carga. Es su primer y límpido recuerdo, anterior a sus masacres. Al regresar a la fuerza a Comala, Susana trae consigo este mar inmenso e inabarcable para Pedro Páramo. Es desde el personaje de Susana San Juan que correctamente la lectura crítica de Irene Fenoglio Limón postula la novela de Rulfo como un espacio femenino que resiste las estrategias del estado revolucionario institucionalizado.

En el segundo sueño-recuerdo del “yo” hecho multitud de voces femeninas, se evoca el llanto de la madre de Pedro Páramo, que “pudo traspasar la maraña del sueño, llegando hasta el lugar donde anidan los sobresaltos” para anunciar el asesinato del padre, Lucas Páramo, lo cual cambiará la vida de Pedro (123). El llanto de la madre por el padre muerto será la sombra que detenga la heterotopía de Comala por siempre en un tiempo que se acumula y extiende infinitamente, “como si no fuera a comenzar el día, sino como si apenas estuviera llegando el principio de la noche” (124). Será también la sombra sobre los ojos de Pedro Páramo, y por ende sobre el resto del pueblo, que impida “la llegada del día” y vuelva la luz hacia el fondo de la tierra, “como si el suelo debajo de ella estuviera anegado en lágrimas” (124).

Asfixiado por el peso de la tierra en rendijas, asesinado por los murmullos de sus sueños, Juan Preciado muere de miedo ante la presencia siniestra de un pasado lleno de violencia y muerte. También, como bien lo señala el artículo crítico de María del Pilar Blanco, es una muerte instigada por un luto que no consigue sobrepasar el peso de tantos fantasmas. Me parece, sobretodo, que la muerte de Juan es ya casi un protocolo ineludible, un descenso a la muerte en ese “mar de lodo” que es la heterotopía de Comala. Es en fin, la deseada reunión del “yo” con todos sus muertos, con las voces que lo han interpelado desde la muerte de la madre y su último deseo: “Quisiera volver al lugar de donde vine” (144). Ya en esta cita, sin saber si la voz es de Juan o de su madre, atisbamos que la voz narrativa del “yo” viene de todos y de nadie en particular.

En su viaje a Comala, que es su descenso a la muerte, el “yo” protagónico que inicia siendo Juan Preciado no halla un origen definido en un padre, una madre o un lugar. Tampoco encuentra una soledad que le diera tiempo a la reflexión o un renacer utópico. En su descenso a la heterotopía de la muerte, no hay pues un solo posible rostro nítidamente reflejado como lo pensaba Paz, sino una multiplicidad de voces que delatan la ilusión que son, tanto la pretendida autonomía y fijeza del “yo,” como el espacio social moderno del “milagro mexicano.”

Más aún, el descenso de Juan a la heterotopía de la muerte lo lleva o lo retorna a Dorotea, la infértil, la mendiga del pueblo, la que siempre anheló ser madre. Dorotea no tiene el agua que se relaciona con las mujeres de Comala—su sexo es indefinido, Doroteo/Dorotea, le llama Juan—y, tal vez por eso, tardó tanto en morir, como un cactus en medio de tierra árida y desierta. En una inversión de su “ilusión” de ser madre, la muerte le concede a Doroteo/Dorotea uno de los hijos de Pedro Páramo, Juan Preciado. Es interesante, sin embargo, que la ambigüedad intersubjetiva continúa extendiéndose hasta los roles de madre e hijo, y no es ella quien lo acuna y alimenta a él, sino él a ella:

Soy algo que no le estorba a nadie. Ya ves, ni siquiera le robé el espacio a la tierra. Me enterraron en tu misma sepultura y cupe

muy bien en el hueco de tus brazos. Aquí en este rincón donde me tienes ahora. Sólo se me ocurre que debería ser yo la que te abrazara a ti. (150)

Dorotea/Doroteo es, como bien lo reconoció Carlos Monsiváis, la metáfora de la Comala seca e infértil, la tierra dejada a su propia suerte, incapaz de concebir o alimentar a sus hijos, como uno de tantos “pueblos muertos” donde sus habitantes “vagan espectrales” en el “único tiempo que es la eternidad” (33). No obstante, me gustaría añadir que Doroteo/Dorotea viene a ser una compañía íntima para el “yo,” un sosiego que confunde las categorías sexuales y las familiares para ofrecer una ética de relación sin condiciones jerárquicas. Así pues, me parece que Dorotea/Doroteo nos da una clave de lectura sobre Comala que se extiende más allá de un referente tangible (un “pueblo muerto” en medio de la nada) para proponer un no-lugar heterotópico donde se consiguen relaciones humanas solo en base a experiencias compartidas y a un relato armado colectivamente. En el espacio heterotópico de la muerte que es Comala, ya no valen entonces las distinciones sociales entre padres e hijos, cacique y dominados, hombre y mujer. En Comala la distinción única es el sonido de la voz que habla, que se da hacia las demás voces para avocarse al relato de las memorias.

4. *Don Segundo Sombra* y *Pedro Páramo* o la literatura inactual

En esta revisión de mis análisis textuales, quiero puntualizar la comparación entre los textos fijándome específicamente en los efectos que tienen lo que he identificado en ellos como lugares heterotópicos y la ética relacional del relato. Mi lectura de *Don Segundo Sombra* considera que el texto propone la frontera como una heterotopía de compensación al orden del espacio moderno. Considero que desde ese lugar heterotópico se articula una narrativa a partir de una ética relacional (entre el “yo” de Fabio Cáceres y el “tú” íntimo de Don Segundo Sombra) para, a su vez, reformular un relato nacional que ha suprimido todo lo concerniente al espacio de la frontera y las otredades que allí habitan. Esta narrativa busca sanar heridas entre subjetividades que han estado en guerra (letrados y gauchos) restaurar el valor de un lugar donde ha ocurrido una masacre (la frontera). Esto lo consigue, en primer lugar, a partir de la entrada y el viaje de un sujeto moderno, Fabio Cáceres, a la heterotopía de ese escenario natural premoderno que es la frontera. En segundo lugar, la narración de la historia de vida de Fabio Cáceres nos habla de la relación íntima de un “yo” con un “tú”, donde las experiencias compartidas van formando esa subjetividad intermedia y relacional del “gaucho” hecho “gaucho” hecho “don.” En esta historia de vida, entonces, Don Segundo Sombra pasa de ser un “otro” reprimido y siniestro a ser un “tú” privilegiado, el interlocutor presente en experiencia y memoria del “yo” autobiográfico.

Por otra parte, mi lectura de *Pedro Páramo* propone ver a Comala como una heterotopía de la muerte. Esta heterotopía sirve, al igual que en *Don Segundo Sombra*, para anular las distinciones entre cuerpo, espacio y tiempo. No hay, pues, una posibilidad referencial exacta en Comala; como la muerte misma, es irreferencial y multirreferencial a un mismo tiempo. Además, la heterotopía de la muerte le permite al relato construirse como una hilera de relaciones que posicionan diferentes subjetividades en los roles de “yo” y “tú.” Por lo tanto, Juan Preciado queda asignado a un rol de vehículo, a un “yo” habitado por una multiplicidad de “tú” que, conforme avanza la experiencia compartida (a través del conocimiento entrecortado, vacilante y confuso de la memoria), acaparan un protagonismo colectivo. En este sentido, la narración de Comala puede darse sólo a partir de—como lo ejemplifica Doroteo/Dorotea—las relaciones humanas sin condiciones jerárquicas.

Es importante, además, que desde la heterotopía de la muerte, *Pedro Páramo* viene a ser una figuración alterna a la construcción del relato histórico, y más aún, una denuncia de su carácter de ilusión o ficción. En este sentido, Comala podría hablarnos del exceso de las otredades que no puede entrar en la definición nacional desde la modernización planteada por el liberalismo y la Revolución Mexicana. Por lo tanto, Comala viene a ser, también, una figuración intelectual distinta a la de Paz en *El laberinto de la soledad*. Si para Paz la búsqueda del verdadero rostro del mexicano ejercía sobre su escritura una ansiedad por la definición y la categorización, para Rulfo el sosiego hallado en lo comunal de las relaciones humanas íntimas pareciera guiarlo en la descripción de un lugar donde ya no hace falta la distinción identitaria. A fin de cuentas, entrever la caída de la primera y la última piedra en Comala es acercarse a las cuentas desordenadas de la memoria: “Dio un golpe seco contra la tierra y se fue desmoronando como si fuera un montón de piedras” (194).

Es así que los “mundos perdidos” (Piglia) que construyen Güiraldes y Rulfo lograron interpelar a sus contemporáneos y continúan hablándonos hoy de lugares y subjetividades “otros” y contestatarios, que persisten en intervenir y acusar la pretendida unicidad del relato oficial de la nación moderna. En este estudio comparatista, por lo tanto, me ha parecido aún más revelador las coincidencias en intenciones políticas por representar esos lugares heterotópicos que las distinciones puntuales entre estilos literarios. En esa intención, como piensa Piglia, ambas novelas siguen formando parte de una “literatura inactual.”

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Absence and Presence: Performing (In) Visible Masculinities in Federico García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and Ernesto Caballero's *Pepe el Romano*

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Abstract: Federico García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) and Ernesto Caballero's *Pepe el Romano* (2003) are intertextually related plays. Whereas García Lorca's play populates mimetic space with the women from the Alba family and exiles men to diegetic space, Caballero's work reverses the spatial configuration and focuses on the men, thus apt plays to illustrate gender issues. Masculinity, embodied in both plays by their strongest link, Pepe el Romano, is used heuristically, supported by two scholarly traditions closely related to it, post structural gender analysis and masculinity studies, to demonstrate gender performativity and invisibility and comment on coercive and violent power relations.

Keywords: Gender, Intertextuality, Invisibility, Masculinity, Pepe el Romano

Federico García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) and Ernesto Caballero's *Pepe el Romano*. *La sombra blanca de Bernarda Alba* (2003) are intertextually related plays. In a study about intertextual discourse, John P. Gabriele provides numerous "examples of the intricate and complex ways in which *Pepe el Romano* intersects textually, contextually, structurally, and thematically with *La casa de Bernarda Alba* ("A case of intertextual discourse" 133). On the one hand, García Lorca's play populates the space that spectators see with the women from the Alba family and exiles men to the area the play's characters refer to, invisible for the audience. On the other hand, Caballero's work reverses the spatial configuration and focuses on the men. Together both plays provide textual and performative evidence to illustrate gender issues, particularly masculinity. Embodied in both plays by their strongest link, the character of Pepe el Romano, masculinity is employed heuristically in this essay to interrogate gender, since "masculinity and femininity are not absolute, discrete, and independent categories, but rather derive from one another their meaning and significance" (Buchbinder 92). Masculinity is deployed

here to comment and analyze the invisible performance of power through gender.

García Lorca scholarship on gender and theater has traditionally focused on the women who populate the plays. When male characters have been analyzed independently from the female roles, it is not to talk specifically about their gender issues, but other aspects. According to masculinity studies' scholars, precisely because of their omnipresence, men "have been obscured by being too much in the foreground" (Brod 40-41), rendered invisible by ignoring the ethnic, social and sexual diversities that individuate them. Through their research, masculinity studies' scholars have sought to dispel men's invisibility by deconstructing universalizing presumptions and stereotypes, thus gendering men as well as women. Presently, there is very little scholarship on masculinities with regard to García Lorca's theater¹. Given their intertextual relationship and intrinsic thematic compatibility, comparative work on *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and *Pepe el Romano* employing masculinity as a lens with which to examine questions of gender and power contributes to expanding this area of scholarship.

La casa de Bernarda Alba is a three-act play about the repressive regime a rural matriarch has over her five daughters and of her youngest child's desperate attempt to break free of her mother's dictatorial regime with fatal consequences. Bernarda Alba has lost her second husband and has imposed a cloistered eight-year period of mourning on her five unmarried daughters as befits local custom. Pepe el Romano, a handsome and attractive suitor who is never seen in the play, courts Angustias, Bernarda's financially secure eldest daughter from her first marriage, while carrying on secretly with the youngest, rebellious Adela. The hidden affair is eventually discovered. Because of the lies of a jealous third sister, Martirio, who tells Adela that her mother shot and killed Pepe el Romano, the girl hangs herself. Bernarda is tyrannized by her concern for her and her household's public image. She, therefore, insists that her daughter died a virgin, imposing silence and eight more years of mourning on her family. Thus, *La casa de Bernarda Alba* is a play about oppression and repression. It is about the clash between an authoritative principle that silences, which Bernarda represents, and a principle of freedom, which Adela symbolizes.

Subtitled "drama de mujeres en los pueblos de España", the play focuses on "the social and historical confinement of women" (Gabriele, "Mapping the Boundaries of Gender" 385) by populating mimetic space, "the space that is visually represented onstage" (382), exclusively with women and assigning all men to diegetic space, "the space to which characters make reference to" (382). The play's dramatic tension is "the

¹ To my knowledge, Christopher James Sherwin's MA thesis "The representation of masculinity in the theatre of Federico García Lorca" (2005) and José I. Badenes' "Staging the Senex: Aging Masculinities in the Theater of Miguel de Cervantes and Federico García Lorca." *Romance Notes*. 54.3 (2014): 335-46 are the only two articles that have dealt specifically with masculinity issues in García Lorca's theater.

result of an interplay of mimetic and diegetic space” (382), between female and male elements. Thus, García Lorca “relies on spatial narrative to...speak politically about gender” (381), the focus of John P Gabriele’s article “Mapping the Boundaries of Gender: Men, Women and Space in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*”.

However, although the play’s focus may be women and their historical and social plight seen through the drama brewing inside the house of the Alba family, García Lorca makes sure that masculinity also be given “maximum attention” (Sherwin 27) by how he represents it and what he has to say about it. He does so “not through male presence, but male absence” (27), the subject of Christopher James Sherwin’s thesis.

The play offers many examples of instances where men are the objects of the female subjects’ attention, interest and gaze despite their absence from the stage, in particular Pepe el Romano. In Act I, upon remarking to Angustias that Pepe el Romano “estaba con los hombres del duelo” (García Lorca 125), a girl attending Bernarda’s second husband’s funeral is contradicted by the matriarch by refuting that “[a] Pepe no lo ha visto ella ni yo” (125) and proclaiming that “[l]as mujeres en la iglesia no deben de mirar más hombres que al oficiante, y ese porque tiene faldas” (125). Later on in the act, Angustias gets scolded by her mother for watching Pepe and the men who attended her stepfather’s funeral through a door while her sister Martirio declares to her other sibling, Amelia, that “es preferible no ver a un hombre nunca” (136) because she is afraid of them. La Poncia, Bernarda’s head servant, then tells her mistress about the men who abducted Paca la Roseta, who willingly left with them, and how the townsmen “les gusta verlo y comentarlo” (133). When towards the end of the act, the maid announces that Pepe el Romano “viene por lo alto de la calle” (142), the women run to their bedroom windows to catch a glimpse of him. In Act II, the daughters engage in conversation with La Poncia about when Pepe el Romano left their home the night before and the servant later on regales the girls with tales about her husband Evaristo el Colín. When the reapers arrive singing, Adela leads her sisters in “verlos por la ventana de mi cuarto” (161). Towards the end of the act, the disappearance of Pepe’s picture from his fiancée’s bed occasions a quarrel among the sisters. In Act III, the conversations between Bernarda and Angustias, Bernarda and La Poncia, and Martirio and Adela all revolve around Pepe, meriting the demented grandmother María Josefa’s ironically lucid remark that “Pepe el Romano es un gigante” (193).

Precisely because only women are seen onstage and men are never seen, García Lorca manipulates the audience so that their critical gaze coincides with a female point of view (Sherwin 42). Men are therefore distanced from the audience and constructed as idealized eroticized passive objects of the female subjects’ sexual desire. For example, Pepe el Romano “es el mejor tipo de todos estos contornos” (García Lorca 140), whom everyone enjoys looking at, whether through doors, windows or in a photograph. He grows to be “un gigante” (193) in the imagination of the Alba women and by extension the audience’s. Another example is La Poncia’s account of her husband Evaristo’s

courtship, which is sexually charged---“Entonces Evaristo se acercó, se acercó que se quería meter por los hierros, y dijo con voz muy baja: ‘¡Ven que te tientel!’” (151)---, as well as her description of the reapers---“[c]uarenta o cincuenta buenos mozos” (159)---, in particular one of them, “un muchacho de ojos verdes, apretado como una gavilla de trigo” (159). Notably, there is a difference in the play between praising masculinity and contemplating the male body.

García Lorca’s strategy of having female subjects praise male characters *in absentia* “attempts a separation of sex (with its locus in the male body) and gender” (Sherwin 31), therefore inviting the audience to critique “conventional understandings of gender being determined entirely by sex” (32). In fact, the play evidences a “masculine construction of femininity” (McDermid 172), particularly Bernarda’s and Adela’s, away from the male body. Bernarda’s authoritarianism, which the rod she carries symbolizes, meriting her epithets like “¡[m]andona!, ¡[d]ominanta!” (García Lorca 119); the assumption of her deceased husband’s role as head of the household and overseer of the land and its workers, seen when one of the mourners asks her as if she were a man “¿[h]abéis empezado los trabajos en la era?” (124); her obsessive preoccupation with public image, so dear to fathers in Golden Age plays, particularly her daughter Adela’s virginity---“¡Nadie diga nada! Ella ha muerto virgen” (199); and her strict patriarchal mindset---“Hilo y aguja para las hembras. látigo y mula para el varón” (129)--- align her with constructions of stereotypical masculinity. Adela also exemplifies traits of masculinity in her behavior. Her forceful demeanor when talking to Martirio about Pepe---“He tenido fuerza para adelantarme...he salido a buscar lo que era mío, lo que me pertenecía” (194)--- and her increasing strength capable of “a un caballo encabritado soy capaz de poner de rodillas con la fuerza de mi dedo meñique” (196) which breaks in half her mother’s rod---“Esto hago yo con la vara de la dominadora” (197)--- reveal traits associated more with masculine conduct than feminine comportment.

Bernarda and Adela are examples of what Judith Halberstam has termed “female masculinity”. By their gender transgressive behavior, both “challenge hegemonic models of gender conformity” (9) and “afford us a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity” (1). However, whereas Adela’s masculinity is associated with positive traits despite her dependence on Pepe that leads her to take her own life, Bernarda’s is linked with negative ones such as “power and legitimacy and privilege” (2), thus replicating “misogyny within femaleness” (9). With Adela’s suicide, it is sadly Bernarda’s negative version of female masculinity that triumphs, a version that replicates rather than challenges maleness.

Drag performances of the play are, therefore, not surprising, given the gender issues it raises. Directors have at times conceived the role of Bernarda as a male figure. For example, Angel Facio’s 1976 Madrid production of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* had male actor Ismael Merlo play the matriarch, whose face “was heavily made up so that [it] became a “mask” (McDermid 178). A dance version of the play produced by

Antonio Gades in 1998 featured an all-male cast performing the female roles, with the exception of the dancer who took on the character of María Josefa. In Gades' interpretation of the play, "gender was viewed as visibly imitative with selected signs of femininity...serving to locate the feminine on the male performing body" (Delgado 116). Thus, drag performances of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* "open up, rather than close down, innovative inroads of understanding into the play's text and communication with the audience" (McDermid 179) by creating discontinuity and dissonance "between the body of the performer, the sex of the character and the gender role enacted by the character" (182).

La casa de Bernarda Alba's deeper resonances problematizing conventional understandings of gender, in particular the relationship between sex and gender, which imaginative interpretations of the work reveal, can be examined through a poststructuralist gender lens. According to Gail Bederman, poststructuralist gender analysis is not interested so much in the invisibility of masculinity as in deconstructing the lack of visibility of the sex/gender system which masks its cultural constructedness with layers of coercive essentialized naturalness. The play's strict separation of gendered spaces, the invisibility of the male element, and the performing discontinuity between body, sex and gender invite interpretations aligned with the theoretical premises articulated by scholars such as Judith Butler and Judith Halberstam, based on post-modern literary and philosophical theory that question binary categories. However, if a poststructuralist gender lens can be employed to analyze gender dynamics in *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, a strictly masculinity studies' perspective can be used to frame Ernesto Caballero's interpretation of García Lorca's drama.

Pepe el Romano. La sombra blanca de Bernarda Alba, inspired and staged by director Mikel Gómez de Segura on November 3, 2000 and written post-production by contemporary playwright Ernesto Caballero, is, according to its author, a homage to García Lorca. Unlike other interpretations based on García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and its female characters, it focuses exclusively on the males that occupy diegetic space in the Lorcan rural tragedy: Pepe el Romano, detonator of the Alba family tragedy; the Viudo de Darajalí, who according to Bernarda was at her husband's funeral in close proximity to a young mourners' aunt; Maximiliano, who happily brings the sexually satisfied Paca la Roseta back home after leaving her husband behind the night before to have fun with the townsmen; and Evaristo Colín, La Poncia's unnamed son whose mother gives him money to enjoy the favors of an out of town dancer. They are joined by two others who are not featured in the play: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*'s author Federico García (Lorca) and Cano, the town fool. The play revolves around these six men, their interactions with one another and the unseen women of the house, paralleling events that take place in the García Lorca play. Like *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, *Pepe el Romano* ends tragically. Adela's death in the García Lorca play mirrors the murder of Pepe el Romano by the Viudo de Darajalí, as an avenger in love with the betrayed Angustias.

Caballero's play is an "explicit and implicit reflective and self-reflective referentiality between his play and [García] Lorca's (Gabriele, "A case of intertextual discourse" 133), resulting "in a much more comprehensive, complete and profound work" (119) that is far from being an imitation of the rural drama. While the focus of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* is the women the audience sees onstage, Caballero's adaptation, according to Gómez de Segura's idea, seeks to tell a story about men at the service of masculinity in order to go deep within each man's soul and reclaim masculinity (Gómez de Segura, *Pepe el Romano*, Introducción). Each of the six male characters is individually delineated: Pepe el Romano is an attractive, self-interested, manipulative hypocrite; the Viudo de Darajalí is wise because of his age, but cowardly; Federico García is an intelligent, sensitive, educated gay man who suffers in silence his attraction towards Pepe; Maximiliano is an unscrupulous man without conscience who rejects anyone who is not like him; Evaristo Colín is a false and cowardly opportunist who is the only one who has access to Bernarda's house; and Cano's foolishness full of dreams and illusions makes him an endearing character. According to Gómez de Segura, together, they represent "Man" in its totality.

Caballero's and Gómez de Segura's desire to render visible the invisible male element in the García Lorca play in their work align them with a masculinity studies 'viewpoint. As summarized by Bederman, masculinity studies scholars' purpose was to "unmask the invisibility of masculinity" (22), as pioneered by Michael J. Kimmel's 1993 article "Invisible Masculinity". As a result, men's insight into their own invisible gendered attributes propelled a wide range of studies of men as individuals. By enfleshing the diegetic male element in García Lorca's plays with a couple of additions and focusing on individual personalities and how they relate with each other, *Pepe el Romano* provides a dramatic example of the masculinity studies 'agenda.

The director notices that just as there are hierarchies inside Bernarda's domain, so there are power distributions among the men in Caballero's play. The manner in which power is distributed among men is the focus of the work of R.W. Connell, one of the leading scholars in masculinity studies. According to Connell in the groundbreaking work *Masculinities*, there are four positions that describe power relations among men: hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized. The hegemonic position is "the currently accepted male ideal within a particular culture at a particular time...[that] functions more as an ideal or fantasy of the masculine than as a reality that actual men may embody" (Buchbinder 92). The complicit position refers to men who "accept and participate in the system of hegemonic masculinity" (92), enjoying its privileges such as power over women and men that do not fit the hegemonic ideal. Subordinate men deviate from the norm consonant with the hegemonic system and ideology in their gender behavior. Marginalized men, usually men of other races or with disabilities, "cannot even aspire to hegemony" (93).

The men in Caballero's play exemplify these four positions. Though clearly an ideal type and thus representing the hegemonic fantasy because of his invisibility in *La*

casa de Bernarda Alba, Pepe el Romano loses his larger-than-life status in Caballero's work once enflashed. He, along with Maximiliano, represents the complicit position. Their macho posturing—"Los que hablan claro son los hombres de verdad" (Caballero 50) ---, womanizing habits---"[q]uedan muchas mozas que no tienen dueño...a acechar a las mujeres más hermosas (88)---, aggressive behavior---"dime qué ves con esos puñeteros ojos vacíos" (44)---, misogynous comments—"Las mujeres tienen sólo dos cosas que vender: la honra y la hacienda" (48)---, and homophobic innuendoes---"mejor con mujeres que con medio mujeres" (45)--- align them with a stereotypical Iberian masculinity to whose rules of comportment they subscribe. However, both Evaristo Colín and the Viudo de Darajalí fall in the subordinate ranks. Though they mostly exhibit gender appropriate behavior, certain traits set them apart from the hegemonic ideal. For example, the Viudo is old and a coward---"[d]etrás de este cuerpo que antes fue fuerte, se escondió siempre una inmensa cobardía" (73)---while Evaristo has easy access to female space, and betrays a non-confrontative attitude and dependence—"me acuso de estar cansado, de no enfrentarme con nadie, de ser un correveidile que no aspira a mucho más que a vivir como un perro zalamero" (66). They are clearly subordinate to Pepe and Maximiliano's more dominant characters. Lastly, Federico García and Cano occupy marginalized positions within this male hierarchy, Federico because of his same sex preferences and Cano because of his mental disability.

According to masculinity studies 'scholars, there are many ways of being a man. However, this spectrum of possibilities is dominated by the hegemonic ideal, which is always unattainable. Thus, those men wishing to approximate the hegemonic position make sure that they maintain and enforce the power and dominance associated with it by subordinating and marginalizing women and those men who are not like them. However, those men in subordinate and marginalized positions contest the hegemonic ideal and its complicit behaviors because it clearly disadvantages them, thus allowing "new constellations of what may count as hegemonic masculinities...to come into being" (Buchbinder 180). By killing Pepe, a representative of complicit masculinity, the Viudo de Darajalí's subordinate status is reversed and the play ends with perhaps a wiser, less hypocritical, more loving model of masculinity, which the Viudo represents, taking over. Nevertheless, the last line of the play uttered by Maximiliano---"Hay que ser hombre para seguir la vida. Hay que ser hombre. Hay que ser hombre" (93)---stresses the underlying fact that in the long run it is about being *men*, not men and women, not people, precisely what the focus of masculinity studies is.

As evidenced thus far, gender-based interpretations of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* seem to be ultimately linked to a gender analysis perspective that deconstructs the "coerciveness and naturalness of gender" (Bederman 22), while *Pepe el Romano* benefits from a masculinity studies 'approach of "un mask[ing] the invisibility of masculinity" (22) when the play visibly represents the male-dominated diegetic space of the García Lorca play. The issues both plays raise about gender, power, invisibility and performance through masculinity can be better appreciated precisely because of the

intimate intertextual relationship between them. Together both plays comment powerfully on the denaturalization of masculinity and femininity to reveal how gender is performed and how it is made invisible in order to structure power relations between human beings in ways that are coercive and violent. Masculinity, understood as a construct that promotes a certain kind of maleness intent on advancing gender conformity and subordinating alternative gender performances, is the specific analytic tool deployed for such purpose.

The character of Pepe el Romano, the visible and invisible protagonist of *Pepe el Romano* and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* respectively, is the strongest link between the two plays and therefore best illuminates the relationship between gender, invisibility, performativity and power seen in the plays by embodying masculinity as oppressive and repressive maleness in relationship to other gender performances. Because he embodies this kind of masculinity, Pepe then functions as an ideal heuristic device with which to demonstrate the invisible power dynamics behind gender performativity in both plays.

In *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, Pepe, despite the fact that he is never seen, is the *raison d'être* of the tensions between the Alba women and therefore the driving force behind the plot and its tragic denouement. He is constantly on the minds and lips of the female characters whose viewpoint, especially about him, the audience progressively accepts. Though a passive object of desire of Bernarda's daughters' sexual subjectivity, Pepe is nonetheless an active principle whose omnipresent absence and silence speak loudly about the kind of masculinity he represents, a maleness associated with power and privileges whose invisibility idealizes him to the extent that he achieves hegemonic status—"Pepe el Romano es un gigante" (García Lorca 193). For example, his physical attraction is described in superlative terms—"es el mejor tipo de estos contornos" (140). His good looks give him power over women, who want to take a look at him every chance they can get—"Criada: Pepe el Romano viene por lo alto de la calle/Magdalena: ¡Vamos a verlo!" (142)---, who fight with one another to have a piece of him---"¿Dónde está el retrato de Pepe que tenía yo debajo de mi almohada?" (163)---, and even, in the case of Adela, forego public reputation---"y me pondré la corona de espinas que tienen las que son queridas de algún hombre casado" (195)---and life itself, because as she lets La Poncia know when the servant comments on how much she likes him: "¡Tanto! Mirando sus ojos me parece que bebo su sangre lentamente" (156). The freedom he enjoys because of his sex and gender---"A Pepe le gusta andar con la luna" (164)--- also empowers him to court both Angustias and Adela, one for her money---"Vino por el dinero" (194)---and the other for her looks---"sus ojos los puso siempre en mí" (194). When he is first mentioned in the play, he is in church attending Bernarda's husband's funeral---"Pepe el Romano estaba con los hombres del duelo" (125)---, but progressively gets closer to the house and by the end invades it. The photograph of him over which the sisters fight is a symbolic reminder of the extent of his omnipresent power over their lives. He is first found in the patio with the other men who attended the funeral, then we see him approaching the house to ask Angustias' hand in marriage,

next he is at the windows to speak with his fiancée and dalliance with Adela, and finally in the corral for his tryst with Adela. His careful penetration of the female enclosure ends up fulfilling the grandmother María Josefa's prophecy: "Él os va a devorar a todas porque vosotras sois granos de trigo"(193). He is a soul-less man—"hombre sin alma" (194)---who selfishly seeks "la tierra, las yuntas y una perra sumisa que les dé de comer" (137), enjoying freedom denied to others---"te irás corriendo vivo por lo oscuro de las alamedas" (199). He embodies the kind of masculinity associated with maleness and patriarchy.

Pepe's invisibility despite his performing omnipresence emphasizes two ideas. On the one hand, his lack of visibility is a commentary on the power hegemonic male masculinity has over other sexual/gender performances, notably women, precisely because of its invisibility, an important premise articulated by masculinity studies scholars like Kimmel. It is a power that is connected with oppression and violence. It is a power that is enforced by creating dissension among those lorded over, dividing and conquering, as happens between the sisters. On the other hand, Pepe's absence emphasizes the disassociation between sex and gender, that masculinity need not be housed in a male body, an important thesis championed by poststructuralist gender scholarship. From the very first moment that Pepe is mentioned in the play, thus invoking his presence despite his physical absence---"Pepe el Romano estaba con los hombres del duelo" (125)---, Bernarda immediately denies it---"Estaba su madre. Ella ha visto a su madre. A Pepe no lo ha visto ella ni yo" (125) ---, thus negating his appearance and therefore power of presence. The battle between Bernarda and Adela is ultimately about Pepe and the kind of masculinity he embodies in his absent presence. While Adela allows him inside the female domain, Bernarda tries to keep him out. With the death of the only male element in the house, her husband, Bernarda now takes over. When La Poncia lets Bernarda know that she will dispose of her late husband's clothes, Bernarda prohibits her: "Nada, ¡ni un botón!" (134). It is as if she has literally and metaphorically stepped into her husband's shoes. Bernarda is now the "man" of the house. Pepe's encroaching presence therefore becomes a threat to her power. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, rather than proposing an alternative masculinity, Bernarda's masculinity replicates the stereotypical masculinity associated with maleness that is about stoicism, control, repression and oppression manifested through abuse and physical force. Her phallic rod symbolizes this stereotypical masculine power, which Adela breaks to no avail. Yet, despite the fact, that she attempts to kill Pepe with her gun, Bernarda misses and he escapes into darkness. Bernarda may continue being the "man" of the house, but heteronormative male masculinity still lurks in the dark threatening her masculine power for alpha status, similar to competing relationships between hegemonically complicit men. By being complicit with this model of masculinity and replicating it, Bernarda unfortunately seals her fate, preventing life-giving opportunities to emerge with new ways of embodying masculinity.

In *Pepe el Romano*, Pepe's invisibility in the García Lorca play is materialized. As a result, as previously stated, he moves from an idealized hegemonic status to a flesh-and-blood complicit position. His traits are removed from their fantasy-based superlativeness, yet they remain aligned with oppressive patriarchal Iberian maleness. He is cocky, aggressive, womanizing, misogynous, hypocritical, opportunistic, insensitive, self-centered, and self-sufficient. He is clearly the dominant male in his circle who finds validation in his crony Maximiliano's equally macho behavior and subservience in the others. He represents a stereotypical male masculinity. However, it is interesting to note that Pepe is aware that he is performing a role when Cano comments on his "costume": "Cano: A mí me gusta tu disfraz de Pepe el Romano"/Pepe el Romano: "A mí también, Cano, lo que pasa es que solo es un disfraz y no sé lo que hay debajo" (Caballero 72). His awareness is consonant with poststructuralist theories of gender performativity. The hierarchical homosocial environment in which he moves supports his gender performativity aligned with a patriarchal mindset. However, though his is a heteronormative male-gendered performance that connects sex with gender, it contrasts with other more fluid gendered performances in the play that create dissonance between male body, feminine costume and masculine behavior.

Cano and Evaristo, a marginalized and a subordinate male respectively within the male hierarchy of the play, perform femininity when they take on roles associated with the unseen Alba women in the house. For example, at the end of the first act, the men amuse themselves by covering Cano with a white tablecloth who "finge pose de damisela cursi" (56) and pretends to get married. Later on in the play, he invokes Adela's presence when he echoes her lines clamoring for freedom: "No puedo estar encerrada. No quiero que se me pongan las carnes como a vosotras; no quiero perder mi blancura en estas habitaciones; mañana me pondré mi vestido verde y me echaré a pasear por la calle. ¡Yo quiero salir!" (71). He also dons the grandmother María Josefa's nightgown and replicates the old woman's poetic interjections against Bernarda: "Bernarda, cara de leopardo..." (81). Meanwhile, Evaristo comes out with the colorful fan Bernarda rejected in the García Lorca play imitating the matriarch's recrimination: "¿Es este el abanico que se da a una viuda? Dame uno negro y aprende a respetar el luto de tu padre" (82). If in the García Lorca play the male element intruded the all-female space by constant references to Pepe, by his photograph, by the sound of his horse, and by his cough and whistle, in Caballero's adaptation the female element is equally present in the transvestite performances of two of its male characters. Despite the strict gender-based spatial separation, each play manages to play with gender fluidity and communicate the lack of correspondence between sex and gender.

In *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, Pepe---and by extension the patriarchal male masculinity he represents---manages to escape the deadly consequences of his two-timing behavior to continue wreaking havoc "por lo oscuro de las alamedas" (García Lorca 199). However, Bernarda's wish of a future fall---"pero otro día caerás" (199)---

is prophetically fulfilled when the Viudo de Darajalí murders Pepe at the end of *Pepe el Romano*: “Le ha disparado ella, pero lo he matado yo” (Caballero 91). If in García Lorca’s play female agency is powerless against masculine entitlement, Caballero’s work gets rid of this kind of masculinity complicit with male hegemonic ideals of power by another type of male masculinity subordinate to it that will take its place. Nevertheless, this new type of masculinity that the Viudo represents, though wiser and more honest, is also linked with the violence associated with patriarchal male masculinity. However, though at first it seems that a new symbolic possibility opens up for men with Pepe’s murder, Maximiliano’s parting words--- “Hay que ser hombre para seguir la vida. Hay que ser hombre. Hay que ser hombre” (93)---trap men into stereotypical masculine roles, just like Bernarda’s imposition of cloistered silent mourning on her daughters at the end of *La casa de Bernarda Alba* entraps females. Both are doomed to repeat their culturally assigned gender performances.

By juxtaposing two plays intertextually dependent on each other, Federico García Lorca’s *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and Ernesto Caballero’s *Pepe el Romano*. *La sombra blanca de Bernarda Alba* are apt plays to illustrate gender issues. As seen, whereas García Lorca’s play populates mimetic space with the women from the Alba family and exiles men to diegetic space, Caballero’s work reverses the spatial configuration and focuses on the men. Masculinity has been defined in the essay as a construct that promotes a certain kind of maleness intent on advancing gender conformity and subordinating alternative gender performances, as embodied in both plays by their strongest link, *Pepe el Romano*. Masculinity has been used here heuristically, supported by two scholarly traditions closely related to it, poststructural gender analysis and masculinity studies, where the former focuses on unmasking the unnaturalness of the binary gender system and the latter on the relationship between men and their gendered invisibility. Supported by textual evidence, the essay has analyzed how gender is performed and how it is made invisible to speak about power relations having to do with “human beings who are ‘men’....[and] human beings who are *not* men” (Bederman 15) that are coercive and violent. As the end of both plays evidence, entrapment for *both* men and women into culturally constructed sex and gender roles continues in the plays as in life, despite attempts at freedom. However, there is hope that by unmasking and exposing patriarchal masculinity’s invisible power, Bernarda’s words to the fleeing Pepe that “otro día caerás” (García Lorca 199) come true.

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The Pleasure of Devouring Marriage, Mexico, and *Gorditas Pellizcadas con Manteca* in Italo Calvino's "Under the Jaguar Sun"

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Abstract: Italo Calvino's "Under the Jaguar Sun" is an attempt to move beyond the Lacanian split of masculine and feminine jouissance to a Barthesian sense of the pleasure based on the phonetics of language. Throughout the story, the main character's understanding of Mexico, pleasure, food, Other, and cannibalism are transformed resulting in the narrator and his wife's ability to consume and be consumed by each other. The story successfully breaks away from the constraints of language and as such imitates and achieves the pleasure of reading theorized throughout the story.

Keywords: pleasure of reading, Barthes, Lacan, Calvino, Mexico

Italo Calvino's posthumously published short story "Under the Jaguar Sun" is commonly read as an exploration of the pleasures and aversions related to the sense of taste.¹ Set in the early 1980s, Calvino's narrator is touring the area in and around Oaxaca, Mexico with his wife Olivia. He describes their visits to convents, churches, and ancient ruins. These visits often precede or coincide with their consumption of traditional Mexican foods and spices. Yet, Calvino, considered by many to be one of the preeminent postmodern writers for his playful intertwining of reality and fantasy as well as for subverting traditional techniques of storytelling², is not offering his reader a comforting travel essay. Rather, these descriptions function as a pretense for more sensational accounts of the erotic

¹ Calvino intended to write five short stories focusing on each of the senses. Only three were completed and published together with "Under the Jaguar Sun" as the title story (Weiss 188). In "The Name, the Nose" a Parisian dandy, a London rocker, and a primitive man each pursue women whose scents have aroused their sexual appetite. "A King Listens" narrates the paranoid thoughts of a King who refuses to leave the seat of his throne, lest he lose power, and who imagines every noise as a potential personal or political betrayal.

² For two good surveys of Calvino's progression from neorealism in *The Path to the Nest of Spiders* (1947) through his forays into structuralism with *Invisible Cities* (1972) to his seminal deconstruction of the novel in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979), see Cavallaro and Weiss.

gastronomy of colonial nuns, ecstasy-inducing peppers, pre-Columbian Aztec cannibalism, spices that accentuate the taste of human flesh, and the narrator's own fantasy of being sacrificed.

On the surface, the more gruesome accounts of the unsavory acts of consumption seem to correlate to the narrator's ruminations about the potential demise of his marriage while those arousing generally accepted sensual and sexual stimulations favor his hope that his marriage will continue, or at least return to a more normal form of intimacy from their present "phase of rarefaction" (Calvino 10). But as many critics have shown, Calvino's accounts of the apparent oppositions between acceptable and unacceptable forms of cooking, eating, and communicating as well as those related to morality and religion, gender and sexuality, and European and Latin American society collapse under the weight of the Calvino's various depictions of couple's experiences in Mexico. Most critics conclude that "Under the Jaguar Sun" offers a reconciliation of these oppositions that leads to a new understanding of the relation between taste and knowledge. However we argue that by failing to take account of the importance Calvino places on the narrator's fascination with the new sounds of the Spanish words he is hearing, these interpretations fail to recognize that while these experiences do establish a relationship between knowledge and taste, they are also about the sensuality of language. To this extent, we show how Calvino seeks to articulate a different sense of pleasure, like Jacques Lacan's sense of feminine *jouissance* and Roland Barthes's notion of bliss, one that not only breaks down standard normative and narrative oppositions but also makes fluid the sensual pleasures of the sexuality, taste, and language.

There is plenty of scholarship on Calvino that employs Barthes's work as well as accounts of Calvino's own theoretical work and personal relationship with Barthes (cf., Badley, Cavallaro, De Laurentis, Gabrielle, Hume, and Weiss). Yet, none appear to use *The Pleasure of the Text* to analyze "Under the Jaguar Sun" as we do here. We employ Barthes' work to examine how Calvino's story attempts to move beyond the Lacanian split between a masculine and feminine *jouissance* to a Barthian sense of the pleasure based on the phonetics of language. We conclude by showing the ways in which the intertwining engagement with Mexico, its cuisine, and its culinary nomenclature in Calvino's story turns *poiesis* (poetry) into *praxis* (engagement) and at the same time how one's immersion into language can promote a more immediate and direct engagement with the cultural other.

"Under the Jaguar Sun" presents a variety of oppositions that are fundamental to the couple's experience and Calvino's textual strategy. One of first oppositions Calvino explores is the tension between the chaste and the carnal. Early in the story, the couple visits a convent where they view a painting of a chaplain and abbess. Though she is twenty years younger, the nun dies within a day of the priest's death from a "love so great" that "its spiritual sense sublimated but did not erase the physical emotion" (Calvino 4). Calvino, always in the voice of the unnamed husband, continues to intertwine descriptions of chaste and carnal love between the chaplain and abbess into

the couples' visit to another colonial convent of nuns whose noble families provided maids for their daughters who prepared them salacious foods that "satisfy the venial whims of gluttony, the only cravings allowed them" (6). Though these culinary and eating habits may appear transgressive, Calvino situates them within a Catholic religious tradition of fantastic stories "of ecstasies and transfigurations, martyrs and tortures" (6) and of the church's "sacred architecture" that was "impelled by the same drive toward the extreme that led to the exacerbation of flavors amplified by the blaze of the most spicy *chiles*" (7). He then compares the architecture of the local Catholic churches and convents to these spicy chiles when he writes,

Just as the colonial baroque set no limits on the profusion of ornament and display, in which God's presence was identified in a closely calculated delirium of brimming, excessive sensations, so the curing of the hundred of more native varieties of hot peppers carefully selected for each dish opened vistas of a flaming ecstasy. (Calvino 7)

Hence, for Calvino, the architectural contest parallels the one fought over cuisine, and the narrator realizes that both art forms revel in inducing ecstatic experiences of sight and taste.

Throughout the story, Calvino's narrator continues to make observations that undermine traditional binaries about what acceptable and unacceptable practices related to sex and food are but also in terms of the relationship between sex, food, politics, and culture.³ Such insights often link the intake of food with a cannibalism that takes on a clear political, cultural, or sexual connotation. Calvino characterizes the intake of food as form of cultural cannibalism in a mostly positive manner when he defines tourism as the more authentic "digesting of the visited country" as compared to the less authentic act of consuming a television show about the country or "visiting the exotic restaurants of our big cities" that merely create a "counterfeit reality of the cuisine" similar to the very same studio scenes produced for television (12). Yet, we find a clearer political depiction of cannibalizing the other through Calvino's narrator's account of a tea party held for by the wife of a politician for wives of the political oligarchy that controls Oaxaca. His description of the event revolves around two perceptions. The first relates to sounds of the escalating cacophony of their conversations that begins by resembling the natural sounds of cascading water and chirping birds, until it crescendoes into "spectacular acoustical event" in which "their voices mingled with the tinkling of cups and spoons and of knives cutting slices of cake" (Calvino 17). The second focuses on the image of a "gigantic full-color picture" of the hostess that conveys an aura similar to

³ Throughout his writings, Calvino playfully subverts binary oppositions with respect to a variety of established notions including time, space, truth, and identity. *Invisible Cities* offers one of his most mischievous yet lucid undermining of such binary categories.

propagandist portraits of Mao Tse-tung (Calvino 17).⁴ Here, as in the historical subjugation of the Oaxacan people and territory, Calvino's account of the pastoral ideal is taken over by the political voices and instruments that slice up cake as they once divided this land amongst the colonial and postcolonial oligarchy from which these women descend. Calvino thus ties their clamorous conversations and dining with their appropriation of land and, consequently, the livelihoods of the political other-- the local population who will get no closer to political power than as waiters and waitresses serving these women their afternoon tea. Likewise, although the local matriarch may look nothing like Mao, Calvino's description of her overpowering portrait makes clear the authoritarian character of the event and the political food chain it celebrates.⁵

At the heart of the story, however, are the more substantial ways Calvino employs the consumption of human flesh as food to undermine traditional binary oppositions between self and other and then moves beyond them to expand our notions of the limits of time and space and political and social categories. The first sense the reader gets of this is indirectly, when during a meal of "*guacamole*," "*guajolote con mole poblano*—that is, turkey with Puebla-style *mole* sauce," and "*quesadillas*," Olivia, without saying a word, asks the narrator if what she is tasting is "*cilantro*" (Calvino 9). This pleases the narrator tremendously not only because "it showed that I was indispensable to her" but also because he realizes that she can only find pleasure in experiences that they share (Calvino 10). Although at this point neither husband nor wife are fantasizing about cannibalizing each other, they are linked as a singular channel of desire and pleasure through the act of consuming the same Mexican food and spices.⁶ As much as this joint action breaks down the binary between self and other, the narrator also recognizes that the locale of their desires has fundamentally shifted from "the bed of our embraces" to the "dinner table" (Calvino 10).

Playing upon the reader's European presupposition of the uncivilized character of the pre-Columbian cultures, the story's first overt reference to the consumption of the other comes via a discussion of Aztec religious sacrifice and cannibalism (Calvino 12). Perhaps what upsets the couple's and the reader's sensibilities is the knowledge of two additional pieces of information about Aztec ritual sacrifice told to the couple by their guides Alonso and Salustiano. First, we learn it was the winners of ancient athletic competitions, and not the losers, who were sacrificed and that these sacrifices functioned not as form of punishment for losing but as a sign of honor and respect for

⁴ This reference calls to mind the large portrait of Mao that still hangs on the outside wall of the Forbidden City facing Tiananmen Square.

⁵ For a similar reading, see Hume, *Calvino's Fictions* 31.

⁶ See Baisin for a thorough account of Calvino's prior literary depictions on the relationship between food and desire (99-117).

winning (Calvino 14). Second, we discover that the spices used in cooking these bodies did not hide but rather enhance, and again, honor the flavor of human flesh (Calvino 22). These reports of ritual sacrifice and cannibalism are fundamental to Calvino's attempt to shock the reader out of her cultural presuppositions. However, more than simply playing upon the dichotomy of the civilized European and the barbaric Aztec, Calvino's inverted account of what these ancients deemed honorable prepares the way for his more subversive representation of the inherent cannibalism that characterizes the modern institutions of marriage and love.

Salustiano's explanation of how the spices might enhance the flavor of human flesh sparks Olivia's appetite but it causes the narrator to focus his attention, as he has done previously, on the way her teeth and tongue are "mentally savoring" their next meal (Calvino 23). During their dinner however, the objects of his gaze turn into the instruments of his own cannibalistic consumption. Calvino writes:

It was the sensation of her teeth in my flesh that I was imagining, and I could feel her tongue lift me against the roof of her mouth, enfold me in saliva, then trust me under the tips of the canines. (23)

The narrator does not simply play a passive role here. Rather, just as with the silent exchange over the taste of cilantro earlier in the story, he

felt also that I was acting on her, transmitting sensations that spread from the taste buds though her whole body. I was the one who aroused her every vibration—it was a reciprocal and complete relationship, which involved us and overwhelmed us. (Calvino 23)

Olivia becomes unsatisfied and upset when she recognizes that their relationship is based only on the meals they share. She lashes out at his characteristic aloofness, and in an ironic twist that maintains rather than moves the couple beyond the consumptive character of their tepid relationship, Olivia calls the narrator "insipid" or tasteless—which he takes as a painful, unmistakably culinary insult (Calvino 25).

During the next day's tour of excavations the narrator realizes how to reset the balance of power in his marriage by turning the tables on Olivia by subverting the binary opposition between the eater and eaten. During their tour of the ruins, they see a *chacmool* statue. Salustiano suggests that the *chacmool* --- the reclining human figure upon which the sacrificed heart is placed --- can represent the executioner who delivers the sacrificial offering to the gods just as much as it can represent the executed who is offering his own heart (Calvino 26). Salustiano's explanation that same person functioned as "both sacrificer and victim" upsets the couple's presupposition about the sacrificial rituals that took place at the temples (Calvino 26). This knowledge leads the narrator to ask if these victims "could be eaten, only because they themselves were

eaters of men?” (Calvino 26). The narrator surmises that if this is true, the only way he can once again become palatable to his wife is to become “the one who ate her” (Calvino 26). To this extent, the narrator further realizes that like those who ate the flesh of others, “the most appetizingly flavored human flesh belongs to the eater of human flesh” (Calvino 26).

The narrator’s revelations about how to erotically charge the couple’s metaphorical cannibalism of each other is followed by his account of a meal of “*gorditas pellicadas con manteca*” which we argue has important implications for understanding how Calvino moves beyond the reconciliation of binaries to a non-linguistic experience of pleasure that has gone unrecognized until now (27). The narrator connects the consumption of the humorously cannibalistically named Mexican dish of “plump girls pinched with butter” (or “Mexican meatballs” as he calls it) with his imagining that he cannibalizes or his wife (Calvino 26).⁷ More importantly, the meal leads them to reconsummate their sexual relationship. For many Calvino scholars, this sequence of events functions as the apex of the story whose main intent, they argue, is to show both how the exposure to another culture may undermine or, at the very least, complicate many of the cultural presuppositions and binaries we hold with respect to eating, marriage, sex, cannibalism.

For these scholars, one’s immediate sensual experiences with a new culture, including its art and architecture but more poignantly, its food, leads to a greater understanding and heightened perception of oneself, the other, and the world. Kathryn Hume, discusses the ways that “fusion of opposites” (*Calvino’s Fictions* 22) throughout the story, including the various metamorphoses and transformations (of who is doing the eating or being eaten or who is performing the sacrifice or being sacrificed), lead us to greater awareness of the fluidity between our selves, the food we eat, the people we love, our own culture and those with whom we live and learn about through our travels (*Calvino’s Fictions* 25-26). As much as the story may lend itself to “multiple readings” (*Calvino’s Fictions* 31) of marriage, food, sex, politics, and culture, for Hume, what is central to the story is how it is the narrator’s experiences of the world through his wife that provide him with a more sensational and secure relationship to world (“Sensuality” 174). This rings true on many levels. The wife’s Spanish is better than his and as a result she is the one who communicates with their guides.⁸ Her name, Olivia, reflects the story’s main theme of experiencing the world through food. Thus, it is no wonder that he tastes seasonings through her. Yet, Hume’s focus on Olivia as the intermediary

⁷ This mistranslation from gorditas to meatballs plays once more on the idea of cannibalization. Gorditas are not meatballs, but rather thick corn tortillas (cf. note 19). Calvino’s choice of the word “meatballs” emphasizes the cannibalistic, or at least, carnivorous, qualities of the name used to describe the food, and perhaps even the cultural cannibalism of referring to the food in terms of the Italian meatball.

⁸ Calvino’s wife, Esther Judith “Chichita” Singer, was herself an Argentinian translator.

between the narrator and the world implies that he never consumes ancient or contemporary Mexican culture immediately or fully. We disagree with Hume and later will show how his transformation at the Palenque Temples is fully his and only his own.

For Beno Weiss what is most important is the way in which these revelations about food and sexual desire help the narrator bridge the gap between pleasure and knowledge. In this sense, he agrees with Silvana Borutti's claim "that Calvino's intent was to suggest that taste is the sense in which we discover 'the nexus between pleasure and knowledge, between orality and intellectuality'" (Borutti quoted in Weiss 193). For Weiss then, it is no wonder that the original title for the story was to "*Sapore, Sapere*" or "Taste Means Knowledge." Dani Cavalloro agrees with Weiss. Not only does she hold that "Under the Jaguar Sun" offers "an unsettling juxtaposition of contrasts wherein sublime harmony is born of dissonance" (Cavalloro 179), she further contends that the "changes and fluctuations in the sexual relationship between the narrator and Olivia are paralleled by the gradual development of their knowledge of, and attitudes to, local cuisine and, via food, by an incremental understanding of each other" (Calvino 181). As "the ingestion of food also operates as a metaphor for the figurative incorporation of a radically alien, mysterious and even mystifying culture" (Calvino 182), the couple's new understanding of ritualistic sacrifice and cannibalism contributes to a greater appreciation of ancient Mexico, its cultural practices, and the cannibalistic nature of their own marriage. Finally, Jo Ann Cannon notes that Calvino's focus on "hearing, smell, and taste" in the three short stories "presents these senses not so much as an alternative means of perception of the world but rather as the means of access to a new world" and that Calvino's stories provide him with a way in which to move beyond the "written word" to the "unwritten world" (94).

All these interpretations suggest that Calvino understands knowledge as dependent on our senses, and more particularly, in the case of "Under the Jaguar Sun," our sense of taste. There are plenty of passages that support this contention. Likewise, it can also be said that it is only through the act of tasting or consuming food and each other that the couple can find pleasure. However, we contend that these interpretations do not go far enough and thus miss the important role that the sounds of the new language—Spanish—play within the overall story, and in the bond between the self, other, and world, that grounds the relationship between taste and knowledge.⁹

⁹ This is also true of Baisin's claim that the couple's "thought of the *chacmool*" as "both victim and sacrifice" allows the narrator to realize that he can only become the object of Olivia's desire if he eats her. This provides the psychological impetus for him to play both roles in his fantasized sacrifice at the Palenque Temples and use the food they eat at their final meal as "the instrument of transgression of a fundamental taboo" (Calvino 123). Although these insights are important, Baisin never mentions the meal of the "*gorditas pellizcadas con manteca*," which happens between the two events and which we claim leads Calvino to his insight into the fourth term.

Returning to the meal of “*gorditas pelliçadas con manteca*” what has been previously left unsaid is the importance of the narrator’s realization that he will never reach a state of complete enjoyment of this new dish and of his wife if the experience consists of only of “three terms—me, meatball, Olivia” (27). The Lacanian character of this statement is striking.¹⁰ For Lacan, the sexual relationship is impossible because “each sex is defined separately with respect to a third term. Thus, there is only a non-relationship, an absence of any conceivable direct relationship between the sexes” (Fink 105). This third term is Lacan’s *objet petit a*, that is, the mother’s body, or that part of the Real which makes us whole but to which we can never return once we enter into the Symbolic. The *objet petit a* is unnamable and, like this sense of wholeness, it is unreachable. In its place we substitute real or fantasized objects --- lovers, fetish objects, food, and even in some cases, meatballs --- that offer us a temporary fulfillment of our desires. So, whereas Lacan’s third term is an object which “sets desire in motion” Calvino’s third term, meatball, functions as the temporary substitute for Lacan’s third term that only momentarily fulfills the couple’s desire for each other (Evans 125). Strictly speaking then, for Lacan and Calvino, the word meatball refers only to the food that provides a temporary fulfillment of desire and, like the sensual pleasures gained through experiencing each other’s bodies once again, the meatballs themselves are only a substitute for the *objet petit a*. As such, the meatballs are only an impetus to the kind of fleeting pleasure achieved through what Lacan calls phallic jouissance (Fink 111), wherein the link between word “meatballs” and its referent, the food itself, like the sexual liaison between lovers, provides only a momentary exuberance and always returns one to a state of unfulfilled separateness within the Symbolic which is ultimately insurmountable¹¹ when experienced as phallic jouissance. However, we argue that something beyond this occurs when the narrator begins to speak of the fourth term. This fourth term is the “name of the meatballs” itself, “*gorditas pelliçadas con manteca*” (Calvino 27). It is the sound of this name that the narrator maintains “was especially savoring” to the point where “the magic of the name continued” through the night and

¹⁰ Hume, Weiss and Cavalloro, all recognize a Freudian character in the story’s focus on the “oral and genital” stages, “oral eroticism” and “the association of sexuality with eating” (*Calvino’s Fictions* 21; Weiss 191; Cavalloro 192). But none of the critics, not even Cavalloro, offers a Lacanian of the text as we do here (cf note xii).

¹¹ Cavalloro is the only one we have found who offers a Lacanian interpretation of the impossible fulfillment of desire and meaning caused by this “hole or lacuna” (190) with respect to “The Name, The Nose,” one of the companion short stories to “Under the Jaguar Sun.” Although Cavalloro then asserts that this same “omnipresent feeling of unfulfillment” characterizes the “erotic quotes undertaken by all the male narrators of the three novellas” she never shows how this is the case for the title story, opting instead to tie this unquenchable search for fulfillment to *Difficult Loves*, an earlier collection of short stories by Calvino (Cavalloro 190-192). As will be shown, we suggest that Calvino aims to move beyond this gap through his focus on the phonetics and the sensuality of language.

provided “the inspiration that had blessed the finest moments of our joint life [that] came to visit us again” (Calvino 27).

Upon revisiting Calvino’s use of Spanish throughout the text, one can recognize how Calvino’s increasing emphasis on the Spanish words he is hearing culminates in his revelation about the fourth term and that this focus on the phonetic experience of the fourth term, rather than the overcoming of opposition, is at heart of “Under the Jaguar Sun.” In fact, the story’s first sentence that tells us “Oaxaca’ is pronounced ‘Wabaka’” (3), focuses the reader’s attention to the sound of the Spanish words. Throughout most of the text, Calvino’s narrator gives and then translates the Spanish words he hears. In order to focus his reader’s attention Calvino italicizes many of Spanish terms he is learning.¹² This follows his long-established practice of employing “[g]raphic symbols, different print types, and unusual spelling ... to supply a strong visual perception” (de Lauretis 417). The use of italics highlights the differences between the original Spanish words and their translation. Some of the words contribute to the reader’s sense of the relationship between people (“*Tenían sus criadas,* [...] “They had their servants”” (Calvino 6)), other times to our understanding of a guide’s explanation of a ritual (“*los xopilotes,* [...] The vultures” that ate the remaining parts of sacrificed humans (Calvino 15)), and still others to our understanding of space (the “*zócalo,* the regular little square” of Mexican colonial cities (Calvino 21)), For the most part, however, the narrator directs the readers’ attention to the new words for the various Mexican foods and spices he is tasting for the first time. Like the pleasures he experiences when tasting new spices, soups, meats, dips, and fruits, the narrator seems to equally savor the pronunciation of “*cilantro*” (9), “*sopa de camarones*—shrimp soup” (23), “*tamal de elote*—a fine semolina of sweet corn [...] ground pork and very hot pepper” (3), “*guacamole*” (8), and “*nopales* (which we call prickly pears)” (12).

Throughout his story, this focus on these new Spanish words suggests that, to truly experience, understand, and find pleasure in the other (either as an individual or culture), one must not only move beyond a pure intellectual comprehension of the other, but further past those common sense experiences related most often to the sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound of a things to include the sensuality of the language that does not simply refer to things in the world, but creates its own sensibility with respect to our experience of the world and the things we find in it. To this extent, it can be argued that the reason Calvino abandons the story’s original title, “*Sapore, Sapere*” is because his experience of the sensuality of the language moves one beyond the connection between taste and knowledge to a newfound wisdom that reaches more deeply into the experiential bonds between self, other, world, and language that he had recognized previously in his other novels and short stories.

¹² This practice is used both in the original Italian publication and English translation of the story but unsurprisingly not in the Spanish version.

In Lacanian terms, the fullness of this experience moves the narrator beyond phallic jouissance to a feminine jouissance that opens the self to the experience of an “unspeakable ecstasy” that is achieved only when the demarcations between the past and present, body and spirit, self and other, and language and meaning become fluid (Homer 105).¹³ While recognizing that a state of fluidity between self, other, and world moves one beyond the boundary conditions of the Lacanian Symbolic to an experience of feminine jouissance, it is Roland Barthes’ notion of jouissance as “bliss,” as defined in *The Pleasure of the Text*, that speaks even more specifically to the role that the sensuality of language plays in Calvino’s fourth term.¹⁴ Like Lacan’s feminine jouissance, Barthesian bliss denudes the self of its individuality while undermining previously held cultural traditions or values (Barthes 14).¹⁵ Barthes even cites Lacan in saying ““that bliss is forbidden to the speaker, as such it cannot be spoken except between the lines...”” (21) The ellipses in Barthes’ quote show the extent to which words are insufficient. According to Graham Allen, for Barthes “the moment of bliss, in other words, occurs when the subject is confronted with language that undoes the social question of identity [...] when the subject escapes into a language which denies the possibility of a statement of identity” (107). To this extent, “Under the Jaguar Sun” can be understood as a text of bliss when, like Calvino’s narrator, the reader experiences this same sense of the loss of subjectivity as the narrator does when he loses himself in the sensuality of this new language of Spanish. Moreover, because it is a foreign language, it is literally unspeakable. We’ve observed that while the New World’s language is Spanish, a Romance language of European origin, the words that most entice the narrator are the words that are of Nahuatl origin—the language of the Aztecs, and therefore of New World origin. Like the narrator himself, Calvino’s text moves the reader beyond the “old languages” of the cultural past to one that is “unexpected [and] succulent in its newness” (Barthes 40, 42).¹⁶ Most importantly, the key to experiencing this bliss is the way in which that new language is expressed in the unusual sounds of indigenous origin.

Barthes’ notion of textual bliss has been most often interpreted as an alternative reading experience resulting from the innovative use of one’s traditional idiom. Yet, in the context of a story centered on a protagonist’s search for a clearer understanding of himself in relation to his wife and this new culture, Calvino’s emphasis is not simply on

¹³ Lacan asserts that only women, who are never fully defined by the Symbolic, can experience feminine jouissance (Homer 105). Given that we are discussing Calvino’s male narrator, we are arguing that Calvino believes otherwise.

¹⁴ For a fascinating comparison of Calvino’s and Barthes’ rejection of left (and right) politics for their reactionary positions on art and pleasure respectively see Weiss 5 and Allen 100-104.

¹⁵ Conversely, Lacan’s phallic jouissance and Barthes’ text of pleasure are firmly rooted in the dominant ideology of those traditions and values. However, according to Barthes, whereas “[phallic] pleasure can be expressed in words; bliss cannot” (21).

¹⁶ Some examples of the words mentioned in the text that are of Nahuatl origin are: *elote*, *tamal*, *guacamole*, *nopal*, *guajalote*, *huachinango*, *zopliote*, *mole* and *chile*.

the translated meaning of the Spanish words but on their evocative sound. Barthes concludes *The Pleasure of the Text* by focusing on the oral and, more specifically phonetic, character of textual bliss. Here, Barthes states that “to imagine an aesthetic of textual pleasure” one would have to consider a form of “*writing aloud*” (66). By this he does not suggest that this pleasure emerges from the way in which one expresses meaning through sound for this speaks to the phonology of language. Barthes emphatically asserts, “*writing aloud* is not phonological but phonetic” (66). That is, Barthes aligns bliss not with the ways in which sounds can be conjoined to create meaning but rather the relationship between the sounds of a language and the symbols- the words associated with those sounds. The text of bliss is one “where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, the tongue, not that of meaning, of language” (Barthes 66-67). To this extent, from the first sentence of the text, Calvino’s narrator continually emphasizes the Spanish language—a language he never fully grasps but continually evokes in his quest to not only bridge the gap between pleasure and knowledge but also to allow his wife and him, individually and as a couple, to reach a state of spiritual ecstasy, and to bring the reader, ever closer to the experience of textual bliss.¹⁷

Beyond the fourth terms’ magical capacity to reconstitute the couple’s marriage, Calvino’s description of the narrator’s experience at the temples of Palenque on the subsequent day suggests that the narrator’s newfound linguistic sensibility has allowed him to move from a state of estrangement to one of characterized by an ecstatic immersion in the world. In this penultimate scene Calvino describes how the narrator’s “dizzy spell” from climbing up and down a series of temple steps, combined with the

¹⁷ It should be noted here that our account of the narrator’s experience argues against Cannon’s claim that “Calvino ... has no choice but to rely upon words to convey the unwritten world” and that “[t]he only way he can evoke this lost knowledge of the senses is by translating sensual perceptions to written signs” (96). Our analysis moves Calvino beyond his previous account of language’s inability to make sense of the world in *Mr. Palomar*. Both in this novel and a later interview Calvino acknowledges the legitimacy of each perspective:

These are two different attitudes, and I recognize the force of each of them. We cannot do without interpretation, without asking ourselves what something means, with embarking on an explanation. At the same time, however we know that for every explanation... too many things are missing, because we lack the entire context. Even if we succeed in establishing certain meaning with precision, these so-called meanings, in *our* context, are entirely different. (Lucente 250)

What we are proposing is that it is only with “Under the Jaguar Sun” that Calvino recognizes a way past the quandary of reaching understanding and knowledge via the interpretation of meaning and the translation of meaning is through a more immediate and corporeal experience of language and culture. For a counterargument contending that the narrator’s experiences at the end of the story make it “impossible ‘not to interpret,’” see Baisin 123.

spectacle of the tourists “loud in sound and color,” and the “light of the jaguar sun” cause his initial faintness to turn into a full-fledged illusion that he is being sacrificed on one of the temple altars (Calvino 28). Surrounded by the various altars and temple reliefs, such as the one found in the Temple of the Sun that depicts sacrificial victims, the narrator embraces his transformation, exclaiming,

The world spun, I plunged down, my throat cut by the knife of the king-priest, down the high steps onto the forest of tourists with super-8s and usurped, broad-brimmed sombreros. The solar energy coursed along the dense networks of blood and chlorophyll; I was living and dying in all the fibers of what is chewed and digested and in all the fibers that absorb the sun, consuming and digesting. (Calvino 28-29)

Consistent with the various ways we, and others, have suggested that the story undermines established cultural binaries, Calvino’s description here clearly depicts the multiple ways in which the narrator’s experience at the temple’s altar allows him to overcome boundaries between past and present, self and other, and self and the world. Beyond this reading however, this passage, like the earlier reference to the fourth term also suggests that the narrator’s overcoming of binaries allows him to reach the state of the “unspeakable ecstasy” of Lacan’s feminine jouissance (Homer 105). As a sacrificial victim, he traverses space and time and coexists simultaneously in two times when he returns to pre-Columbian Mexico and remains in the present with the tourists wielding cameras. The sunrays that led to his initial faintness now cause his veins to pulse with a mixture of those elements—blood and chlorophyll—necessary to sustain both human and plant life. To this extent, just as he will become one with the priest who he imagines will eat his flesh, he also becomes fully integrated with the sun and plants which nourish his very being. With this fantastic experience, the divisions between himself and world, the past and present, sacrificer and sacrificed, and the eater and the eaten are not only erased but experienced as ecstatic.

As was the case in his earlier descriptions of being chewed by his wife, ritualistic sacrifices, *chacmools*, and the use of spices to enhance the flavor of human flesh, with the narrator’s experience at the temples, Calvino returns to one of the story’s major themes—cannibalism. The relevance of this theme should not be underestimated for as Gian-Paolo Biasin documents, a “treatise by Sahagún” on cannibalism was published with the original Italian version of Calvino’s story (119). Biasin adopts Peggy Reeves Sanday’s anthropological work that is, in part, based on this treatise, to explain the ways in which cannibalism functions as a “ritual meal” while sacrificial victims would be considered “divine food” (119-120). This offers its own insights into Olivia’s “gourmet appreciation of human flesh” as well as her psychological need for “revenge” and

religious “desire to communicate with and feed the gods” (Biasin 119-120).¹⁸ While this may all be true, Biasin’s interpretation only focuses on Olivia’s perspective as either an outside observer of this cultural practice or as the subject having agency over the practice. Yet, it never speaks to the overall way by which the narrator participates in the dual roles of the eater and eaten within the cannibalist binary and how this duality functions in a narrative where political, social, and cultural oppositions between the Americas and Europe persist. A case in point is the difference between the narrator’s early gastronomic tourism and the complete cultural immersion he experiences at the Palenque temples. The narrator recognizes that his own initial form of gastronomic tourism offers a more insight into Mexican culture than that of visiting a exotic local restaurant or watching a television show about the culture would. All three of these experiences –visiting a local restaurant, eating in Mexico, and watching a television show –reflect a form of cultural colonization insofar as they emerge from the perspective of an outsider looking in, in this case, as a modern European who assimilates what he can of the other culture to his own cultural perspective while obfuscating, dismissing and, if necessary, dismantling and destroying what does not conform to his cultural paradigm.

Hence, contra Biasin, the narrator’s multiple experiences as both the eater and eaten that culminate in his fantastic sacrifice (and implied consumption) at the Palenque Temples allows for a full integration of his European self with a spiritual awareness of and bodily immersion with this ancient culture. In this way, his experience appears to fulfill what Oswald De Andrade’s modern nation-building “Cannibalist Manifesto” attempted to do for the modern Brazilian of the 1920s: to “challenge [...] the dualities civilization/barbarism, modern/primitive, and original/derivative” in order to help “forge his specular colonial identity into an autonomous and original national culture” (Bary 35). As a European, the narrator is not a part of this new Latin American identity; nevertheless, his experience at the temples challenges these political binaries for him. He surrenders and allows himself to be devoured by the colonized rather than be yet another European who devours the colonial culture. Thus the narrator’s approach, in contrast to a typical European tourist, seems to align him with Andrade because, unlike other Europeans, he understands that, “Cannibalism unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically” (de Andrade). He sacrifices himself to unite and identify with Latin America. He is like a willing sacrificial victim of the past who gives up his power, in this case as a European, to surrender to the magnificence of Latin America.

After describing the narrator’s fantastic experience at the temples, Calvino ends his story with a description of the meal where in the couple once again reaches a state of Barthian bliss. As they begin eating their teeth fall into a rhythmic pattern allowing them to transform from their human form into “serpents concentrated in the ecstasy of

¹⁸ Biasin is referring to Peggy Reeves Sanday’s *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System*.

swallowing each other in turn” (Calvino 29). This ecstasy arises as their mutual consumption becomes part of a more encompassing awareness of

being swallowed by the serpent that digests us all, in the universal cannibalism that leaves its imprint on every amorous relationship and erases the lines between our bodies and *sopa de frijoles*, *huachinango a la vera cruzana*, and *enchiladas*. (Calvino 29)

For the first time in the story and only after the narrator’s recognition of the importance of the fourth term, none of the culinary terms are translated. In fact, Calvino abandons the practice of translating Spanish terms after acknowledging the revelatory character of the fourth term. In this manner, Calvino’s story ends with the erasure of divisions between the couple’s bodies and the untranslated menu of their meal— a testament to the importance he places on the sound of the Spanish language and its ability to traverse the boundary conditions that plagued the narrator throughout his trip to Oaxaca.¹⁹

Unbound by the former divisions between self and other, sense and knowledge, as well as constituted by time (history) and space (geography), Calvino’s text proffers a way in which writing becomes a way to engage the world, the other, and most importantly, the world of other that moves us beyond our normal experiential framework to an ecstatic overcoming of the multiple boundaries between the world, language, people, space, and time. As Linda Badley suggests, Calvino’s work “dramatizes the dialectic through which *poiesis* is realized in *praxis*, or the process through which a text becomes a medium of engagement” (76). What we have tried to show here is that Calvino’s fourth term makes the reader aware that an engagement with a foreign language is not simply a matter of translating a term from one language into another in search of the meaning of specific terms. Rather, it is a form of engagement with a cultural totality that emerges from the experiential ground of the phonetic articulation of that society through the voice of its language.

¹⁹ Insofar as the crux of our argument centers on the issue of translation in the context of the story, we have examined the text in Italian and read the English and Spanish translations. The translated words in the English translation and the original Italian story have similar effects. It makes sense for Spanish words and the Mexican cultural traditions to be translated and the indigenous foods to be explained. The Spanish translation of the story is uncanny in that it uses the words in Spanish but unlike in Italian and the English versions, these words are not italicized; in the Spanish translation version there is no use of linguistic codeswitching. Moreover, the story explains things that are familiar in an unfamiliar way. The *gorditas* are explained as *albondigas* or meatballs, but *gorditas* are not *albondigas*. The former is made out of corn and flat and circular and the latter one is made out of meat and is round. For the scholar who has only read the story in Spanish, she misses out on the bilingual nature of the original text, but like in the other versions, the Spanish language translation still breaks the boundaries between the familiar and unfamiliar and thus illustrates the way in which the fourth term traverses the boundary conditions between language and experience. For these reasons we argue that our claims are effective in the original Italian and its English and Spanish translations.

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Creation in Distraction: Felisberto Hernández's “Explicación falsa de mis cuentos”

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Abstract: Drawing on Walter Benjamin's concept of “reception in distraction,” I describe a similar phenomenon called “creation in distraction,” which signals a profound change in modern perception but also presents a new form for its expression. While reception in distraction questions individual bourgeois subjects as receivers of art, creation in distraction troubles Romantic notions of individual genius, making way for non-individualized—even posthuman—creation. I analyze Uruguayan writer Felisberto Hernández's “Explicación falsa de mis cuentos” as an example of this phenomenon.

Keywords: Latin American Literature, Modernity, Authorship, Subjectivity, Posthuman

Introduction

In his second version of “The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility” (1935-1939), Walter Benjamin establishes an opposition between two kinds of attention, concentrated and distracted, in which “[c]ontemplative immersion” appears as a bourgeois mode while distraction emerges as a new “variant of social behavior” characteristic of the masses (39). He illustrates this “antithesis” with the following example: “A person who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it; he enters into the work, just as, according to legend, a Chinese painter entered his complete painting while beholding it. By contrast, the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves. Their waves lap around it; they encompass it with their tide” (40).

This passage has been read as the establishment of a positive value for the kind of distraction that characterized the cinema-watching masses of Western Europe in the 1920s and '30s; the kind of distracted state that Siegfried Kracauer had earlier lamented in his 1926 essay “The Cult of Distraction.” Seeing in the masses “a matrix from which all customary behavior toward works of art is today emerging newborn,” Benjamin seeks to redeem their distracted attention and uncover in it a political potential not detected by Kracauer (Benjamin 39). It represents what Benjamin calls “[r]eception in distraction—the sort of reception which is increasingly noticeable in all areas of art and is a symptom of profound changes in apperception” (40-41, emphasis in original). The locus of the new form

of perception is the masses, and its “training ground” is the cinema; it is thus the mass as cinema audience that embodies the promise of the new (collective) reception in distraction, opposed to the now-outdated bourgeois individual reception in contemplation.

However, if we reread the example that Benjamin uses to illustrate this antithesis between contemplative immersion and reception in distraction, one striking element appears in the foreground. When describing the concentrated subject who becomes lost in the work of art, he does not use an example of a bourgeois museum-goer or some other expected image. Rather, he invokes the figure of a Chinese painter who, “according to legend,” enters into the world of the painting he himself has created. Upon first glance, the status of this figure is doubly unstable: not only is he a Chinese painter, a far-off “other,” but his story is also told “according to legend” and thus forms part of the realm of myth. His ambiguity goes further, however. The Chinese painter’s relationship to the work of art is not the one we expect to see, as he is not simply the individual contemplating a work of art; he is both the creator and the receiver of the artwork, both artist and audience.

Why is the mass audience, whose distracted reception heralds for Benjamin the promise of a new form of perception in modernity, contrasted with an “exotic,” semi-mythical figure who occupies a liminal space between creator and receiver of the artwork? Benjamin’s example reveals a significant element that has characterized discussions of attention and distraction: an opposition has often been established between work of art and audience, and the creator of that work of art is scarcely mentioned. Moreover, the attentive state of the audience is of central importance while that of the creator of the work of art merits little consideration. By mentioning the painter, engrossed in his own work once he has created it, Benjamin hints at a little-explored aspect of attention: the role of attention in creativity and the consequent possibility of a certain “creation in distraction” similar in nature to his notion of “reception in distraction.” What is the painter’s attentive state in this anecdote? Is it only by “beholding” the painting that he becomes lost in it? What was his state earlier, while he was creating the painting? This cryptic reference to a legendary Chinese painter, who is both a creator of a work of art and a contemplator who is absorbed into it, opens up the possibility of new dimensions of attention and distraction as states that characterize not just one who *looks* but also one who *produces*.

I wish to initiate an exploration of the phenomenon that I have called “creation in distraction” above. A preliminary definition would envision creation in distraction as a possible constitutive part of the process of reception in distraction as well as a result of it. Like reception in distraction, creation in distraction would signal a profound change in perception in modernity, and a new way of expressing that perception creatively. Just as reception in distraction calls into question the individual bourgeois subject as receiver of art, creation in distraction would trouble Romantic notions of individual genius, inspiration, and originality, calling forth the possibilities of non-

individualized—even posthuman—creation, or creation that emerges from an attentive state in which the individual subject has been decentered. And I would like to propose the Uruguayan writer Felisberto Hernández, specifically in his 1955 text “Explicación falsa de mis cuentos,” along with several short stories composed both before and after it, as compelling examples of this phenomenon.

“Explicación falsa” is a manifesto of sorts in which Hernández states that he intends to respond to all of the people who have asked him how he writes his stories. However, instead of providing anything resembling a conventional answer, he flatly states that he neither knows nor does not know how his stories come to be. He “explains”:

En un momento dado pienso que en un rincón de mí nacerá una planta. La empiezo a acechar creyendo que en ese rincón se ha producido algo raro, pero que podría tener porvenir artístico. Sería feliz si esta idea no fracasara del todo. Sin embargo, debo esperar un tiempo ignorado: no sé cómo hacer germinar la planta, ni cómo favorecer, ni cuidar su crecimiento. (“Explicación” 216)

This is a double disavowal: not only is it a self-proclaimed “false explanation,” and thus suspect from the outset; the “explanation” itself is a non-explanation, providing no clear information about how Hernández’s stories come into being. Instead, we are offered this “false explanation,” which troubles the notion of a clear origin for writing, converting it into the metaphor of a plant over whose growth the writer has little to no control. Origin, then, is something that is doubly denied, doubly deferred.

Hernández develops the metaphor of the plant-as-origin: “Ella misma no conocerá sus leyes, aunque profundamente las tenga y la conciencia no las alcance. No sabrá el grado y la manera en que la conciencia intervendrá, pero en última instancia impondrá su voluntad. Y enseñará a la conciencia a ser desinteresada” (216). The double disavowal now becomes a triple denial: not only is the explanation false and the plant-origin not controllable by Hernández, but now the plant itself does not even “know its own laws,” at least not at a conscious level. His stories, he insists, are neither intentional nor unintentional: “No son completamente naturales, en el sentido de no intervenir la conciencia. Eso me sería antipático. No son dominados por una teoría de la conciencia. Eso me sería extremadamente antipático” (216). Consciousness seems to work in these statements as a sort of willed perception that a human subject would wield over the material world; as such, it represents a human intentionality that Hernández evades. At the same time, consciousness is also something that belongs to the plant-origin, something that both writer and plant must distract or defer in order for writing to emerge.

The *mise-en-abyme* structure that characterizes this process of creation with no clear origin is useful for understanding the principle of deferral at work in much of

Hernández's writing. By not providing a real explanation of anything, but rather deferring the agency of creation from writer to plant and beyond, this "false explanation" thematizes two of the main ideas that recur in most of Hernández's works: human unintentionality and the subjectivity of objects. Here, the human subject is the writer himself, represented in his own *apologia* as a bumbling figure, perceiving the presence of something but not knowing how to react to it, and thus remaining passive. The object is his story, defined here as a plant with a life of its own who will not benefit from the human subject's attention. The message, it seems, is that Hernández does not write his stories but rather they write themselves through him. Both the human subject and the plant-origin have a consciousness, but it is unclear whether it is a shared one.

The most striking aspect of Hernández's piece is its meditation on the connection between perception and creation. The writer and his plant encounter one another not through a process of concentrated attention but through distraction, a "disinterested consciousness" that both writer and plant possess. Why is consciousness such a central term in this eccentric explanation of the creative process? How does this "disinterested consciousness," which I understand as a state of distraction, lead both the writer and the plant-origin to the creation of literature? I argue that Hernández's preoccupation with consciousness here is part of an overall project (one whose intentionality the writer himself would surely deny) to chart the ways in which literary creation interacts with different attentional states, and to trace the contours of what can emerge from a distracted writing subject. Many readers of Hernández have emphasized the importance of distraction in his work but have based this observation on distracted characters in his stories or on biographical information gleaned from people who knew Hernández personally. It is my contention, however, that distraction is not just part of the author's personality or a theme for his stories; rather, it is actually constitutive of the very texts themselves—distraction is not a *theme* for writing but a *means* of writing. As I hope to demonstrate, this "false explanation" shows us the way in which Hernández's writing is itself a theorization of a certain mode of attention or inattention, which I call "creation in distraction." And as part of this, Hernández is inviting us to meditate on the creative process itself, purposely distancing his biographical (already fictionalized) "self" from the writing that comes out of him, in a distracting move that leads the reader's attention away from the search for a clear origin for his writing.

The "Mobile Glancing Eye"

Distraction has aroused interest among many critics and artists, who have assigned to it a variety of meanings, from seeing in it the perplexing evidence of modernization's hold on the psyche, to heralding it as the promise of a new mode of perception more attuned to industrialized urban experiences. Paul North has argued that distraction prompts serious ontological and epistemological questioning, because the Cartesian tradition in Western philosophy does not allow for the possibility of "not-

thinking”—such a concept is something that literally “cannot be thought” (North 42). Yet, in the phenomenon of distraction, this philosophically impossible act of “non-thinking” becomes possible: distraction is a state in which “non-thinking,” or something akin to it, takes place (42). Distraction is “the disintegration or misdirection of a unified, stable, directional mental force for possession of sanctioned objects”; in other words, if “paying attention” is considered the “unified, stable, directional” exertion of energy toward something, then distraction is the point at which this unity, stability, and directionality break down (5). Consciousness loses the focus that it had trained on something specific, and is left directionless—without a clear target for its energies, it just floats aimlessly. But more importantly, the will to “possession” that characterizes attentional focus disappears and the mind just lets go. It is a state defined by incompleteness and partiality, with paradoxically “receding-approaching” mental horizons along which the mind remains half-open (13). Sylvia Molloy has used similar terms when discussing Felisberto Hernández’s work, calling his writing *entreabierto* (“Tierras” 71-72).

Jonathan Crary has argued for “an idea of perception that can be both an absorption *and* an absence or deferral” (9, emphasis in the original). For him, attention contains within it “its own undoing,” as it is not opposed with but rather “continuous with states of distraction, reverie, dissociation, and trance” (46). The gesture of locating attention and distraction on the same continuum rather than as polar opposites is a stance against arguments such as those put forth by Benjamin. For Crary, inattention can be viewed as a productive force, and asks “how and whether creative modes of trance, inattention, daydream, and fixation can flourish” (78). These “creative modes” that Crary mentions can be linked to Benjamin’s Chinese painter: what happens to attention in this in-between state, in this space between artist and audience? He finds some possible answers in the later work of Paul Cézanne, where the painter works out issues of attention as they relate to the creative subject; he seems to leave behind what Meyer Schapiro called the “art of grave attention” in favor of an exploration of the “uncertain status of an attentive observer” (Crary 281, 282). One of Cézanne’s major discoveries in this later period, Crary maintains, is the idea that “perception can take no other form than the process of its formation” and thus his work does not seek to represent or record experience but rather it is “confronting and inhabiting the instability of perception itself” (287-88).

Crary also recalls Paul Valéry’s declaration that fixed concentration makes things come alive but also makes them take on a life of their own, and in order to regain control over those things, we need to undergo a process of forgetting (299). The creative subject claims no status as a stable source for creativity, but rather acts as a vehicle through which this creativity takes place. For Valéry, the artist actually loses control by concentrating his or her attention, and it is only by letting the mind wander, by forgetting, that control is reestablished. There is a troubled sense of agency at work in these ideas, aligned with Benjamin’s Chinese artist who is drawn into it his own

painting. For Hernández, like Cézanne, the artist is thus somewhat passive, allowing something to wash over him while he averts his or her attention.

Center and periphery also gain the same status: as Crary notes, Cézanne attempts to “grasp peripheral retinal sensation simultaneously and with the same immediacy and intensity as the central or foveal region of the eye” (297). There is no normative perspective offered: both the perspective of the panorama (all periphery, no center) and the stereoscope (all center, no periphery) are incorporated into the scene (297). This encourages the observer’s eye to move continuously between multiple centers and peripheries, which themselves change their status depending on where the eye is at any given moment. This goes against the notion that concentration leads to greater sharpness of vision: “Once the eye stops moving,” Crary reminds us, “the immobile eye triggers a ferment of activity—it is the doorway to both trance and to perceptual disintegration” (300). While the fixed eye produces movement but also disintegration, another kind of gaze, involving a “mobile glancing eye,” allows the viewer to engage the object not as a “premade integrity” but “as a process of becoming” (301). The new vision, ushered in by Cézanne’s pictorial technique of combining center and periphery, is mobile and changeable, involved in a constant process of glancing and averting its glance, learning and forgetting.

This same “mobile glancing eye” is present in the perceptual experience related by Hernández in his “false explanation” of the origins of his writing. When Hernández protests that he cannot claim full or certain knowledge about the process by which his literary creation comes into being, he speaks as a spectator in that process with an eye that is continually moving and changing, never fixed on an object for too long, lest this attention cause it to fail to develop its own life. It is not fixed concentration that leads to writing, but rather partial attention, and a gaze out of the corner of the eye. A fitting image for this might be that of a distracted spectator at the cinema; perhaps a Surrealist looking at the screen in the manner of Man Ray, “blinking his eyes rapidly, ... moving his fingers in front of his eyes, making grills of them, or placing a semi-transparent cloth over his face” (Kyrrou 139). It is a refusal to pay full attention, a retreat from the petrifying power of the fixed gaze, withdrawing back to a partial spectatorship, one made up of half-viewed images and partly-grasped scenes.

It is well known that, beginning around 1917 and decades prior to turning his full attention to writing, Hernández worked for many years as a traveling pianist, hired to provide sound accompaniment to silent films in small movie-houses in the provincial towns of the Uruguayan and Argentine interior. Many critics have explored references to cinema in Hernández’s work, most often as part of an autobiographically-oriented reading of his many quasi-autobiographical stories. In addition, the importance of music as a theme in Hernández’s literary creation has been explored at length by critics, as well as the way in which music appears also as a formal influence on his writing style. For example, in one noted study of Hernández’s relationship with film, Enriqueta Morrillas argues that Hernández’s early employment as film accompanist gave his writing a

particularly spontaneous character, given that the pianist seated at the foot of the screen, tasked with providing music to entertain the film audience, experiences a certain freedom to be spontaneous and even to improvise (Morrillas 84). Indeed, an element of incompleteness characterizes Hernández's stories; a somewhat haphazard element that suggests the influence of musical improvisation.

What critics have not yet explored is the relationship between the specific attentional investments that Hernández's work as a film accompanist involved, and the writing that he would go on to produce. To put it differently, an attention-oriented reading of Hernández could ask: what are the attentional characteristics of the subject who is positioned between audience, screen, and piano? His attention must be divided at least between the goings-on on the screen and the piano in front of him, if not also further divided by the need to gauge audience reactions. It is intriguing to approach Hernández from the perspective of attention, not only in light of the ways in which attention figures in his literary work and occupies a central place in his "false explanation" of his creative process, but also in light of the attentional orientation that could have been produced by his experience working in movie-houses. Imagining Hernández positioned between screen, audience and piano, it is not difficult to envision his attention as something akin to "studiously distracted," with an eye that moves continually between the foci that require attention, in order to continue producing the spectacle that the audience requires. Far from being an eye that is fixed in concentration on one thing or another, Hernández's eye is Cézanne's "mobile glancing eye" (Crary 300).

This "mobile glancing eye" can be found all throughout Hernández's body of work, both before and after his "explicación falsa" and even as far back as his earliest fictions. Early texts such as "Prólogo de un libro que nunca pude empezar" (1925), as well as later works such as "Las dos historias" (1943) and "La casa nueva" (1959), present us again and again with a writing subject who is unable or unwilling to focus on the task of communication. "Prólogo," a text that is one paragraph long, is not a story or even notes toward a story, but rather a statement by a writer-narrator explaining why a story cannot be written. He begins: "Pienso decir algo de alguien. Sé desde ya que todo esto será como darme dos inyecciones de distinto dolor: el dolor de no haber podido decir cuanto me propuse y el dolor de haber podido decir algo de lo que me propuse" ("Prólogo" 44). The narrator skips between different temporal perspectives, beginning with the verb "pienso" which communicates both a current activity (thinking) and a future-oriented perspective (planning). He is thinking about saying something about someone, while also planning to say something about someone. From thinking and planning he jumps to a later point in time, at which he already knows that this thinking and planning have not resulted in anything. He knows how the failed result will feel: the pain of *not having been able to* ("no haber podido") say as much as he wanted to say, as well as the pain of *having been able to* ("haber podido") say some of what he had wanted to say (44). By writing from the position of already having given up on the idea

of being able to write—“Yo emprendí esta tarea sin esperanza”—the present is avoided, the act of writing elided (44).

However, the prologue remains, and it is given the title of what it is—a prologue to a book that the writer-narrator was not able to begin. This nonexistent book is a text that the writer’s intentions have not been able to produce; he knows that by “proponerse” to write it, he has doomed himself to failure. The text exists, then, as a record of the way in which thinking and writing have shown themselves to be incompatible, because thinking has led to an attempt to use language to represent something (in this case, a woman). The “pensar” and the “proponerse” are the problem: their intentionality has prevented the book from being written. The text we do have, the only result of the attempt to write the book, stands as both the before and after of failed writing, in which attention made representation impossible.

After this early hint of what will become a lifelong preoccupation with the fraught relationship between attention and writing, these issues are explored again and again in later writings such as “Las dos historias” and “La casa nueva.” “Las dos historias” can be read as a chronicle of the impossibility of writing. Composed of fragments that are never quite able to be made into the shape of a story, the narrator affirms this impossibility, and thus the story is also somehow constituted by that failure to become complete. Part of this failure is due to the writing subject’s inability to concentrate. The text opens on a scene of preparation and planning for writing: “El 16 de junio, y cuando era de noche, un joven se sentó ante una mesita donde había útiles de escribir. Pretendía atrapar una historia y encerrarla en un cuaderno” (“Las dos historias” 160). The narrator is relating, in the third person, what happened to an individual who had decided to try and write a story. Almost immediately, however, he is drawn away from this thread of the tale, and into a digression, as he goes back to a prior moment: “Hacía días que pensaba en la emoción del momento en que escribiera. Se había prometido escribir la historia muy lentamente, poniendo en ella los mejores recursos de su espíritu” (160). Just as we saw earlier in “Prólogo,” the act of proposing or planning to write is its undoing: here, the writer “pretendía atrapar una historia,” and that intention has led to an almost immediate digression—not only on the part of the writing character but also on the part of the narrator.

An employee in a toy shop, the young man had been at work when, gazing into space, he suddenly realized he was ready to begin to write his story: “Ese día iba a empezar: estaba empleado en una juguetería; había estado mirando una pizarrita que en una de las caras tenía alambres con cuentas azules y rojas, cuando se le ocurrió que esa tarde empezaría a escribir la historia” (160). The act of beginning to write has been passed over in favor of an earlier moment in which it was the object of anticipation. Having sat down and gathered his materials, the young man that the narrator is telling us about is cut off from the act of writing just as he is prepared to begin; denied the actual moment of writing, we are diverted to an earlier time. The scene of writing is deferred, and will be deferred yet again when we are told, almost immediately after, that

the memory of this moment in the toy shop—where the young man realized he was ready to begin—has called forth yet another, almost identical memory: “También recordaba que otra tarde que pensaba en un detalle de su historia, el gerente de la casa le había echado en cara la distracción con que trabajaba” (160). Once again the writing subject is at work, prior to writing his story; he is thinking about writing and his manager comments on his absentmindedness.

In both memories, the young man cannot focus on the task at hand, at the toy shop, as his attention wanders to the story that he wants to write. And yet, in this moment of beginning to write, he is similarly unable to focus; as the previous object of his attention comes to occupy his reality, memories of prior moments of anticipation, in another time and space, flood in. Finally we return to the moment in which writing is about to happen, but right away the writer is distracted by his surroundings. It occurs to him to tidy up a bit before sitting down: “Cuando estuvo en su pieza le pareció que si la acomodaba un poco antes de sentarse a escribir estaría más tranquilo; pero al mismo tiempo tuvo la impresión de que sus ojos, su frente y su nariz tropezarían con las cosas y las puertas y las paredes” (160). Finally, he just sits down. This does not last long, however, and he gets up again: “Después de sentarse, aun se tuvo que levantar para buscar una libretita donde tenía apuntada la fecha en que empezó la historia” (160).

The writing subject simply cannot get started. And yet this failure to begin is communicated to us by the narrator; this deferral of beginnings is, in part, the story. “Las dos historias” is a record of writing gestures that fail to come together to produce anything; stories that “se niegan a hacerse historias” (Pollmann 358). This writing both affirms and negates its possibilities of coming into being, finally emerging almost despite itself. And in addition to providing an account of a stalled writing process, this story chronicles the loss of focused consciousness. The narrator describes the process by which the young man, who is trying to write a story, attempts to manipulate his own thoughts: “Así como su espíritu le borró el feo recuerdo de que el gerente de la juguetería lo apartó bruscamente de sus más queridos pensamientos, así también su espíritu le escondió el motivo más hondo e implacable que entrañaba el deseo de realizar la historia” (“Las dos historias” 161). Here, writing fails not because of the interference of intentionality, as in “Prólogo de un libro que nunca pude empezar,” but rather because of the writing subject’s inability to connect with the motivation for writing, the “el motivo más hondo e implacable.” Instead of a prologue without a story, we have two stories: one that can never come to fruition, and another which is the account of this failed story. In these texts, writing cannot quite take shape: either it disappears, leaving only its prologue as proof of its intended existence, or it disintegrates into multiple partially-formed narratives.

In “La casa nueva,” failed writing comes in yet another form: writing that is produced in code, and which is intended to be read by no one other than the author. Writing drifts away from its ostensible purpose of communication, and any recording that it does carry out remains undecipherable. “La casa nueva” opens with an act of

writing in progress: in the first line, the narrator tells us that “[d]esde hace un rato estoy haciendo signos taquigráficos frente a un amigo que está del otro lado de la mesa del café” (“La casa nueva” 108-9). The reader is dropped into a situation where the narrator has been writing shorthand symbols on a page while seated across from his friend in a café. What is the relationship between the narrator’s act of writing and the text that we are reading? It is unclear whether the story we read is to be understood as the end product of his café scribbling. Are we reading the shorthand symbols, later translated into full words and sentences? Or is his stenography merely a secondary activity that the narrator carries out while also narrating the story to us?

We find out that the narrator is a piano player who has come to town to play a concert, and we quickly learn that the friend is breaking the news to him that there is no way for the concert to proceed, as there are no funds for it. The narrator has traveled here and is staying in a hotel, but he will now not receive the money he needs to pay for it. He is left a performer without a stage, having arrived at a venue with no audience to play for. Shorthand becomes, in this situation, not an activity but rather a way to rest: “Lo que yo quiero, verdaderamente, es descansar los ojos –escribiendo me los canso menos–, la cara y el alma” (109). The act of writing is not an active undertaking but rather one of resting; he is not producing actual words but rather stenographic symbols. This activity allows the narrator to withdraw from his face-to-face interaction. He confesses: “Si yo no estuviera escribiendo tendría que mostrarle a mi amigo, una sonrisa, un gesto y unas palabras...”; he continues, “prefiero meter los ojos y la cara en este papel y despistar a mi amigo con esta fuga de signos” (109). With shorthand the narrator can actively write while not worrying about his writing being understood by his interlocutor; he can withdraw into a private code of signs.

The ostensible intent of stenography is to record the spoken word quickly and efficiently for later translation into a common language. Shorthand, along with typewriters, belongs to the realm of modernity where speed and efficiency are key. However, here shorthand is a tool for avoiding communication. As one observer has noted, the narrator is not even writing shorthand but just scribbling the symbols, which could indicate that he is not actually writing anything with content but rather just doing practice exercises with no other purpose (Rosell). This observation is compelling, as it suggests that the narrator’s writing production is all form and no content, leading the reader to further speculate about the relationship between this act of seemingly empty scribbling and the text that we are reading. As Hernández uses it, stenography ceases to be utilitarian, a code that will be decoded. The narrator of “La casa nueva,” scribbling his symbols at the café table for no purpose other than to rest his eyes and face, and thus to withdraw from having to “perform” himself for his friend, is engaging in a kind of writing that is perhaps not even intended to be read at all. Just as he is a pianist who might not be able to play for an audience, he is also a writer whose text might never be read. Here, stenography stands as a symbol for an intentional non-communication in writing; a writing that is accessible in its true form only to the writing subject. Rather

than being used to send a message, shorthand is used to evoke, to suggest, to confuse, to distract, and to mislead—“despistar [...] con esta fuga de signos” (109). Writing cannot be used intentionally for its ostensible purpose: to communicate, to represent; it is a slippery tool that seems to work of its own volition.

The Writer as Distracted Accompanist

Reading Hernández’s early activities as a piano accompanist alongside some of his writings, such as those examined above, allows us to draw some parallels in terms of the process by which creation—musical or literary—emerges. Seated at the piano, Hernández must take his cue from the source, which is the film; but since this source is silent, he must physically move his gaze to the screen in order to apprehend its meaning. But he cannot look at it too long, as the action on the screen is ever-changing and he needs to provide a musical interpretation of what he has just seen before the action moves on. With eyes variously on the screen, the piano, and the audience, Hernández is a conduit between the visual meaning on the screen and its audible expression in the piano. Eyes and fingers are the physical channels through which meaning travels from its visual source to its audible representation—literally a “re-presentation” of what is being seen by the audience. Decades later, in his “false explanation,” Hernández seems to return to this moment of reception-creation, similar to what Sylvia Molloy (in another context and following Freud and Lacan) has called a “textual primal scene” (*At Face Value* 17). When he claims that his stories “no son completamente naturales, en el sentido de no intervenir la conciencia,” it is clear that his stated intention is not to link his practice to a Surrealist-type experiment with automatic writing (“Explicación” 216). His writing is not totally unintentional, and does not seem to come from any specific place such as the unconscious, which is the source of automatic writing for the Surrealists. And yet, at the same time, his writing is not a fully conscious process, either. While moving away from Surrealist automatic writing, Hernández’s in-between state does recall the place that André Breton was able to inhabit when he lost himself in a film: thanks to cinema’s “*power to disorient*,” Breton gives himself over to the film and thus “passes through a critical point as captivating and imperceptible as that uniting waking and sleeping” (81-2, emphasis in original). Hernández’s cryptic account of his creative process shares something with Breton’s disoriented spectatorship.

In Hernández’s “false explanation,” consciousness and the lack thereof (he specifically does not use the term “unconscious”) interact to produce attentional states conducive to literary creation. Hernández uses the term “intervention” to describe the work that consciousness does on the production of his writing. Yet this intervention is unclear, and he seems to prefer that it remain “mysterious” (“Explicación” 216). The work of consciousness, however, changes a few sentences later: “A pesar de la vigilancia constante y rigurosa de la conciencia, ésta también me es desconocida” (216). Here, consciousness goes from carrying out mysterious interventions to performing

“vigilancia constante y rigurosa” (216). Surveillance over what? Who is watching whom, or what? It almost seems as though consciousness is double, intervening in a “mysterious” way while also performing surveillance. And despite this double presence, consciousness is “unknown” to the human writing subject.

Suddenly the narrative changes, although within the same paragraph: “En un momento dado pienso que en un rincón de mí nacerá una planta” (216). Two references to temporality appear: “[e]n un momento dado” and “nacerá.” The first temporal reference refers to randomness, a time that is not specific and yet could happen at any moment. The second temporal reference, “nacerá,” also conjures the sense of something being on the cusp of happening. Divided attention, attention that is constantly in a state of shuttling back and forth between objects, is also attention that is always “about to” happen, and also unpredictable and indiscriminate. The plant, which is on the cusp of being born at some point in time, occupies a corner of the subject—perhaps his consciousness, perhaps his internal field of vision. It is on the periphery and yet also central. The subject lies in wait for the plant, as he believes that something creative could result from it. But he knows, somehow, that he should not approach it too directly. He does not know “cómo hacer germinar la planta, ni cómo favorecer, ni cuidar su crecimiento,” but he does know that the plant should not listen to observers who would suggest to it “demasiadas intenciones o grandezas” (216). Here, the intentionality involved in a purposeful search for meaning is eschewed.

Hernández writes that this plant will grow in accordance with an observer, and yet he has also suggested that he will not fix his attention on the plant. The plant, for its part, will not pay much attention to its observer, while also growing in accordance with it. The plant will know that it is being observed, and will act in relation to that knowledge; yet, at the same time, the plant will not fix its attention on its observer. The eye watching the plant (“an observer”—the writing subject?) will come upon a plant that seems unaware it is being watched. This unawareness is picked up in the next sentence: “Si es una planta dueña de sí misma tendrá una poesía natural, desconocida por ella misma” (216). This plant, representing the origin of writing, cannot come from a place of fixed attention and intentionality, but rather from a place of coincidental events, averted glances, and an unawareness that is somehow both real and feigned. Hernández states that this plant, in order to grow properly, needs to be like a person whose life will last an indeterminate period of time; here, we return to non-specific temporalities, the constant possibility of something happening by chance, and the unknown duration of events. The plant’s “necesidades propias” and “orgullo discreto” will be carried in a way that is “un poco torpe” so as to “parezca improvisado” (216). Here, we have another sort of disavowal: the plant will not only seem unaware, it will also carry itself in a way that is not necessarily improvised, but which *seems* improvised. This layer of meaning returns us to the double disavowal of the title of the piece, “Explicación falsa de mis cuentos”—explaining by way of not explaining.

As observed earlier, this reticence, or inability, to pinpoint the origin of creativity extends to the consciousness ascribed to the plant itself: “Ella misma no conocerá sus leyes, aunque profundamente las tenga y la conciencia no las alcance. No sabrá el grado y la manera en que la conciencia intervendrá, pero en última instancia impondrá su voluntad” (216). It is not only the writer but also the plant-origin within him that must remain purposely inattentive. The plant’s role is extended further, as an influence on consciousness itself: “Y enseñará a la conciencia a ser desinteresada” (216). “Desinteresada” is a key descriptor for this tactic of calculated unintentionality: it is through the sidelong glance that the origin of writing can be transformed into writing on the page; it is a distracted pose that will allow creativity to emerge as if unwatched. This is a Cézannian “mobile glancing eye,” whose roving, ever-partial attention unleashes heretofore unknown creative possibilities. But while, for Valéry, “forgetting” is a means to regain control over objects, Hernández speaks of no such control. The plant, itself partially unaware, instructs consciousness to be disinterested, as its vigilance would only foreclose the plant’s full growth. Yet the writer, the human subject, can do nothing more than wait “indefinitely” for these “variable elements that act and react on each other” to produce writing (Crary 340).

In his non-explanation of the seemingly unknown origins of his work, Felisberto Hernández presents us with a poetics that seems to spring from the configuration of attention that emerged during his early employment as a piano accompanist to silent films. After exploring the concept of distraction in fictional works where he presents us with protagonists who struggle to write and fail in their attempts, in his “false explanation” Hernández returns to the position of the cinema accompanist. Caught between receiving stimuli in the form of a film, and providing it in the form of music, he has his eyes on the film, the piano, and the audience at the same time, and only partially on any one thing at any given moment. As an accompanist, Hernández is an instrument for something, a performer of a creation that has not originated with him. When he attempts to “explain” his writing process, he returns to this same mode of creation, only now the plant has replaced the movie screen. Now, as then, he cannot fix his gaze on the object, or it will wither under his stare. In this non-explanation, Hernández defers his own attention and that of the reader towards a meditation on the nature of attention itself, and the possibilities that can result from seemingly unintentional, yet necessary, lapses of attention. In this “creation in distraction,” the continual deferral of attention, both on the part of the writer and on the part of the “plant” inside him, is the only means by which writing can emerge. Writing, then, is not the product of a Romantic notion of “inspiration” or a Realist project to “represent,” but rather a spontaneous, almost random occurrence emerging in conditions in which eyes are averted, attention is divided, and intentionality is disavowed—and perhaps, as Benjamin suggested, it could lead to radically new forms of expression as well as perception.

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Two-Way Mirror: The Two Voices of Exile in *La Rambla paralela* by Fernando Vallejo

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Abstract: This article explores the duality of narrative voices as a representation of exile in the 2002 novel *La Rambla paralela* by the Colombian author Fernando Vallejo. Shifting between first and third-person narrators, Vallejo's work exposes the self that is caught between times, spaces, and realities. My contention here is that the alternation of first and third-person narrative voices reflects the pluralism of exile as voices in dialogue rather than a monologue, exploring the fluctuating distance between times, places, and identities.

Keywords: Fernando Vallejo, exile, *La Rambla paralela*, Colombia, nostalgia, narrative voice

Todo cambia. Cambian el clima y las ciudades. Si hubiera forma de parar el tiempo para que no avanzara, y el mundo para que no cambiara... Nada de lo que estaba mal se componía, y todo lo que estaba bien lo dañaban. Ésa era la ley del mundo.

La Rambla paralela

The mirror is the mysterious window that allows the viewer the rare opportunity of looking out while looking in. A reflection, be it a shadow or an echo, is a convincing double agent; it is at once its own entity and its representation. In his 2002 novel *La Rambla paralela* – a hallucinatory extracorporeal chronicle of the narrator's own death– the Colombian author Fernando Vallejo navigates the complex space between the reflection and the self. It is *el viejo's* somnambulistic trek through a world that is neither the Medellín of his childhood nor quite the Barcelona that he fully recognizes; rather, it is a chronotope created in the refraction of a past and present that at once do and do not exist. In this article, I explore the depths of the narrative voice in *La Rambla paralela* as both the mirror and the reflection of the experience of exile. The experience of exile, as I propose here, is a superimposition, a parallel of unparalleled voices: the voice of memory and the voice of reinvention.

The narrative wandering of *La Rambla paralela* traces the final, fragmented

footsteps of its protagonist/narrator, *el viejo*, as he groggily attempts to acclimate himself to Barcelona during his trip as an invited speaker at the Feria del Libro. The novel begins and ends in *el viejo's* hotel bathroom, as he awakes from a nightmare and examines his dying self in the mirror: “En ese instante me desperté bañado en sudor, con una opresión en el pecho y un dolor confuso en el brazo izquierdo” (10). During *el viejo's* awareness of his own departure from body, an external, third-person narrator appears and assumes control of the text: “El viejo se apoyó en el espejo para no caerse y al hacerlo dejó en él las huellas de los dedos ensuciándolo” (10). The narrator then begins to follow the flesh and phantom character of *el viejo* through the streets of Barcelona and the clouds of his memory, which is further fogged by vermouth, jetlag, insomnia, and the persistent confusion between life and death. Bound at both ends by the same dream and *el viejo's* self-observation in the mirror, the novel wades into the purgatorial space of nostalgia and destruction. The voice of the narrator supplements the growing gaps in *el viejo's* memory and serves as a symbolic affirmation of his separation from the world. The moment of death, as performed through the mirror, opens up a metaphysical space for self-observation vis-à-vis an external narration of self.¹

If we are to believe the narrator, or *el viejo*, for that matter, the question is not whether he died, but rather at what point. In fact, the narrator is quite explicit throughout the novel about *el viejo* having already died; he observes that to kill him is impossible because he is already dead (100), to which he later enthusiastically adds: “[q]ué bueno que se murió” (111). Despite the narrator's repeated assurances of *el viejo's* death, the temporal and spatial localization of the actual moment eludes concrete identification. The fantastical image of *el viejo* floating far above the streets of Barcelona happens when he is “[s]ituado fuera de este mundo en su instante eterno” (171). Despite his gradual denials and distancing of self from *el viejo*, the narrator is able to observe and describe such mystical moments because the narrator is *el viejo*. Returning to the opening and closing moments in front of the mirror, the parallels between them suggest that they are a single instant of metaphysical hyperawareness experienced during his death. That is, the appearance of the third-person narrator in the opening scene of the novel is the performance of the classic out-of-body experience so often attributed to the individual's proximity to death. In the beginning of the novel, *el viejo* wakes from his recurring dream, in which he is told that he has already died, of which he finds visual confirmation in the mirror. Upon that confirmation, the first-person voice of *el viejo* is subsumed by the third-person narrator. In contrast, at the end of the novel, the narrator watches as *el viejo* first observes himself closely in the mirror, and then retreats into the

¹ Here I will consider the multiple voices of narration in *La Rambla paralela* as different voices of a single entity, expressed alternately through the first and third-person perspectives throughout the novel. While the *narrator* assumes the role of the first-person voice, his observations about *el viejo* appear in the third-person. A possible third voice appears towards the latter part of the novel in the form of an invisible interlocutor.

familiar dream one last time. The performance has concluded, and “[e]n la angustiosa irrealidad del sueño la arritmia tomó entonces el control del corazón” (190).

The pain of exile, while not explicitly identified by Vallejo’s protagonist, is an underlying element that profoundly impacts the shape of *La Rambla*’s narrative. *El viejo*’s quickly fading world of the present is juxtaposed with the world that has left him behind a lifetime ago (84). While the pangs of nostalgia reverberate throughout the works of Vallejo, the experience of exile is particularly evident in *La Rambla paralela* through the often confusing interweaving of multiple voices. Vallejo’s narrator echoes *el viejo*’s allusions to exile: referring to the process in which “esa Colombia tuya que en tu ausencia se hizo ajena” (122). It is a narration that yearns, mourns, criticizes, wanders, wonders, forgets, and remembers. *El viejo* wanders through the world of living ghosts, haunted by the painful memory of loss. Faced with the impossibility of erasing that pain, he retires to his hotel room to count sheep or exhume the dead (144). Rapidly departing from the physical world, the spatial and temporal constructions that begin to surround *el viejo* blend Barcelona, Medellín, and Mexico City, from different stages of his life. The fragmentation of *el viejo*, as performed through the disembodied observation from his third-person self, further illustrates his division between spaces and times. My contention here is that Vallejo’s superimposition of first and third persons in the novel reflects the pluralism of exile, presenting it as voices in discourse, rather than a monologue.

Recognizing the multidimensionality of exile is critical to understanding its plurality of voices.² Exile is neither here nor there; rather, it is the space negotiated between what was and what is. Edward Said proposes that exile “is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (173). Said accounts for the pain of loss by highlighting the permanent disconnect between places and selves; his view recognizes that exile is an irremovable wedge and an irreversible process that traps the individual inside and outside of space. In *La Rambla paralela*, *el viejo* is caught between insomnia and the weight of nostalgic dreams, between life and death, and between places and times. The narrator explains the advantages of *el viejo*’s insomnia by suggesting that it cushions him from the painful dreams of death and destruction. The dream that marks the end and beginning of the novel is not a novelty; rather, it is a recurring narrative of an eternal separation, played through the silence on the phone that replaces his grandmother (110). The pain that characterizes the relived nightmare of *el viejo*’s failed phone conversation derives not from absence, but rather from a presence that is just beyond reach. The paradox of exile, as Sophia McClennen suggests, is that it

² Luis Roniger’s article highlights the difficulty of classifying experiences according to terms such as “exile” or “expatriate,” suggesting that even a departure formally recognized as voluntary may be interpreted and experienced by the individual as forced displacement (166).

is “both a condition of confinement and of limitless movement” (164).³ This parallel relationship between movement and confinement unfolds throughout the novel; although *el viejo* freely wanders the streets of Barcelona, he cannot resurrect the city as experienced during his youth. Exile creates a set of concurrent, temporal spaces that influence the reconfiguration of self. The individual lives in the new present while the alternate present, rooted in the past, continues its own forward advance *in absentia*. This alternate present does not cease to exist; rather, it becomes inaccessible. Vallejo’s narrator in *La Rambla paralela* notes the relationship between exile and space: “[m]ientras nuestro amigo andaba afuera soñando con volver, Colombia se le había ido rumbo a otro siglo y otro milenio y otros dueños, y ya no había forma de recobrarla y dar marcha atrás. Nadie puede reenrollar el carrito loco del tiempo. Desandar los pasos sí, pero en calidad de fantasma” (122).

Colombia did not disappear; rather, *his* Colombia has been lost. The spaces of self and place, like the space of time, exist multi-dimensionally. Said observes that “[f]or an exile, habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally” (186). Confinement, then, does not reside solely within spaces themselves, but also originates in the inaccessibility of spaces. Vallejo’s *viejo*, for instance, longs for returning to *his* Medellín, that is, “no al de ahora: al de [su] infancia” (42). It is the separation from time and space that, following a Heraclitian metaphor, prevents *el viejo* from stepping back into the same Colombia that he has lost. Stranded between the irrecoverable past and the exclusionary present, *el viejo*’s voice becomes inhabited by the plurality of exile.

To view exile as a multidimensional condition of confinement between inaccessible spaces recognizes that the process, the experience, and the identity of exile are reflections of reflections. That is, they are the present as viewed through the past, and the past as experienced through the present. Within that reconstructed space, nostalgia emerges as a second voice of narration.⁴ The exile’s voice of nostalgia echoes longing, lamentation, and condemnation alike.⁵ Thus, for Vallejo’s *viejo* in *La Rambla*, the Río Cauca exists as both one of “esos ríos tan bonitos” (30) of the Colombian landscape and as a bloody highway of corpses throughout El Bogotazo (27). The two voices of narration attempt to navigate the space between the rivers of memory. Although *el viejo* longs for the fondness of his childhood as remembered in *la finca Santa Anita*, his childhood memories also bear the scars of decapitated corpses and scavenging vultures. The beautiful moments of his past are ruptured by violence and loss. Excluded

³ This article owes much to Sophia McClennon’s excellent study of exile, which illustrates the very fluidity and complexity of experiences.

⁴ For further information regarding the role of nostalgia in Vallejo’s works, please see the doctoral dissertation by Andrés Fernando Forero Gómez.

⁵ Robert Hemmings suggests that “[n]ostalgia and trauma operate from the same liminal space between memory and forgetting” (3).

from time and place, caught between spaces, much of the exile's perspective relies on the voice of nostalgia and memory. As Paul Ricoeur contends, the trustworthiness of memories depends greatly on the tension between presence and absence of representations of the past (41). *El viejo* toys with that notion, suggesting that "los que se borran a sí mismos de la memoria por completo son los muertos. De un momento al otro, sin darse cuenta, dejan de saber quiénes son y quiénes fueron" (21). The complexity and the confusion of voices lies in the very multidimensionality of memory itself. To return to Heraclitus, Vallejo's *viejo* cannot step in the same Río Cauca. Rather, the narrative voices attempt to remap and rechannel the lost river through the forces of memory and nostalgia.

In order to understand the significance of Vallejo's use of two voices in *La Rambla paralela*, it is useful to situate the novel within the context of Vallejo's corpus of fiction. The intertextuality of Vallejo's work is evident in the compilation of *El río del tiempo*, an anthology beginning with *Los días azules* (1985), in which *el viejo* relates various chapters of his life.⁶ There is a general tendency to position *La Rambla paralela* outside the realm of *El río del tiempo*, but the many parallels that appear in *La Rambla* make a very strong argument that it should in fact be considered as part of that greater narrative. Is it not the same *viejo* born in *Los días azules* that meets his own death in *La Rambla paralela*? Many of the same memories that flood *El río del tiempo* repeat themselves in *La Rambla: la finca Santa Anita*, his grandmother's green eyes, his trip to Rome, balloons at Christmas, and his dog la Bruja. Could it be, then, that the novel is excluded from the discussion of *El río del tiempo* because of its deviation from Vallejo's narrative formula?

Fernando Vallejo's works prior to *La Rambla paralela* avoided the third-person narrative because, as he playfully contends, the first-person narrative is the only one that does not betray the truth (Fonseca 2). Instead, his stories have been presented through a first-person character that very much reflects the non-fictional Vallejo: Colombian novelist, Mexican citizen, animal lover, filmmaker, biographer, linguistics aficionado. For this reason, Vallejo's work has generally been regarded as autofiction.⁷ By situating his narrator within a landscape that is biographically his and allusions that are historically recognizable, Vallejo the author lends a certain credibility to the criticisms made by his narrator.⁸ For instance, in *La Rambla paralela*, he sarcastically notes that "antier mataron al arzobispo de Cali unos sicarios. Y que ayer el país amaneció tan

⁶ Beginning with *Los días azules* in 1985, Vallejo's anthology of *El río del tiempo* also includes *El fuego secreto* (1987), *Los caminos a Roma* (1988), *Años de indulgencia* (1989), and *Entre fantasmas* (1993). Ariztizábal Peraza brilliantly approaches these connections in her article.

⁷ In addition to outlining the complex subcategorizations of autofiction, Arnaud Schmitt's article proposes an alternative term of *self-narration*, which is informed by the awareness "that every life narrative, as honest as it purports to be, is flawed simply because our memory is also by definition flawed. We forget, we misunderstand or only partially understand, we lie, we use our imagination to escape our limited empirical experience" (129).

⁸ For a further exploration of the relationship between the biographical Vallejo and the autofictional narrative please see Francisco Villena Garrido's doctoral work.

indignado por el vil asesinato que casi tienen que suspender un partido importantísimo de fútbol” (102). His brief description leaves enough clues for the reader to partially conclude that the murder represents the shocking assassination of Archbishop Isaías Duarte Cancino in 2002.⁹ Additionally, but not alternatively, Julia Musitano’s investigation compares the novel’s details about the Feria del Libro with information from the newspaper *El País*, situating it historically during the week of July 14, 1998 (n.p.). The hints that either, or neither, of these temporal localizations accurately contextualizes the novel further bends the lines between fiction and reality. Situating *el viejo* and his narrative within a recognizable and authentic historical context reveals the challenge of reconciling fragmented perspectives. The subtle ambiguity that emerges in the space between Vallejo’s fiction and the reader’s ascription of the historically recognizable to events in the novel underscores the work undertaken by autofiction. In staging *el viejo*’s final night, the narrator places himself among the mixed company of unnamed participants in the *feria* and Luis Armando Soto, an actual (former) official with Colombia’s Cultural Ministry (185). In doing so, the narrator legitimizes his separation from *el viejo* by invoking the witnessing presence of an identifiable personage. In the space between fiction and autobiography, Vallejo builds a narrative that is critical, nostalgic, emotional, and deeply personal. The blurred borders between fictional and autobiographical selves reflect the very nature of the exiled identity as it drifts between the parallel planes of what once was and what now is.

Autofiction lends the author certain creative elements of fiction that allow for an exploration of self that the autobiography does not afford. In bending the rigid structures of space and time and revisiting lost places and resurrecting the dead, Vallejo’s narrators explore the nature of memory. His work recognizes that memory is flawed, and exploits its subjectivity to expose a paradox of human experience: existence is reconstructed memory. *El viejo* describes memory itself as a filter: “No recordés sino los momentos felices. Los tristes son para olvidarlos” (94). The past is irretrievable and the present is oppressively fleeting, while memory attempts reconciliation through reconstructing the inaccessible. In the repeated sequence of *el viejo*’s dreamed phone call, the question of whether he has dialed the right number is answered by the cold contradiction of a voice on the other end of the line that responds “[s]í, pero no” (9). Seeking clarification, *el viejo* finds little consolation in the ensuing conversation:

- ¿Pero sí estoy hablando a la finca Santa Anita, la que está entre Envigado y Sabaneta, saliendo de Medellín, Colombia?
- A la misma. Al aire que quedó.
- Y que es de Raquel Pizano.
- Era: de misía Raquelita. ¡Cuánto hace que se murió! (9)

⁹ As noted in the *Semana* article “Con la cruz auestas,” official figures counted “26 religiosos católicos y 39 pastores evangélicos” assassinated between 1998-2002. However, Duarte Cancino was the first bishop murdered in Colombia since the 1989 death of Jesús Emilio Jaramillo Monsalve.

The revelation of information that *el viejo* already knows, a memory buried in the confusion of a dream, surprises him nonetheless. Of course, *el viejo* soon discovers that he, too, has died. More accurately, he is told in a dream, he tells himself, and the newly introduced narrator tells us.

The death of *el viejo* in *La Rambla paralela* could easily be interpreted as the death of Vallejo's autofiction.¹⁰ To kill his self-narrator would certainly be the logical punctuation to his chronicle, coinciding with the introduction of the uncharacteristic third-person narrator in *La Rambla paralela*. However, if the first-person and the third-person are two voices of the same character, does the author really stray from his model? Julia Musitano suggests that Vallejo has designed a cleverly structured narrative that aims to confuse the reader, overlapping the voices in a way that makes it at times impossible to determine which voice is speaking. According to Musitano, it is simply "una máscara más al yo autoficticio, un nuevo disfraz para expresar la gran contradicción entre el deseo de esconderse y el deseo de mostrarse" (4). Vallejo is not simply killing a character in *La Rambla paralela*; rather, he is opening another dimension of self-exploration. *El viejo's* death is the end and the means; it is the only way in which he can have two voices and two perspectives. In that brief eternity of confused clarity, the soul leaves the body and life's saga replays itself in flashes and fragments. The superimposition of voices and perspectives allows *el viejo* to finally see the Rambla and the Río Cauca together:

Rápido, rápido, rápido iba arrastrando el río los decapitados en la lejana Colombia y por las calles de la Rambla gente. El río era el Cauca, el de mi niñez, y la Rambla la de mi muerte, la de Barcelona. Y mientras el niño que fui seguía desde la orilla del río eterno el desfile de los cadáveres con gallinazos encima que les sacaban las tripas y salpicaban de sangre el agua pantanosa, el viejo que lo recordaba veía desde su mesa de café, viendo sin ver, el deambular interminable de la Rambla (11).

With an added perspective and voice, the narrator recognizes the absence and presence of both places and times. The alternating superimposition of the first and third-person narrative in *La Rambla paralela* is born from the metaphysical moment of hyperawareness in death, and continues to develop in the created narrative space of dying.

The problematic of situating the precise moment of *el viejo's* death in the novel owes partly to the limits of the narrator's own knowledge of that timing, as the two

¹⁰ Villena Garrido cites an interview with Javier Fernández in which Vallejo admits that his introduction of a third-person narrator serves multiple purposes, as both a vehicle for action and as parody: "resolví el problema de mi muerte en primera persona, y me burlé de la tercera en que están escritas casi todas las novelas" (34-35).

voices are fragmented parts of the same phantom. Throughout the novel, *el viejo* responds directly to the presumably interior monologue of the narrator's observations about him. The seamless crossover between the two voices suggests that both entities exist within one another. The multiple glances into the hotel mirror and the recurring dream of the phone call to the *finca* suggest both a longer process of emotional death in motion, as well as the immediacy of the physical death. Additionally, *el viejo's* wanderings, outside of the mirror, are further categorized by states of questionable reliability and altered consciousness, which suggest an overlapping process of unfolding separation from the physical world. Indeed, *el viejo* insists that his status as deceased be "bien claro en el papelito o no me dejan subir el avión de Mexicana y no voy a poder regresar a México" (187). His actual return flight becomes, through his awareness of death, the metaphorical journey into the other world.

The confusion that haunts the novel in regards to *el viejo's* narrative waltz with the shadows of death continues to build with the physical unraveling of the character. These slightly altered states experienced by *el viejo* further blur the boundaries between the world of the living and his approaching, or already completed, physical expiration. Likewise, the processes represent *el viejo's* exclusion from the present and past, wedging him further still into existential limbo. His brief breaks from insomnia only find him with the enormous weight of dreams of death and loss. Lost in the modern shuffle of Barcelona's streets, he attempts to cross roads with his eyes closed. Even with his eyes opened, the salt from the sea fills them with tears, and disorients him further. He does not suspend the dizzying consumption of vermouth and absinthe, but rather at one point switches to Cynar because it is said to regenerate the liver (167). The ironic futility of self-preservation is not lost on *el viejo*, as the narrator observes that "el único que él seguía haciendo ahí era preservando el yo, unos míseros recuerdos en el gran desastre de la vida" (166). As he notes throughout, *el viejo* finds himself at times no more dead than the living phantoms that walk the streets of Barcelona, and no more alive than the spirits from his past. His heartbeat, the loud clock ticking towards the "desastre inminente" (11) of his death, becomes almost indistinguishable from the deafening tocks of five alarm clocks that he has set to five o'clock (188). *El viejo* no longer trusts the interior biological cadence or the mechanized time of clocks.

The structure that Vallejo designs with regard to the two voices in the novel parallels the static rhythm of the experience of exile itself. The moment of the mirror establishes the duality of voice and of selfanswers, as *el viejo* looks at and from himself at once. The two voices establish a complex narrative of both harmony and discord that evolves throughout the text. Initially, it appears as though the narrator and *el viejo* are simply a dying man's internal dialogue as he looks for closure in a rapidly fading world. It is certainly a bidirectional exchange, as the two voices question, correct, answer, interrupt, and consult one another. The confusion of voices often blurs the already fuzzy line between the narrator and *el viejo*:

- ¡Un vermut! - pidió instalándose como se le habría de hacer costumbre en los días que permaneció allí, en la ciudad de los herejes y los réprobos, a una de las mesas exteriores del Café de la Ópera: frente al hueco, el otro hueco, el que dejó el incendio.
- ¿Cuál incendio? ¿De cuál estás hablando, hombre? ¿Del sexual?
- No. Del del teatro ese que se quemó, ¿y que se llamaba cómo?
- ¡A ver! ¿Cómo, cómo, cómo?
- ¡El Liceo!
- Exacto, el Liceo, se había acordado! Por lo menos esa batalla contra el mal de Alzheimer la había ganado. (20)

Throughout the novel, the voices criss-cross and consume one another, and at times seemingly invert themselves. Blending the two voices projects the complex multidimensionality of exile, which is further explored through the separation of the narrator from *el viejo*.

As the novel advances, the voice of the narrator begins to contrast and distance itself from *el viejo*. The narrator at times explicitly highlights the disconnection and distance between the two manifestations of self: “El viejo se levantó, pagó la copa, y volvió a tomar hacia el Moll de la Fusta. ¿Qué se iba diciendo en camino? Ah, eso sí no sé, no tengo un lector de pensamientos” (30). Here the narrator toys with the notion of his authority; despite his apparent access to *el viejo*'s consciousness, he suggests to the reader that he has no way of reading another individual's thoughts. Claiming to be nothing more than an impartial biographer that “abre y cierra comillas y se atiene a los datos,” (140), the narrator steps further away from *el viejo* and claims that his “último recuerdo de él es alejándose por las Ramblas en la noche entre el gentío” (185). If, as impartial biographer, this were the narrator's last memory of *el viejo*, he would not be able to faithfully portray the final intimate moments in front of the mirror, nor would this explain the first-person account of self-observation in the beginning of the novel. Rather, the narrator's above-mentioned last sighting of *el viejo* is significant because it marks the final moments in which he sees himself walking amongst the world of the living.

There is, then, a very fluid relationship between these two voices; from the perspective of the narrator, he owns a shifting sense of access to the other voice, while *el viejo* at times scarcely has ownership over his own. Throughout the novel, *el viejo* wanders the streets of Barcelona with his eyes closed, “oyendo sin oír, viendo sin ver, como un fantasma más en medio de los fantasmas” (34). I propose that the separation of voices and *el viejo*'s blind walks through the city represent a parallel to the experience of exile. Isolated, excluded from time and space, the individual loses the first-person perspective of home. The story of home becomes a third-person narrative, as the exile relies on the word of others to experience that inaccessible parallel space. Home begins to speak through such channels as phone calls, letters, newspaper headlines, and

memories. Remembering his favorite café, for instance, the narrator observes that “[c]uando se quemó el Miami [él] estaba en Londres y hasta allá [l]e llegaron los ecos del incendio” (29). Similarly, the death of *el viejo*'s grandfather reaches him by letter during his youth in Rome; the news marks the beginning of a chronic chain of tragedy experienced from the isolation of distance. This experience and observation of life and tragedy from abroad does not replace the first-person voice, but rather becomes a supplemental component of the exile's reconstructed identity.

Torn away from his past and his home, *el viejo* in *La Rambla paralela* is stranded between two voices. As a result, a new, split-identity emerges that attempts to negotiate both spaces. Said observes that “[m]uch of the exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule” (181). Much of that world for *el viejo* is a recreation of memory, the blending of his lost world and the world in which he is lost. The painful longing for his grandmother mixes with the salty sea air of Barcelona, blurring his eyes with tears. He is thus temporarily transported, through nostalgic wandering and his physically distorted vision: “Se levantó, se despidió de sus paisanos y salió de la frescura del stand al calor del verano. Una brisa fresca sopló por la calle del Perú, la de su infancia, y agitó las ramas de los carboneros” (63). With his eyes closed, *el viejo* constantly tries to resurrect the dead and revisit the lost spaces of both the Medellín of his childhood and the Barcelona of his youth. His attempt to reconcile what has gone with what remains is a revelation of his own duality: “Esa calle, la de su juventud, lo partía en dos: Él era uno antes de ella y otro muy otro después. -Dos personas distintas y un solo hijueputa verdadero” (97). Exiled by distance, time, memory, and modernity, *el viejo* must create a new self that recognizes both presence and absence. The insertion of the third-person narrator into *La Rambla paralela* is a way in which *el viejo* has created that new identity.

El viejo embraces a very binary view of the world, rejecting the notion of intermediaries (50). How, then, can he account for an identity and an existence that are neither here nor there? Perhaps, finding himself in a space of detachment and uncertainty, he cannot. The creation of a second voice, as I proposed earlier, offers him the perspective to see multiple layers of himself at once. It represents an attempt to explore the paradoxical nature of the exile's identity. The narrator's multiple self-identities as Antioqueño, Mexican, and Swiss are not an attempt at deception, but rather an exploration of the construction of self. He only exists, after all, as a condition of *el viejo*'s death. *El viejo*'s identity is not solely Colombian; the earthquake and the politics of Mexico and the distinct space of Barcelona have also shaped him through the years. The narrator claims that *el viejo* was “un anarquista, un pesimista, un terrorista, un despatriado, un despechado, un amargado. Un cínico que abusaba de su calidad de fantasma” (162). Straddling the world of the living and one in the world of ghosts, *el viejo* finds his balance in the voice of the narrator. It is a reconfiguration of identity that accounts for his isolation from both worlds.

In much the same manner, language plays an important role in the exploration

of the exile identity throughout *La Rambla paralela*. It is hardly surprising that Vallejo the linguist has given it such attention throughout the novel.¹¹ Language reflects the idea that *el viejo's* identity is a multidimensional construction. It serves as both a reminder of his connection to and his absence from Colombia. The narrator observes, for instance, that “[l]a palabra que el viejo pronunció yo nunca la uso. Es de él, un colombianismo vulgar y grosero” (41). Language, in a very significant way, connects him to a time and a place to which he cannot return. *El viejo* uses language to express his identity. Throughout the novel, the narrator continues to call attention to the peculiar relics of Antioquía in his voice, such as *vos* and *semos*. While Jacques Joeset follows the rationale set by Vallejo's narrator in the text that such colloquial references ring with a tone of mockery, I would like to suggest that *el viejo* also employs them as a technique of salvaging what he can from his otherwise irrecoverable world (34).¹² Language has become an anchor and a symbol; it ties him to home and it identifies him as Antioqueño to the outside world. The narrator notes the distinction that “El viejo escribía en español pero se hablaba en antioqueño” (54). The remnants of *el viejo's* Antioquía Spanish form one dimension of his identity that reaches towards and inaccessible past.

While language serves as a bridge to *el viejo's* Medellín, it also represents his distance. Despite the survival of his dialect, it becomes evident throughout the novel that his language has also changed during his years of exile. Much like his identity, his language has begun to incorporate elements of the new space in exile. For instance, the narrator explains that his use of “estoy norteadado” is a Mexican expression for being lost (153). His brief vocabulary lesson on the Colombian, Mexican, Guatemalan, and Peninsular Spanish variations for the word *hungover* is more than a nod to his interest in language. It is a testament to a life lived between spaces. The change in *el viejo's* language is not limited to lexical differences, nor is there a consistent pattern. The narrator, who at times tries to distance himself from the Antioquía dialect, incorporates certain elements of it into his speech. *El viejo*, alternatively, in trying to preserve his Antioquía identity, wanders between the language of home and dialects from abroad.¹³ The narrator snidely comments that after only five days in Spain, *el viejo* “ya hablaba de ‘vosotros’ y decía ‘hideputas’ como Cervantes” (74). Ironically, the narrator also occasionally uses the Barcelona pronunciations of the same words that he ridicules *el viejo* for using. Although the narrator later contends that *el viejo's* language, country, and self have all been reduced to disaster, the continued influence of Colombia and Spain on

¹¹ In the opening pages of the novel, Vallejo's narrator draws a parallel between his own death and that of the seventeenth century grammarian César Oudin, suggesting that he, too, was going to die while trying to resolve a grammatical triviality (11). His reference to the legacy of the great Colombian grammarians, in particular the suggestion that “[t]ras la muerte de [Rufino José] Cuervo fue el acabose” (44) further serves to wedge him between the world of the living and dead.

¹² Joeset's article presents a detailed linguistic reading of *La Rambla paralela*.

¹³ It is worth noting that although much reference is made by the narrator with regard to *el viejo's* use of Peninsular Spanish, Spain represents one of many spaces of his exile.

the language suggests that his language and his identity have changed rather than dissolve (152).

In much the same vein, the fall of Rome did not destroy Latin or erase the people of the Roman Empire; populations resettled and Latin morphed into new languages that redefined the landscape. Vallejo's incorporation of Latin into *La Rambla paralela* is the novelist-linguist's unique way of representing both *el viejo's* experience and the exile's struggle to maintain identity. Although Latin, like *el viejo*, is largely considered dead, it continues to wander phantasmically through a temporal and spatial dimension to which it no longer belongs. There is a silent resilience in Latin for maintaining its presence in a world that has largely disposed of it. It survived crises of identity, time, and space. It took refuge in the major institutions of church, state, science, and medicine. As both *el viejo* and the narrator illustrate throughout the novel, it has assured its own survival by planting itself in prayers and business mottos. The presumably dead language that for so long was inaccessible to the masses has ironically returned to the masses after its death, immortalized in such phrases as *Carpe diem* and *Semper fidelis*. Latin cannot be returned to the days of its youth; it likewise cannot simply insert itself into the river of modern human language and expect to be accepted and adopted. Latin, like exile, occupies a space toward which return is impossible and from which change is inevitable.

If language is the exile's attempt to connect with a space that is only accessible in the selective, subjective, and sometimes contradictory realm of memory, how are those spaces represented by the voices of *el viejo*? Throughout the novel, the same images from the landscape of Colombia are presented in very different tones. The narrator, for instance, groups the caimans with the likes of mosquitoes, yellow fever, and snakes, to represent the threat of death in the Magdalena (80). *El viejo*, on the other hand, laments the mass hunting of caimans that has turned a population into bags and belts. Similarly, the narrator evokes the visual of vultures feeding on decapitated corpses in the Ríos Cauca and Magdalena as testimony to the grim violence of El Bogotazo. *El viejo* later reworks the same image by categorizing Colombia's actions as devouring its own guts. Through the contrasting projection of images, Vallejo's dual narrators argue that Colombia is the victim and the perpetrator. Such imagery illustrates the paradoxical isolation in his exile. By emphasizing his use of the word *gallinazo* versus the terms *buitre* and the Latin *vultur*, the narrator declares the birds - and Colombia- as his (23).¹⁴ On the other hand, *el viejo* is very methodical about his rejection of the vultures. The narrator explains that *el viejo's* love for animals extends to very few bipeds, among them the "gallinas, gallos y pollos" (139). The enumeration of various names for a domesticated animal that, while standing in contrast symbolically to the vulture, is a deconstructed sequence of sounds that constitute *gallinazos*, suggests that both the warmth and the pain

¹⁴ The narrator later refers to newscasters as "buitres" rather than *gallinazos*. I interpret this as another example of exclusion, in which the narrator wants to underline the distinction between the corrupt newscasters and the public.

of Colombia are always effectively on the tip of his tongue.

El viejo's reconstructed view of his home is much more than a reflection on a lost time and space. Memory becomes a criticism of a government and a country whose violence has exiled him from his past, present, and future. His perspective is based on an experience charged with the pain of abandonment, brutality, and indiscriminate destruction. In contrast with *el viejo's* nostalgia for his family's farm and the beauty of Colombia's mountains, the voices in *La Rambla paralela* also express outrage at a continuing genocide that has turned the country into a Shangri-la for the vultures (23). The novel makes repeated references to the rivers of corpses and gruesome descriptions of decapitations as the *modus operandi* of Colombia's war. Perhaps there is the very literal connection between the heads and the rivers that Vallejo wants to illustrate: headless bodies dumped in rivers floating past *el viejo* as a young boy. Or perhaps the image of the head and the river is Vallejo's way of connecting Colombia's violence with nature and humanity. The personification of Colombia by both *el viejo* and the narrator further lends support to the connection between nation and people. It is also a technique that draws a target for a criticism that is otherwise very widely aimed. The narrator refers to Colombia as "la destructora, el país bulldozer" (139), "ladrona" (80), and the responsible party that "asesinó" its own population (138). *El viejo* directly accuses Colombia of murder: "[e]l año pasado mataste a veintiocho mil y secuestraste a tres mil quinientos" (53). Such direct criticisms of Colombia coincide with a blend of voices throughout the novel that combines satire, nihilism, and outright rage. *El viejo*, for instance, suggests that "Colombia nunca tendrá un papa ni ganará el mundial de fútbol" (98). Intertwined with the criticism of cockroach bureaucrats and vulture newscasters is the repeated conclusion by both voices that Colombia is the happiest country in the world. The claim is consistently met with a response of disbelief by the other voice. Here the suggestion is that neither perspective is inherently wrong; systemic violence and the happiness of a population are not mutually exclusive.¹⁵ Similarly, his exile is a wandering between nostalgic longing and the pain of continuous loss.

Exploring that expanse of space between memory and loss, *el viejo* finds himself caught between two worlds. His navigation of a world to which he does not belong is like to waking up trapped in a body that is not his own. His search for the Rambla paralela in Barcelona reveals his disorientation in both the present and the past: his map lists it as "el Paralelo" (53). Similarly, his constant search for the 18°C temperature of Medellín instead finds only the salty humidity of Barcelona's sea breezes. In the abyss of exile, from the heights of death, *el viejo* floats between Barcelona and Medellín. It is a world and a time that do not make sense to him; much like the Colombia of his youth,

¹⁵ Slavoj Žižek uses the term *systemic violence*, suggesting that "[i]t may be invisible, but it has to be taken into account if one is to make sense of what otherwise seem to be "irrational" explosions of subjective violence" (2).

Barcelona has also changed in his absence. He wonders why he cannot get medicine without a prescription in Barcelona if he does not need one in Colombia (88). While *el viejo* struggles with the hotel key card and cannot find the brothel from his youth, the narrator forgets whether or not Barcelona sits on the sea. *El viejo* is effectively exiled in exile, “[o]bsoleto como una llave” (99). He reacts to his exclusion from time and place by also criticizing everything that is not Colombian: Barcelona is a city of heretics, the Spanish buy books but do not read them, the French are philosophical potheads. Vallejo’s hyperbolic criticism of the world also represents *el viejo*’s defense against a world and a time that have conspired with another world and time to exile him within his exile.

The two voices in *La Rambla paralela* represent a resistance to adopt the new identity of exile. The reconstructed identity is another instrument of oppression and exclusion that shadow the politics and psychology of exile. There are two perspectives that form the exile’s identity outside of the homeland: the new nation’s exclusion of the exile from its society and the individual’s perception of self as a consequence of loss and distance. The dual forces further serve to isolate the exile: the new country imposes stereotypes while the individual begins to self-identify in a way that reflects life on the outside. *El viejo*’s experience on the Air France flight demonstrates the struggle that the exile faces as a result of the imposition of stereotypes. He was denied access to his connecting flight at the airport, “[p]or colombiano[...] por ladrón, atracador, secuestrador, narcotraficante y asesino” (13). He later reappropriates a similar stereotype by sarcastically suggesting that all Colombians grow coffee and cocaine, while the narrator proposes that all Colombians dream of becoming the President. Such exaggerated reconstructions of identity from stereotypes reflect the difficulty of self-identity within the context of exile. The outside world attempts to classify individuals based on preconceived images, while the exile struggles with the inaccessibility of cultural beacons from home and in the new space. It is not surprising that *el viejo* gets his news from the Colombian booth at the Feria or looks forward to the Mexican tequila aboard his return flight. His collection of old passports is testament to his constant search for identity; they remind him of who he is, who he was, where he is from, and to where he cannot return.

As the world closes around *el viejo* in death, he sees the Cauca and the Rambla flowing together, out of his reach. The narrator admires his old-fashioned waiter: “de cuando España era pobre pero digna y para un camarero era un orgullo serlo” (150). *El viejo* is metaphorically that waiter, pouring the same drinks for a world that has left him behind. Vallejo’s third-person narrator is the shifting reflection of his autofictional *viejo* wandering through a hall of mirrors. The confusion of voices is not the author’s game of smoke and mirrors designed to surprise and awe the reader; rather, Vallejo commandeers the vehicle of death as a means for separating soul and body in the final search for self. The world of *La Rambla paralela* is a shifting reconstruction of memories superimposed over an unfamiliar yet familiar landscape. The two voices shift between

discord and harmony in a static rhythm that ruptures the planes of space and time. Vallejo's dismantling of self through death is symbolic of the search for identity. The space of dying represents the unmarked avenue between the tangible world of the living and the inaccessible world of ghosts. Vallejo uses this space to explore the multidimensionality of the exiled self as a perpetual series of reflecting reflections. The narrator suggests that *el viejo's* return to Colombia is as simple as boarding a plane. But no plane can return him to the only Colombia that he knows, lost through distance and time. The Rambla paralela and the Río Cauca of his youth are clouds of his memory blowing away in the wind: "La nube explotó y el viejo se precipitó a tierra jalado por la que nos une a todos y no nos deja dispersar en las inmensidades del espacio eterno: la fuerza de gravedad, doña verraca" (148).

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Over the past several years, a team of scholars at the Voltaire Foundation, based at the University of Oxford, has been working on an extraordinary project to publish 2,500 mostly unedited letters of Françoise de Graffigny (1695-1758), a French novelist and playwright known principally for her novel *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747) and her play *Cénie* (1750). As an acquaintance of Voltaire, Madame Du Châtelet, and several contributors to the *Encyclopédie*, Graffigny was highly engaged with the literary and intellectual life of the time, making her letters a rich mine of information about the culture and history of the eighteenth century. Having come from a noble family, Graffigny had acquaintances at court as well as in intellectual circles from the fields of literature, theater, science, finance, and politics.

The volume under review here contains letters written from January 1754 to December 1755, all addressed to her friend, François Devaux. In the area of literature, these letters deal with her own writings, such as her play *La Fille d'Aristide*, in process during this period. The letters contain many exchanges with other writers, discussions of manuscripts, and literary ideas. We also find allusions to the latest works of Voltaire, Diderot, Madame de Sévigné, and Rousseau. Since theater was her passion, Graffigny often attended plays in Paris, reporting to Devaux about performances such as Voltaire's *Mahomet*.

The world of the eighteenth century comes to light in other ways too as the letters deal with practical issues such as exchanges of goods and manuscripts, various commissions, problems with domestic help, household furnishings, and more. Due to her social status and connections at the courts of Versailles and Lorraine, Graffigny often attempted to secure positions or housing for family and friends in need. The world of finance finds its way into the letters as well. During this period Graffigny attempted to invest in various markets and helped acquaintances get in on various financial deals. Always optimistic and reluctant to accept any weakness, Graffigny nevertheless writes at length about health issues as well. During this time she suffered several painful health problems and keeps Devaux apprised of the effects of a remedy

she is taking. But she is dismissive of her own health problems, as well as of those of Devaux, often admonishing him to avoid doctors.

In contrast to the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné and others who were conscious that their letters would be read in public, that of Graffigny appears extremely personal and unrestrained. The letters are frank, sometimes humorous, often shocking in their directness and intimate detail. The use of nicknames and insider jokes renders them lively and realistic. Graffigny's correspondence is a tremendous resource for scholars of history, culture, and literature. The editorial annotation is exacting and highly detailed. The volume is beautifully presented, supplemented with an invaluable introduction, illustrations, a general index, and indices of nicknames and colloquial expressions. A great scholarly achievement, this correspondence has made an enormous impact on eighteenth-century research.

Southon, Nicolas (ed.), and Roger Nichols (trans.). *Francis Poulenc, Articles and Interviews: Notes from the Heart*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2014. 346 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4094-6622-2.

Reviewed by
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In 2011, Nicholas Southon edited *Francis Poulenc: J'écris ce qui me chante*, a collection of articles and interviews with French composer and pianist Francis Poulenc (January 7, 1899 – January 30, 1963). Poulenc is best known for being a member of Les Six, a group of six young composers (Poulenc, Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Germaine Tailleferre) under the tutelage of the colorful avant-garde French composer and pianist Erik Satie. His most celebrated pieces are: the piano suite *Trois mouvements perpétuels* (1919); the ballet *Les Biches* (1923); the *Concert champêtre* (1928) for the harpsichord and orchestra; the opera *Dialogues des Carmélites* (1957); and *Gloria* (1959) for soprano, choir, and orchestra. Roger Nichol's adept translation of selected sections of the 2011 Southon edition brings to life Poulenc's vivacious personality for a wider audience, since many of the articles and interviews in *Francis Poulenc: J'écris ce qui me chante* had not previously been available in English. This fact is significant because only recently have Poulenc's works been given more serious consideration than during his lifetime, when he had been considered a lightweight composer, mainly because his early works were light-hearted; it was not until he began composing religious works in 1936 that his work included more complex elements.

The collection is comprised of seven parts: "Articles"; "Critical Articles and Reviews"; "Contributions to Works by Others"; "Response to a Survey"; "Lectures"; "Interviews"; and "Interviews with Claude Rostand." As such, the collection brings together a bevy of topics. For those of us who are not music experts, Southon's editorial comments prove especially valuable. For example, as one reads the title of Article XXVIII, an interview with Jeannie Chauveau, "The Work of Two Great French Artists, written in Secret during the Occupation," one would expect the interview to discuss the power that music has to unite people during times of oppression. It is only when one reads that Poulenc set the poetry of Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard to music that one appreciates the difficulty of such an undertaking, since "these poems, recited clandestinely in every province, expressed the intransigence, the patience, the unyielding

resolve of the people of France” (137). Furthermore, Poulenc’s terrified excitement when challenged by Henri Screpel to set Eluard’s poem “Liberté” to music is palpable when he explains:

All through that spring I thought about the idea, already enthusiastic about it but not yet knowing what form the work might take. Then, in July 1943, I left for Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne and there, in six weeks, I wrote this cantata for unaccompanied double choir. (138)

And then Poulenc’s sheer pride shines through when he states: “I forgot to say that in the meantime the Chorale d’Anvers had heard about the project and had let me know that they would like to receive it and sing it in Belgium immediately after the Liberation” (138).

Yet it is Southon’s editorial introduction to this interview that helps the reader to understand the evolution of Poulenc’s emotions surrounding the project:

In talking about this score, which had become symbolic of a form of resistance under the Occupation, Poulenc often subsequently became inaccurate [...] unintentionally no doubt, but also, consciously or not, so as to present it as the product of personal inspiration, whereas it had its origins in a commission from Henri Screpel. (137)

Numerically, interviews dominate *Francis Poulenc: Articles and Interviews* (twelve in Part VI and eighteen in Part VII), but equally fascinating are the articles, reviews, and lectures as they provide further insight into the outside influences that helped to shape Poulenc’s career as well as his personality. It is in reading “*Le Coq* and *Le Coq Parisien*: May – November 1920” that Southon details the role that Jean Cocteau played in promoting the works of Les Six. Southon quotes the notice in the second issue of the magazine *Le Coq*, as he believes that the notice was written by Cocteau himself:

Le Coq is not the manifesto of any school. It is a leaflet in which six composers of different tastes, joined in friendship, express themselves. That this friendship should find its energy in a shared tendency differently understood, goes without saying. These composers are joined by poets and painters who are in sympathy with them. (17)

Or via Southon’s inclusion of “My Teachers and My Friends,” Poulenc’s self-deprecating nature regarding his vanity is readily discernible:

When, last September, I accepted Mme Yvonne Sarcey’s kind invitation to speak at the Université des Annales this winter, I was, I confess, the

victim of a gust of vanity. But for the last ten minutes, alas, I've been pondering the extent of my audacity and I can assure you that in that green room where I've waited many times to come on stage, I have never felt more intimidated. (95)

When one reads such comments made by Poulenc, one is able to appreciate the gentle smile that shines throughout the photographs contained in the volume. Of particular note are: photograph #2, one of Poulenc at the tender age of twelve; photograph #9, where Poulenc stands in front of a doorway with Pablo Picasso and Henri Sauguet; photograph #10, which depicts Poulenc with Denise Duval, the French soprano discovered by him and for whom he wrote many works; and, photograph #11, of Poulenc with Cocteau and the other members of Les Six, in which he is the only person looking directly at the camera.

In sum, while *Francis Poulenc, Articles and Interviews* will undoubtedly delight music aficionados for providing direct insight into Poulenc's creative genius via his warm conversational tone, not to be underestimated either is the value of the noteworthy social commentary that the articles and interviews provide. Each piece in this rich collection is a gem in itself. Moreover, for a man who was largely self-educated musically and whose contributions to the world of music have too long been overlooked, Poulenc finally receives a much-needed and much-deserved homage from Southon.

Vivar, Francisco. *Cervantes y los límites del ser*. Madrid, Universidad de Navarra, 2014. 169 pp. ISBN 978-84-8489-831-3.

Reviewed by
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Cervantes y los límites del ser reflexiona sobre el conflicto entre la realidad y el cumplimiento de los anhelos, la confrontación de las limitaciones propias y la ilusión de lo soñado a partir de personajes cervantinos. Francisco Vivar, doctor por la Universidad de California, es autor de *Quevedo y su España imaginada*, *La Numancia de Cervantes y la memoria de un mito* y *Don Quijote frente a los caballeros de los tiempos modernos*, además de numerosos artículos sobre el Siglo de Oro. Con *Cervantes y los límites del ser* Vivar usa su conocimiento enciclopédico para adentrarse en los pozos de la conciencia humana y en el aprendizaje del héroe cervantino. Tal y como lo propone Vivar, este aprendizaje brota del conocimiento de la fuerza interior y de asimilar los tropiezos de la vida en una reconciliación individual. La voluntad insatisfecha provoca dolor, mientras que el conocer y aceptar los límites representa equilibrio. El héroe del mundo antiguo es aquel de quien se cuentan grandiosas proezas, mientras que el héroe cervantino es el hombre con capacidad de actuar. Esta es la idea que Vivar desarrollará magistralmente a lo largo de seis capítulos, apoyándose no sólo en Cervantes, sino en Goethe, Camus, Montaigne y Safranski, entre otros.

En el capítulo I, “La inocencia épica” el autor aborda a Rincón y Cortado como personajes que, llevados por la inocencia y por una “nostalgia de la libertad”, buscan la aventura del héroe épico conocido por los libros. Los personajes han anidado la ilusión de trascender la frontera de sus limitaciones a raíz de sentirse extranjeros en su propia tierra. Solo la desmitificación de sus anhelos los reconciliará con su pasado y consigo mismos.

En el capítulo II, “La aventura del conocimiento”, Vivar habla de Tomás Rodaja, “el licenciado Vidriera”, vinculando su ambición de conocimiento con el pecado original. Rodaja desea asistir a la universidad “para obtener el máximo de conocimiento y así alcanzar la fama”, sin darse cuenta que este anhelo excesivo es tan grave como la necesidad. De su aislamiento de la realidad y su apego a los libros brotará la locura; la brillantez de sus apotegmas y dichos aprendidos de memoria son semillas estériles para los que lo rodean. Su conocimiento recitado le forja las murallas, los libros son las rejas

de su propia cárcel, lo que Vivar interpreta como “una metáfora del intelectualismo dogmático”.

“Deseo” el tercer capítulo, gira en torno a Rodolfo, protagonista de *La fuerza de la sangre* quien es herido por el aguijón de la lujuria. La hermosa Leocadia será la víctima del deseo de Rodolfo, quien representa la transgresión de las reglas morales. La voluntad de Rodolfo se cumple por el poder de pertenecer a una clase acomodada y el conocimiento de que aunque dé rienda suelta a sus instintos la ley lo pasará por alto ante su sangre y riqueza. El deseo de los poderosos no obedece reglas, nos dice Vivar, pero también deberá seguir un camino de aprendizaje hasta alcanzar la redención.

En la comedia Pedro de Urdemalas, Vivar encuentra al protagonista de su siguiente capítulo, “El don de la metamorfosis”. La capacidad de mutación de Pedro es el espacio en donde Cervantes explora la incapacidad de definición del ser humano. La metamorfosis es vista como parte de la naturaleza de un ser en continuo movimiento y construcción, el hombre inacabado: el cervantino Pedro, cuya capacidad proteica le gana la indefinición de sí mismo.

En “La imaginación”, el autor pasa revista a Don Quijote, Sancho Panza y Carrizales, personaje del *Celoso extremeño*, contrastantes seres imaginativos que van más allá de la razón. Vivar explora el salto de los límites razonables al punto donde el delirio modifica el comportamiento normal y lo transforma en un comportamiento perturbador. Indaga, también, sobre el peligro de esa imaginación tomada como verdad.

Para “La necesidad”, el último capítulo, el autor dialoga con la idea de Montaigne sobre la “necesidad que nos conduce a aceptar los límites”, y que tiene implícito la aceptación de uno mismo. Para ello es necesario el conocimiento, y no sólo el que se halla en los libros, sino el que ayuda al conocimiento del interior. Don Quijote ofrece el paradigma de esta necesidad. Sus anhelos más profundos se fracturan al convertirse en cómplice de su tiempo, uno en el que ya no existen los caballeros andantes ni sus ideales.

Cervantes y los límites del ser es un lúcido ensayo que enmadeja ideas desde el mundo grecolatino hasta la filosofía actual. Nos presenta a los personajes cervantinos desde una mirada de profunda reflexión humana. Nos invita a la lectura de la obra cervantina pero sobre todo, a la revisión concienzuda de la herencia literaria y humana de Cervantes, que late en personajes tan humanos como nuestras dudas, temores y anhelos más profundos.

Bell, Vikki. *The Art of Post-dictatorship. Ethics and Aesthetics in Transitional Argentina*. Serie Transitional Justice, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014. 170 pp. ISBN 978-11-3810-0220.

Reviewed by
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En las últimas tres décadas adquirieron frontalidad los estudios teóricos sobre memoria, fotografía y representación de la violencia, como los de Georges Didi-Huberman (*Devant l'image. Questions posées aux fins d'une histoire de l'art*, 1990), Marianne Hirsch (*Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, 1997) y *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (2012), Susan Sontag (*Regarding the Pain of Others*, 2002), Jacques Rancière (*The future of the Image* (2007) y *The Emancipated Expectator* (2010), Martha Langford (*Suspended Conversations; The Afterlife of Memory in Photography Albums*, 2008), Judith Butler, *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable*, 2009).

El estudio interdisciplinario de Vikky Bell se alinea con varios objetivos de estos estudios, mientras dialoga de cerca con un ya amplísimo corpus de ensayos sobre el terrorismo de Estado en el caso argentino, como lo son, *Políticas de la memoria: tensiones en la palabra y la imagen* (Sandra Lorenzano y Ralph Buchenhorst, 2007), *Los desaparecidos en Argentina: memoria, representaciones e ideas (1983-2008)* (Emilio Crenzel 2010), el volumen colectivo de Claudia Feld y Jessica Stites-Mor, *El pasado que miramos: Memoria e imágenes ante la historia reciente* (2009), el de Ludmila da Silva Catela, Mariana Giordano y Elizabeth Jelin (compiladoras), *Fotografía e identidad: captura por la cámara, devolución de la memoria*, 2010) y más recientemente, la co-edición de Jordana Blegmar, Natalia Fortuny y Luis Ignacio García, *Instantáneas de la memoria. Fotografía y dictadura en Argentina y América Latina* (2013). En estos trabajos, el consenso fue afirmando la importancia de la fotografía como emblema político *de la falta* y de los cuerpos negados por la represión del estado terrorista, tal como ya lo sostenía Nelly Richard en el 2002 en *Poéticas y estéticas de la memoria*. Cora Gamarnik, a su vez, explicaría en *En Imágenes de la dictadura militar. La fotografía de prensa antes, durante y después del golpe de Estado de 1976 en Argentina* (2011) que la dictadura argentina advirtió el poder de construcción de sentido de las imágenes por lo cual se abocó a controlar la circulación de fotografías como parte de una sistemática política de producción cultural. La represión debía ser clandestina, y ello, en reacción

preventiva, luego de la fuerte condena internacional generada por las imágenes de la represión del golpe de Pinochet.

Los estudios mencionados resaltan que la excepcionalidad extrajurídica de la “desaparición forzada” exige un dramático cambio en el orden representacional, así como cuestionamientos éticos de estratificaciones más profundas alrededor de la representación del terror y del pasado traumático, instancias ya advertidas por Adorno en *Romanticism after Auschwitz*. Según los estudios mencionados, las imágenes, los medios visuales, las artes plásticas y la fotografía son fundamentales para dar visibilidad a la ausencia, y al *después* de esas ausencia, aspecto ya central en el pionero estudio de Pilar Calveiro, *Poder y desaparición. Los campos de concentración en Argentina* (2004). El consenso general es que la imagen representa una poderosa intervención interpretativa, cognitiva y emocional en los procesos de construcción de la memoria –una herencia re-generadora de elaboraciones y resignificaciones del duelo familiar/ social/ nacional.

Otro aspecto central en las teorías sobre la construcción de la memoria colectiva es el énfasis en la naturaleza eminentemente idiosincrática de los intercambios sociales, los que exacerban desvíos y desmarcados respecto a agendas oficialistas. La compleja textualidad/discursividad de éstos propone mucho más que remitir a una memoria encargada de recontar. Leyéndolas como si se tratara de *suspended conversations* (Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations; The Afterlife of Memory in Photography Albums*), estos estudios identifican la imagen visual como zona de enlaces multidiscursivos e involucramiento emocional inagotables y sin cierre, especialmente en el caso de los álbumes familiares, textos centrales en los proyectos conmemorativos de artistas visuales en las campañas contra la impunidad y por la justicia en Argentina.

The Art of Post-Dictatorship comparte con estos estudios el objetivo de analizar los usos polimorfos de la imagen/ de la memoria a partir de un consorcio de múltiples agentes culturales como familiares, testigos, artistas, apropiadores del espacio urbano, etc. que van entrelazando en una dimensión social ampliamente abarcadora, imágenes y lenguajes transgeneracionales. En el capítulo “Between Past and Future, the art of post-dictatorship”, Bell resalta la agencialidad colectiva de las subjetividades e imaginarios de las nuevas generaciones y sus intercambios con las anteriores, partiendo del marco de estéticas basadas en *la experiencia*. La circulación trans-familiar de la afectividad familiar es transmitida a la memoria colectiva, tal como acontece en las herencias familiares: memorias como herencia; herencia de la memoria, la más compleja modalidad del espacio social.

Enriquece este estudio la familiaridad de Bell con un amplio espectro de lecturas teóricas, como las de Hanna Arendt, Michel Foucault, Theodor Adorno, Giorgio Agamben, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, junto con Robert Cover, Judith Butler, John Beverley, Pilar Calveiro, Emilo Crenzel, Claudia Felt, Soshana Feldman, Cecilia Macón, Diana Taylor, Mario Di Pauloantonio, Marianne Hirsch, Hugo Vezzetti., Horacio Verbinsky, entre otros. Su trabajo entreteje una serie de campus interdisciplinarios concernientes a la fotografía y medios visuales, memoria y derechos

humanos, performance studies, discurso legal, arquitectura de la memoria, estudios sobre la sintaxis de los museos, etc. Bell ancla su estudio, no en el período inmediatamente posterior a la dictadura argentina, sino a partir de la desequilibrante desaparición, ya en pleno kirchnerismo, de Jorge Julio López (2006), ex desaparecido de la dictadura y testigo principal contra el comisionado general de policía Miguel Etchecolatz.

The Art of Post-Dictatorship interpreta de qué manera en Argentina, los usos de la memoria fueron convirtiendo los espacios urbanos en zona de emplazamiento de manifiestos/mensajes privados/públicos, locus de construcción de la memoria colectiva en permanente reconfiguración, actualización, reciclaje y suplemento, como las pancartas heredadas de las Madres y usadas a partir del 2006 para reclamar, “Julio López: aparición con vida ya!”. Especie de *revenant* derridariano, propone Bell, esta reactivación de signos/slogans sobre la Guerra Sucia abre la ingobernabilidad de sus usos transversales para seguir pidiendo justicia por nuevas víctimas, como Luciano Arruga, joven adolescente de 16 años desaparecido en 2009 y encontrado muerto luego de ser secuestrado por la Bonaerense.

El capítulo “On Fernando’s Photograph. Biopolitics, *aparición* and the demands of the disappear” analiza otros artefactos artísticos como las siluetas (de los *siluetazos*) de desaparecidos que fueron emplazadas en el espacio/escenario urbano a partir de las Madres, y más recientemente, con la producción de artistas plásticos como Julio Flores, continuando así un largo periplo transnacional originado en un poster polaco que daba cuenta de las víctimas de Auschwitz que habían muerto en un solo día. Para Bell, si la memoria colectiva puede ser leída como un espectro derridariano, lo es por ser un espectro *colectivo* que sigue emitiendo señales: ‘it signals the social body’s refusal to be pacified (2). Es la *segunda* desaparición forzada de López y las posteriores movilizaciones suscitadas lo que permite a Bell leer el presente postdictatorial como transicional, desestabilizante y renuente a una memoria homogénea.

En el inspirador seguimiento de las manifestaciones estéticas/reclamos de memoria y justicia analizadas por Bell, los espacios sociales/públicos son leídos como amplias zonas de enunciación de textos sociales: siluetas, graffitties/señales callejeras leídos como textos artísticos, movilizaciones populares, artefactos visuales, fotografías familiares e institucionales, documentos personales, testimonios jurídicos de testigos (Basterra, Testa, Alvarez, Careaga, Calveiro), records de los juicios post-dictatoriales. Un mosaico alocucional al que se suman obras pictóricas, escultóricas, exhibiciones fotográficas, intersectadas con manifiestos de familiares de las víctimas, discursos políticos de la Junta (Videla, Massera, Viola, Mignone), presidentes constitucionales (Menen, Krishner), represores militares (Astiz, Scilingo, Acosta), etc. Este complejo entramado de voces, escrituras e imágenes, se propone dar cuenta de la simultaneidad de alocuciones políticas (familiares, artísticas, jurídicas, militares) pero lo que más parece interesar es transferir al lector, en clave transicional, mapas de localizaciones/agencialidades múltiples para invitarlo a identificar manifestaciones

estéticas resignificadoras: lo alocutivo que intenta vivir, “mindfully in the gap between past and future *is itself an art*, an aesthetics of existence” (3, énfasis de la autora). En ello reside uno de los tantos aciertos del estudio de Bell: acogiendo conceptos operativos foucaultianos, leer la producción estética como “political arrangements of life”: “the intentional and voluntary actions that individuals undertake as ‘technique of the self’” (3). Estas manifestaciones de las subjetividades, recuerda Bell, quedaron impresas en la historia cultural más allá de Argentina como record público de intervenciones de múltiples agentes y sus maneras peculiares de materializar las múltiples formas de la memoria. Y es aquí cuando Bell refrenda la naturaleza infinita de la cultura concebida por Levinas como reactivación incesante de reclamos y búsquedas aporéticas irresueltas.

Respecto a las éticas/estéticas centradas en la figura de la desaparición forzada de personas, para Bell es importante destacarlo: el activismo de sus agentes culturales comenzó a dejar marca mucho antes de la reinstauración de la ley positiva y del derecho a la memoria/justicia. De allí que proponga que la Argentina post-dictatorial es una historia “that is only partly grasped via the role of law and legal decisions” (5). Analizar la multidiscursividad y transgeneracionalidad de ese activismo permite a Bell explicar cómo “people ponder issues of response and responsibility, by which they practice ethico-aesthetics’ practices, beyond legalistic mechanisms of transicional justice” (5).

El estudio de Bell no desconoce la importancia de la ley positiva como puente habilitador del derecho. No obstante, *The Art of Postdictatorship* lee el intervencionismo de la ley como descentrado, e incluso rebasado por el polimorfo infinito del *nomos*, término acuñado por el sociólogo-jurista Robert Cover para referir los mundos en los cuales las personas “come to understand themselves” (5). *Nomos*, como magma de alternativas a las respuestas emitidas por las instituciones formales en las tensiones del complejo marco de los universos del cuerpo social y sus múltiples repertorios y performativas.

Una de las contribuciones más relevantes de *The Art of Post-dictatorship* es su capacidad de seguir la trayectoria, circulación y permeado de estas manifestaciones en los imaginarios sociales. Como el caso de la fotografía de Fernando Broodsky, secuestrado en 1979 a los 22 años y llevado a ESMA. Bell señala que si bien su nombre aparece junto a otros desaparecidos en el Parque de la Memoria, es su “aparición fotográfica” la que da pie a una resignificación simbólica de un destino inverso a la desaparición.

En “On Fernando’s photograph”, Bell ratrea la experiencia de un archivista *inapropiado*, Víctor Bastera, secuestrado con Fernando en ESMA, quien en algún punto de su secuestro logra extraer los negativos de fotos de desaparecidos tomadas por fotógrafos de la institución concentracionaria. La foto de Fernando fue luego recogida, junto con otras once, por el texto de Marcelo Brodsky, *Memoria en construcción: el debate sobre la ESMA* (2005). Se trata de fotos que, azorosamente arrancadas a los pactos de silencio de la represión, consiguieron hacer circular la memoria de las víctimas de los vuelos de la muerte: fotografías del *durante*, de los cuerpos insertos en el horror,

señalarían Ana Longoni y Luis García en “Imágenes invisibles: acerca de las fotos de desaparecidos” en *Instantáneas de la memoria. Fotografía y dictadura en Argentina y América Latina*, co-editado por Jordana Blegmar, Natalia Fortuny, Luis Ignacio García (2013) p. 18.

Las fotografías de Basterra recibieron notoria atención en importantes trabajos relativos a la fidelidad documental de la fotografía como estrategia institucional para el control biopolítico del Estado (la foto del documento/ carnet de indentidad). Bell acuerda con éstos respecto a la subversión de los usos de la fotografía policial a manos de activistas que lograron reconfigurar la función de los archivos del horror con nuevos fines de construcción de la memoria”. Pero señala que la foto de Broosky persigue mucho más que el tipo de justicia que se espera de los Tribunales; Fernando aparece como su propio testigo, en un directo reclamo ético a la mirada de la audiencia que debe procesar el fuerte impacto emocional de recuperar la imagen de Fernando, captada por el flash del fotógrafo de ESMA. Deslizada afuera del espacio concentracional, la foto devuelve una imagen que estaba destinada a desaparecer, como las víctimas fotografiadas. Al mismo tiempo, “the camera’s adoption by the military regime has left us an image that has the potencial to speak back to power” (30). El detenido desaparecido se transforma en testigo de su propia victimización en el *durante* de su propia victimización. En esta yuxtaposición de tiempos, el rostro de Fernando, los rasgos íntimos de una vida todavía con vida, son transferidos al record público para el que no estuvieron pensados. Bell nos recuerda que la *restitución* de la imagen/ausencia de la víctima, coexiste en los archivos judiciales con los innumerables *habeas corpus* presentados en vano por los familiares de las víctimas. Un presente/pasado de ausencias sin cierre.

Otro ejemplo del arte/iniciativa de agencialidades culturales analizado por Bell es la serie fotográfica “Ausencias” de Gustavo Germano, emsamblada en una primera etapa, a partir del álbum familiar de la infancia de Germano y sus tres hermanos. Un juego de diferencias fotográficas contrasta imágenes de escenas familiares causales y cotidianas antes de la desaparición con otras posteriores en las que ese mismo espacio es recreado para resaltar el hueco de la ausencia: “Germano’s images unsept” (5) “: la violencia reside en el contrapunto entre las fotografías: golpea en los espacios en blanco.

En el capítulo “Re-Structuring the past: ESMA trial and the effective architecture as the ‘Space of Memory’”, Bell analiza las esferas en las que es rastreado el impacto producido por la Mega Causa ESMA en tanto mecanismo de la justicia transicional vehiculizado por el Estado para restaurar la gestión de la ley positiva y la reposición del derecho.

Al respecto, el estudio de Bell ofrece una minuciosa reconstrucción de los sucesos sobresalientes de la Mega Causa ESMA. Y no lo hace sin razón: en los estudios de memoria histórica, ESMA aparece como el más icónico espacio de experimentación del terror y gestión de la cultura del horror; de allí su centralidad en un extenso corpus de otros estudios, tales como “La imagen que muestra el secreto: Alicia Domon y

Léonie Duquet fotografiadas en la ESMA” de Claudia Feld, publicado en *Instantáneas de la memoria. Fotografía y dictadura en Argentina y América Latina* (Jordana Blejmar, Natalia Fortuny y Luis Ignacio García, compiladores, 2013) respecto a las fotos trucadas de las dos monjas francesas y la compleja historia de su circulación.

El campo de la ley, sostiene Bell, aparece como fundamental para las culturas de la memoria pero al mismo tiempo genera excedentes a la memoria legal (*extralegal meanings*) cuyo poderoso aspecto dramático pudo ya ser advertido en 1961 en el juicio contra Adolf Eichman. A Bell le interesa rastrear ese *extralegal meaning* en la Mega Causa ESMA. Y para ello, sigue a Soshana Felman para resaltar esa dimensión extralegal como remanente/excedente del evento legal: una dimensión “that the law has to confront but which it is *structurally* bound to miss” (61).

Buscando atrapar ese excedente, Bell se detiene a analizar qué hubo por detrás del *colapso* de testigos y sus testimonios *fallidos*, la intimidación/intimidación del padecimiento de la víctima, ahora convertido en público por los juicios; la confrontación física del cara a cara de víctimas con victimarios; los nuevos reclamos [“when you are testifying, you are kidnapped again, you are back in that place”]; el regreso a ese trauma, ese “returning of the past demanded by law” (62).

En el capítulo “Last Words: rupture vs. Laughter”, Bell procede a interpretar las alocuciones del jefe de inteligencia del Grupo Tareas 3.3.2, Jorge “Tigre” Acosta, y de Alfredo Astiz, conocido internacionalmente por el asesinato de las monjas francesa y su infiltración en el movimiento de las Madres. Explica Bell que éstas, junto con las intervenciones de los abogados defensores sirvieron a la parte acusada para reorquestar “the status of the speech made by the accused”, el estatus que “placed them above the law” (66): “the superior, confident and relaxed ‘gentlemanly’ manners of the ‘naval official’” (66). Las interrupciones proferidas contra las víctimas/testigos son leídas por Bell como estrategias para desviar sistemáticamente la atención lejos del horror representado y, en cambio, resaltar la violencia de la ley que forzaba al acusado a la comparecencia pública. A Bell le importa subrayar operáticos gestos/ palabras de cierre, como los pronunciados por Astiz mientras activa un power point e intenta resignificar la Mega Causa como inconstitucional e ilegítima, entidad jurídica que victimiza por medio de la persecución hostil de las ideologías políticas (68). Astiz, señala la autora, aspira a rotar el fundamentado del derecho internacional hacia un tipo de colonialismo judicial/terrorismo judicial -- mientras extiende al juez una copia de la constitución argentina: “gestures toward spectacle”.

Para Bell, esta naturaleza parafernáticamente teatral de los acusados es, sin duda, una estrategia para incrementar la inseguridad, los titubeos y los “fallos” del testigo. Sin embargo, a *The Art of Post-dictatorship* le interesa subrayar la imprevisibilidad de los procedimientos receptivos a través de los cuales los eventos del juicio serán decantados y jerarquizados por los presentes de diferentes maneras, como acontece con las declaraciones post-juicio del juez Daniel Obligado respecto a dos imágenes “that stayed with him”: “la madre de Fernando Brodsky, enseñando la fotografía del joven en el

comedor de su casa y la del miedo de [el] rostro [de Fernando] en la fotografía “(64) sacada del campo de concentración.

La segunda imagen, “was the unanswered question asked by an elderly woman who seemed a little bit lost...: “Do you now where my son is?” (65). La poderosa convocatoria emocional de la fotografía y la de una desconcertada interrogación sin respuesta, alega Bell con acierto, constituyen respuestas ‘off stage’, respuestas que por otro lado, *materializan* la circulación trans-personal/trans-temporal de los eventos, al ser incorporados a la memoria del jurista como parte de la audiencia del Juicio.

El capítulo “Missed Appointments: ethics at the Parque de la Memoria” analiza el Museo de la Memoria (exESMA), aduciendo que la memoria depende de mapas espaciales que la comprenden en tanto recolección espacial/material, una especie de sistema de memoria arquitectónica, un “imaginative visual process is an emotional affair providing access to knowledge” (76), tal como lo señala Bell, citando a Giuliana Bruno en *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts*. Acerca de si existe “a path to knowledge via the museum walk”, acerca de cómo se construye/transfiere la memoria, Bell conjetura sobre el impacto de los tours de la ex ESMA. Aduce que éstos abren diferentes gradaciones de involucramiento del pasado por medio de obras de teatro, conciertos, festivales de tonos festivos que conviven con las pancartas que ligan las ausencias del pasado con las nuevas, como la sintaxis dialógica y de simultaneidad que pregunta por los desaparecidos de la Guerra Sucia, por Julio López y por Luciano Arruga.

Otro capítulo sugerente del estudio de Bell es “Absense and Vigilance: the art work of Diana Dowek and Lucila Quiero”, concerniente a manera en la que las artes plásticas contribuyen al cuerpo social en el objetivo de re-cordar y re-presentar la realidad cotidiana de la dictadura. La autora escoge para ello dos artistas plásticas: en primer lugar, Diana Dowek y las representaciones del espacio callejero en la gradual deformación sufrida por la esfera pública durante la dictadura. El trabajo de Dowek ha sido abordado por una serie de importantes estudios recientes, entre los que destaca “La Argentina en pedazos: los collages fotográficos de Lucila Quieto” de Jordana Blejmar, publicado en *Instantáneas de la memoria. Fotografía y dictadura en Argentina y América Latina* (Jordana Blejmar, Natalia Fortuny y Luis Ignacio García editores, 2013). De “Paisaje”, Bell interpreta el impacto visual del parabrisas de un coche, superpuesto a la imagen del espejo retrovisor que refleja el acercamiento de un Ford Falcon. Yuxtapuestos, espacio interior y exterior recrean “the precarious safety of the car, that ambiguous space which can feel like a ‘private’ space” (124) pero tornado, en cambio, en una espacialidad deglutida por el asedio del Falcon y su circulación en espacios públicos ya apoderados por el horror. Inducido a ocupar la posición del conductor del coche (124), el espectador se funde con el perseguido: “The car offered no real protection... it was a private space that was violated by the military just as were the sacred spaces of the home... leaving no spaces of withdraw or sanctuary” (125-6). Bell recuerda que tanto Dowek, como Juan Carlos Distéfano, Victor Grippo, Alberto Heredia o Pablo Sánchez

exhibieron sus artefactos de la memoria “when the repression was at its height” (126), en el momento mismo en el que las heridas de la nación eran infringidas.

Bell analiza igualmente la serie *Arqueología de la ausencia* de la co-fundadora de HIJOS, Lucila Quieto: treinta imágenes de familiares desaparecidos reunidas por el grupo HIJOS y orientadas a fungir en la naturaleza restaurativa de las fotos encuentros entre víctimas y familiares que nunca tuvieron lugar. Desafiando las ausencias orquestadas por el proyecto represor, el espectro de las imágenes retorna para materializar, “missing images from a non –existing family album” (131); una simultaneidad imposible que, no obstante, *produce* encuentros visuales, como el ejemplo de una foto del album familiar superpuesta como tatuaje en la espalda de la hija de un desaparecido. Para Bell, esta yuxtaposición permite dar presencia/ausencia a una especie de in-memorable post-memoria (Hirsch) o “walking temporalities”, “dream sequences”.

De esta manera, los textos analizados en *The Art of Post-Dictatorship* invitan a la audiencia externa al album familiar a adentrarse en espacios de la memoria del otro, a *adoptar* sus trazos y fragmentos en clave, enigmáticos rastros familiares hechos circular, gracias al trabajo de la memoria de las nuevas generaciones y de las iniciativas de las subjetividades cuyo objetivo se propone mantener irresuelta y abierta la tensión entre la transferibilidad/intransferibilidad del pasado colectivo. Se trataría, aduce Bell, de un “rehousing” de la memoria familiar: “To be vigilant over that memory cannot be approached as a task of simple continuity or translation... In the ways I am discussing, since the images address themselves to the conditions of impossibility that surround these imagined scenes... they also... suggest that the task of the next generations extended beyond reconstruction” (133), “beyond the passive vigilance” (134).

The Art of Post-dictatorship se articula en base a un excelente trabajo de montaje multidiscursivo, alineándose en ello a la propuesta teórica de Ralph Buchenhorst en su estudio, “Los desaparecidos de Argentina: localizaciones múltiples de un discurso de la memoria” (2009). El montaje del análisis de Bell está pensando para dar cuenta de la variedad y complejidad de los procesos de agencialidad y circulación de la memoria, los de la siempre impredecible relocalización identitaria que aparece consecutiva, luego del impacto cognitivo y emocional/político de las memorias de desapariciones contenidas en fotografías, imágenes y en las artes plásticas. Aunque algunas ideas de consensos y textos analizados por Bell forman parte de un corpus de trabajos ya indispensable e innumerable, el fundamento de su inspirador rastreo analítico refuerza su solidez al basarse en las propuestas teóricas de Emmanuel Levinas en cuanto al deseo de entrar en el espacio del otro, “not just to understand it from the point of view of the other but from the very *place* where the other once stood” (76). Respecto a ese acceso cognitivo invaluable, Bell cita a Levinas (*On Thining of the Other*, 1998) para señalar los riesgos involucrados: “[t]he principle of asymmetry and incomunicability by which alterity grounds ethics is put at risk when what he calls non-in-difference collapses into an ‘understanding’ that is a form of incorporation” (76) Como maniobra para evitarlo, Bell

recurre a la invitación de Levinas: recurre a “[t]he heterogeneous collection of sensation, views, impressions, sounds, smells” (76), proponiendo así que el trabajo por la memoria integra a audiencias que se comportan a partir de naturalezas eminentemente ideosincráticas a la hora de reaccionar al contacto con los sujetos de la memoria. El trabajo de la memoria es principalmente un trabajo cultural colectivo y en *The Art of Post-Dictatorship*, sus manifestaciones son leídas en tanto circulación, afiliación y adopción de una herencia política/cognitiva/emocional que parece no tener cierre, entre otros factores, porque la diversidad de los emisores y receptores de esa multidiscursividad social habla desde posiciones discursivas diversas en espacios que van entretejiendo lazos poliédricos, como lo son los espacios de desarreglo de las múltiples disciplinas intersectantes, activadas por los debates de la memoria. Visualización de la memoria/ausencia del otro, espacio urbano/social y activismo político, ética y responsabilidad social, circulación, transferencia y procesamiento de la experiencia de la memoria son las temáticas centrales anudadas en este inspirador estudio.

Beckman, Ericka. *Capital Fictions. The Literature of Latin America's Export Age*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 272 pp. ISBN 978-0816679201.

Reviewed by
William Clary
University of Akron

In this focused study, Ericka Beckman carries out a theoretical excavation of select Spanish American literary texts, that from the modernist through the early period of *criollismo*, lays out convincing arguments that support her work's central contention: certain seminal literary texts of this period in Latin America were not only influenced by the expanding role of export commodities in many of the region's economies during the neo-colonial or Export Age at the dawn of the twentieth century but that many of these novels operate almost as reflections or tropes of imagination and desire for the transformative economic processes which the mono-cultural export model advanced in the many countries of Spanish America. Using an eclectic and theoretical approach in her analysis of Spanish American novels from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Beckman not only conflates Foucauldian concepts of historicity with traditional Marxist dialectics but draws on current cultural studies paradigms to strengthen her materialist critique of the literature of the neo colonial period, a period which not only saw export commodities proliferate to fuel modernization but also a diverse corpus of literary texts which at times championed this model while problematizing its goal of material improvement.

With initial discussion of classic nineteenth century liberalism as an economic model, Beckman explores the observations of the "liberal imagination", the utopian visions of Domingo Sarmiento and José Martí regarding potential for economic progress via the positivist models of development in different geographic spheres: Argentina and Guatemala. Martí's exhortation of wealth and progress through the expansion of coffee cultivation in Guatemala is unique among his modernist texts in its depiction of the crop's power to transform the economy and create unknown levels of wealth during the implementation of Liberal reforms under Guatemalan president Justo Rufino Barrios, a plan which according to Martí would hinge on elites using wealth generated by coffee for the civic good of the nation. Interestingly, Martí at this juncture paradoxically ignored the neglect for subsistence farming that provided sustenance for the Central American nation and the potentially disastrous results such an abrupt

change could have in a country with the agricultural diversity and potential of Guatemala. Later, as Beckman correctly asserts, Martí radically modifies his position in his most famous essay, *Nuestra América* all but abandoning trust in elites to channel commodity profits into national infrastructure, urging elites to abandon attitudes influenced by French culture and adopt nationalistic attitudes as “Americans.”

In her reading of “*El rey burgués*,” a short story from the collection *Azul...* by Rubén Darío, Beckman suggests that the descriptive narrative gaze that directs itself to exotic luxury items reflects the modernist recurring attraction toward elitist commodities, a fixation which also is apparent in the poem *Mis amores* by Cuban modernist Julián de Casal as Beckman examines in the same section. This preferred inventory, or “modernist catalogue”, Beckman argues, is an illusory façade in many modernists texts, a decorative space, which attempts to project or visualize a level “civilization” through the impulse of consumption of luxury goods, in essence an illusion inaccessible to the masses and distant from, according to Beckman, “the vast inequality of the market” that characterized the economies of fin de siècle Latin America.

Beckman highlights the rise of monoculture in agriculture that flourishes during the neo-colonial period as one of “expanding transnational commercial relations,” one which not only promised, through the discourse of positivism, increased prosperity but also allowed for increased consumption of luxury goods as a result of capital generated by agricultural exports and their relation to the articulation of desire for imported luxury goods in the poetry of Julián del Casal and the novel *De sobremesa* by José Asunción Silva.

Silva’s decadent character Fernandez in this novel *De sobremesa*, a *letrado* unable to find any productive niche in society, is read by Beckman as the embodiment of frustration and failure in his maladaptation to his homeland Colombia. This ineffectual state, by extension, lays threadbare the misguided plans for modernization in Colombia based on monoculture export and import of finished goods, a general tendency throughout Spanish America that proved inoperative and incapable of generating the benefits of European modernity, leading to debt burdens and bankruptcy in many Latin American countries during the 1890’s as well as Silva’s own bankruptcy and subsequent suicide in 1896.

Fernandez’s decadent ennui or disinterest in active participation can also be read, as Beckman illustrates in her reading of Silva’s novel an affirmation of aesthetics over the material, a critique of the economic model that devastated Colombia in the later stages of the Regeneration, or, in Beckman’s words, “a poetics of bankruptcy on the periphery of global capitalism,” highlighting the impossibility of a grafting European decadence on the nascent South American republic afflicted by the boom and bust cycle and interminable conflict between liberals and conservatives. In short, this is

an indictment of both models and their inapplicability to the realities of fin de siècle Colombia

Beckam's insightful analysis of José Eustacio Rivera's *La vorágine* reveals multiple layers of complexity surrounding the themes of artificiality, deceit, and commodity fetishism of the rubber boom that swept through the Amazon Basin during the first decades of the twentieth century. Here, Beckam astutely describes the jungle's depths as a wall of occlusion which impedes any insights into the distant demands for the coveted white gold known as *caucho* and the many injustices its extraction deals to indigenos *caucheros*. Furthermore, as Beckam points out, Rivera's classic text underscores the immense spatial divide between the deplorable conditions that were rampant in much of the Amazon Basin that enabled large scale caucho extraction and the expanding forces of market capitalism driving the world's insatiable demand for rubber to propel the burgeoning automobile industry and very little mention of caucho's effect on the Colombian national economy and the havoc wreaked on indigenous peoples of the Amazon.

In her concluding chapter "Return to Macondo: The Promise of Bananas," Beckman deftly points to the origin of the faith Colombian Liberals invested in bananas as an export at the dawn of the twentieth century. Colombian Liberal Rafael Uribe Uribe's exaltation of the potential of the fruit as the unequivocal avenue to modernity in an extended speech in 1903 demonstrates, according to Beckman, a fundamental ignorance of "the storm that was gathering on the horizon as he sang so optimistically to the banana." She then reads the prophecy of catastrophe inherent in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a prefiguration of the ruins of the failed modernity evidenced by the disappearance of Macondo and the Buendía clan in the novel, a trope for the ultimate collapse of the foundational myth that underlies the Liberal dream of progress and modernity propelled by agricultural imports

While Beckman's work casts the idealization of commodities as a guarantor of prosperity as a recurring trope in distinct periods of the twentieth century Spanish American literature, she neglects to allude to the denunciation of this very process in many *criollista* and later novels from the region, the best known of which center on the Central American banana enclaves and indictments of the role of North American imperialism and the exhaustion of the Liberal mono-culture export model. References to an idealized progress via export models are not only absent in novels such as *Mamita Yunai* by the Costa Rican Carlos Luis Fallos, *Prisión verde* by the Honduran writer Ramón Amaya Amador y *La Trilogía bananera* de Miguel Angel Asturias, but also apparent in novels from the Andean region such as *Huasipungo* by Jorge Icaza and *Tungstono* de César Vallejo. In these *criollista* novels the model itself is excoriated as anathema to economic equality as a national state controlled model. In this same vein, Beckman's value contribution in *Capital Fictions* study would have been further

buttressed by some additional analysis of the completion of the cycle that Spanish American modernist texts initiated more than a century ago: an exploration of the wealth creation promises of neo-liberalism which envelops the region after the collapse of Keynesian state centered economies during the debt crisis of the 1980s.

Welge, Jobst. *Genealogical Fictions. Cultural Periphery and Historical Change in the Modern Novel*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-4214-1435-5.

Reviewed by
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The critical expansiveness of literature brought on by the advent of Cultural and Post-colonial Studies in the 1960s has amplified, complicated, and enriched the discourse, and nowhere is this more evident than in Jobst Welge's new book *Genealogical Fictions*. The entire book is an exercise to implode the near ossified binaries clinging like carbuncles to the study of the Realist Novel of the 19th and 20th centuries. Welge's study of the genealogical realist novel is simultaneously transatlantic, comprehensive of both the 19th and the 20th centuries, and spans Italian, Scottish, Irish, Portuguese, Brazilian, and Spanish novels. The common thread throughout the chapters is the theme of genealogical decline in realist and naturalist novels as a way to problematize nationalization and modernization from different peripheries (internal peripheries, in relation to Europe's centers of modernization, and in relation to the experience of time).

Welge's selection of the peripheral or liminal borderlands of the realist novel is precise and offers intriguing new readings of the novels studied. He justifies his focus on the periphery, and the trope of genealogical decline as it manifests there, as a literary space that focuses on difference, variation and compromise in the light of progress, modernization and nationalization. The contemporary relevance of this is phrased concisely; "I would argue that the 'peripheral' novels here discussed anticipate not only our current concern with processes of globalization but also our present sense that the 'homogenizing force of modernity' is an illusion that has faded in the light of a 'plurality of paths toward modernization' and a plurality of temporal worlds" (9). Indeed, Welge's diverse demonstration of this liminal modernizing space via the trope of genealogical decline provides powerful strategies of great relevance to the globalizing contact zones of his reader in 2015. The author's analysis of the plurality of paths towards (or away) from modernization in novels of the 19th and 20th centuries prefigures the very dynamic of the present day.

The peripheral genealogical novel is polyvalent and dynamic. The first novel in Welge's study is Walter Scott's *Waverly*, which represents the assimilation of Great Britain's other culture, the Scottish Highlands, by means of a representation of

generational change in one family. Scott's Romantic depiction of the Highlanders ultimately serves the purpose of bringing them into the fold of British modernity.

This is contrasted by other novels studied by Welge, wherein the genealogical crisis is exploited to resist, reduce, or diminish assimilation to an inevitable modernizing center; such is the case of his study of *I Maloviglia* by Sicilian author Giovanni Verga. Whereas the story of Scott's *Waverly* utilizes the family trope as a metaphor of Britain's absorption of the Scottish periphery, Verga focuses on family as a reservoir of metaphysical changelessness, resistant to the surface changes of modernization. In the face of industrialization and capitalism rampant in Northern Italy, the family structure of Italy, and Europe's, periphery reveals fundamental and changeless truths.

These are but two examples of Welge's critical accomplishment. The genealogical crisis suffered by families is depicted in other peripheral countries, such as Spain (Galdos' *Fortunata y Jacinta* and Pardo Bazán's *Los pazos de Ulloa* and *La madre naturaleza*), Portugal (de Queirós' *Os Maias*), Brazil (Machado de Assis' *Esau e Jacó* and José Lins de Rego's *Plantation Boy*), all the way to Modernist novels such as Di Lampedusa's *Il Gattopardo*. Each of these novels belongs to a specific national, economic and cultural context that configures the genealogical trope uniquely, adopting or critiquing modernity and its temporal revolution or, more frequently as the 19th century wanes, engaging this paradigm shift with ambivalence and irony.

Welge's book adopts a truly comparative approach, which is its greatest virtue and its greatest challenge. Welge's prose and rigorous research accomplish a consistency and soundness to his study that makes for pleasurable and convincing reading. Welge summarizes plots and character studies succinctly and sews their relevance into his overall argument. Welge's expertise and fluency in narrative theory is complete, but at no place in the book does his knowledge of narratology overwhelm the central genealogical theme of the book. His references to key concepts of Genet, Moretti, and other critics is always deftly employed to explain and deepen the significance of the genealogical aspect under discussion, contributing to the readability and coherence of the text.

Even with Welge's smooth transitions and pothole filling, I did find that perhaps the greatest limitation of the book will be found in the reader's difficulty accessing its bevy of texts. The very breadth of the study, the sheer number and diversity of novels under analysis, create a special challenge for its readability, comprehension and critical consumption. Welge's analysis is rigorously maintained with admirable clarity, but even the trained critic will likely leap to the few chapters that study novels with which they are familiar. This is due in part, no doubt, to the hyper-specialization of the academic field, and our own myopia and ownership of very small corners of the literary market; nonetheless, the quality of the book deflates in part due to this conflict and restricts its usefulness, in places, to reference material and encyclopedic storehouse. The number of people to fully enjoy and appreciate the depth and breadth of Welge's admirable study will likely be a select number of an already select readership.

Yet this critique carries with it another critique of our profession, one which Welge addresses in his introduction. He writes "I bring together texts that are normally discussed only *within* the bounds of their respective national contexts and disciplines. I see the task of comparative literature as establishing and making visible the links between national and international, global frames of reference" (11). In this respect, Welge accomplishes the task of the comparative critic. This addresses another strength of the book. It discards and renders irrelevant many burdensome dichotomies that clutter the study and discussion of the literature of modernity: center/periphery, capital/region, North/South, European/Oriental. Welge penetrates into these often polarizing dichotomies and deflates them, exposing the complex interchanges and hybridities occurring ambivalently between the dialogical poles. The multiple fault lines on which these peripheries fall create a dynamic of cultural adaptation, a plurality of temporalities, inherent to the fact that all of these novels deal directly with "moments of crisis, transition, and sociohistorical change" (11). The engagement of the binaries on the liminal space of the periphery is the key to Welge's study, and the universal presence of the genealogy trope, of family continuity or extinction, is the key element to its understanding.

This book is relevant to the student of the realist novel, specialists in post-colonial and cultural studies, as well as more traditional scholars of the novels listed above. The study is of special interest as well to the sociohistorical reader of literature, and the contextualization of 19th and 20th century literature in the transformative revolution of modernization will find deep and precise readings here. The broader, comparative study provides new readings of old novels, and builds bridges between literary fields that have been floating outside each other's' orbits.

Rivas, Cecilia M. *Salvadoran Imaginaries. Mediated Identities and Cultures of Consumption*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0813564616.

Reviewed by
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Wofford College

This book focuses on Salvadoran transnational imaginaries, which study author Cecilia M. Rivas understands as shared ways of thinking about spaces that transcend the territorial boundaries of the Central American nation-state and yet have their origins in the people, history, and landscapes of El Salvador. Following Arjun Appadurai (1996), Rivas defines the imaginary as an expression of a collective, and in her research, she explores the ways Salvadoran imaginaries of transnational realities take shape from, and in turn shape, the lived experience of hundreds of thousands of individuals. Rivas' timely book excels as an example of integrative scholarship, and the author draws effectively upon the tools of anthropology, sociology, and phenomenology, as well as from cultural and literary studies, in her examination of contemporary phenomena such as call centers; online and print newspaper sections; shopping malls; and advertising. Most importantly, she argues for an understanding of material culture in relation to the dynamics of belonging and alienation; rejection and celebration; inclusion and exclusion; nostalgia, longing, ambition, and regret, each expressions of a range of psychosocial realities for those who migrate, those who stay, and those who move between national borders in an age of "cultures of consumption."

Rivas' concise study takes its place at the intersection between a growing body of scholarship focused on dimensions of the phenomenon of Central American migration into the United States and research worldwide about the transnational spaces in which information, identity, and lived experience are constructed, mediated, and contested in an era of globalization and cross-border migration. Rivas' study makes a unique scholarly contribution to a diverse field of research that considers Salvadoran migration as an important category of Central American migration: general studies that analyze migration in the context of the postwar Salvadoran nation (Silva Prada 2000; Andrade-Eekhoff 2003; Lauria-Santiago and Binford 2004; FLACSO 2005; DeLugan 2012), research specifically focused on gangs (Zilberg 2011; Ward 2012), and studies on labor and migration (Pedersen 2013), as well as immigrant networks (Menjívar 2000), among others. Appadurai (1996), generally, and Néstor García Canclini (2001), in the field of Latin American cultural studies, have theorized about the nature of

transnational spaces in an era of globalization, and Rivas draws from their scholarship in framing her own exploration of border-transcending, post-war Salvadoran cultural realities.

Rivas' volume is comprised of five main chapters, a brief introduction and conclusion, as well as careful footnotes, a wide-ranging bibliography, and a comprehensive index that makes the volume easy to use for readers interested in specific topics. Rivas includes chapter-length explorations that are de rigueur for a project like this one, for example, on the emergence of both the term and idea of "Departamento 15," a reference to a fifteenth department (or province) of El Salvador, which has fourteen such territorial units. Departamento 15 has come to refer to, rather than to a territorial and political unit, a "diasporic space" (Rivas 25) comprised of individuals of Salvadoran origin who live and work abroad. In Chapter 1, "Tracing the Borderless in 'Departamento 15,'" Rivas analyzes the notion of Departamento 15 as it relates to the coverage of borderless Salvadorans in the newspaper *La Prensa Gráfica*. She contextualizes her analysis of media representations of the Salvadoran diasporic community with information about changes in journalistic work, such as the founding in 1998 in San Salvador of *El Faro*, Latin America's first digital newspaper, and postwar economic change, such as the "Ley de Integración Monetaria" [Monetary Integration Law], both of which indicated shifting possibilities and mentalities in El Salvador after the 1992 Peace Accords.

In Chapter 2, "The Desperate Images," Rivas delves deeper into media coverage to consider how narratives of migration and displacement circulate in news outlets, and by their circulation, become normalized as everyday Salvadoran experiences (Rivas 72). Importantly, Rivas considers the way both the experiences and representations of migration are gendered and includes analysis of stories of both successful and unsuccessful migration attempts by men and women. Oscar's story, for example, details the story of his fall from "La Bestia," the notorious cargo train on which many Central America migrants hitch a perilous ride north through Mexico, and the aftermath of that fall for him and his family as he is repatriated with severe injuries. Zuleyma's story is of a migrant experience in which family members are killed and she is brutally assaulted, only to be returned to a life of poverty she had left behind in El Salvador. Rivas uses each story to illustrate the power dynamics of the migration experience, as well as the ways that both individuals and the media try to make sense of daily tragedies associated with it.

"Vega's Disgust" (Chapter 3) is a markedly different chapter in that it explores a fictional representation of migration and return. Rivas studies Horacio Castellanos Moya's 1997 novel *El asco*: Thomas Bernhard en San Salvador in order to probe difficult psychological realities that are part of transnational imaginaries. Of particular interest to Rivas is the way fictional representations like Castellanos Moyas' contest tidy representations of transnational experience; in *El asco*, for example, the protagonist expresses disgust with homeland and compatriots upon his temporary return to El

Salvador in the wake of his mother's death. Castellanos Moya is far from alone in exploring cynicism and disgust in fiction from the postwar period, and though Rivas' chapter is not ~~on~~ a literary reading of the novel per se, she presents her close reading of the novel against the backdrop of literary scholarship about Central American fiction and the broader social context in which it is written and circulates.

If Chapter 3 reads human emotional experiences closely, Chapter 4 does the same for a particular site of the experience of globalization: the bilingual call center. "Exporting Voices: Aspirations and Fluency in the Call Center" draws from the author's interviews with call center recruiters, employees, and former employees, as well as upon print and television ads for call center employment opportunities, to foreground a particular kind of Salvadoran identity, one that is coded as desirable in the international labor market. Rivas is particularly interested in the contradictions of the call center phenomenon, which for consumer-callers is a readily available source of assistance for purchasing or product and service-related troubleshooting, at the same time that it represents a labor and language challenge for call center operators and staffers. Rivas observes that since call centers privilege English language proficiency and "neutral" Spanish, they invite the mostly young people they employ to embody and project a particular Salvadoran identity in the workplace. Meantime, the complex personal histories from which such bilingualism derives exist just beneath the surface in stories of migrants who return, or children of migrants abroad to whom job ads appeal to discover their roots by returning to El Salvador to work.

In the same innovative vein as the exploration of call centers is Chapter 5, "Heart of the City," which presents a close reading of shopping malls, particularly Metrocentro and La Gran Vía in San Salvador. The chapter effectively weaves together an analysis of physical space and architecture, advertising, and lived experience, punctuated by thoughtful commentary on the shift from the valorization of public spaces for civic life (such as plazas) to private ones (like malls) in the neoliberal city. The consideration Rivas gives in this chapter to transnational expressions of cultures of consumption will be of interest to those working in cultural studies, particularly those with environmental approaches, since she thoughtfully documents the phenomenon of consumption and the rise of private spaces for social life, as well as alternative experiences of national life, such as street markets and neighborhoods that they displace and marginalize and with which they coexist.

Finally, Riva's brief conclusion on "Renewing Narratives of Connection and Distance" underscores an important point she makes throughout her study. Narratives of "becoming global," that is, these collective expressions of imagination, she asserts, are "produced, circulated, consumed, and mediated," as well as contested, in daily life (150). The conclusion also opens the door for further research about citizenship, displacement, and transnational spaces in the experience of globalization.

Rivas presents realities of transnational life as perceived from multiple angles of analysis—class, gender, physical location, age, level of education—rather than from

one alone, and this sensitivity to diverse experiences makes her book a particularly noteworthy example of integrative and interdisciplinary scholarship. By drawing on direct, qualitative research, as well as primary and secondary published sources, and giving it all cogent analysis, Rivas offers readers a unique book that conveys a complex understanding of transnational realities with regard to subjects of different positionalities: middle class, middle-aged women employees; young call center recruiters; migrants who have succeeded financially in the United States; marginalized young men and women repatriated after traumatic journeys. Read together, chapters on realities that are normal, everyday, and desirable, such as hardworking migrants abroad or bilingual call center employees at home, as well as chapters about the dark and yet still quotidian side of transnational experiences, such as mutilation, exploitation, and family separation yield a nuanced view of Salvadoran transnational imaginaries. Rivas' work makes a valuable contribution to transnational studies, migration studies, Central American studies, and Salvadoran studies, and scholars and students in each of these areas will find it a valuable resource and a catalyst for further work.

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Pérez Firmat, Gustavo. *A Cuban in Mayberry*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 2014. 181 pp. ISBN 978-0-292-73905-5.

Reviewed by
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El ensayo *A Cuban in Mayberry* (2014) de Gustavo Pérez Firmat es una aproximación exhaustiva y a la vez muy personal de una de las más icónicas series de la televisión norteamericana, el *sitcom The Andy Griffith Show* (1960-1968). En este libro, Pérez Firmat analiza los entramados del show a la vez que describe las complejidades psicológicas y de identidad que el exilio cubano (y acaso todo exilio) conlleva.

Gustavo Pérez Firmat llegó con sus padres a Miami como “an undocumented Mayberrian, the town’s resident alien” en octubre de 1960, el mismo mes en que debutó *The Andy Griffith Show* (TAGS). Así su entrada a los Estados Unidos fue también una llegada a Mayberry, el mítico pueblo de Carolina del Norte donde se desarrolla la acción de la serie. De ese modo, el pueblo y en general la experiencia de TAGS desarrolló con un conjunto de correspondencias con la nueva comunidad de exiliados que se conformaba en Miami.

En este libro, Pérez Firmat vuelve a mirar el show con una mirada crítica y estructurada que a la vez nunca se despoja de aquella primera fascinación infantil. Esta vez, además, Pérez Firmat se acerca a la serie, como él mismo dice, con “an eye out for Cuban things”. Es esta visión continua sobre TAGS, el exilio cubano, el rigor analítico y la íntima experiencia humana de Gustavo Pérez Firmat lo que se combina en este libro que hoy presentamos.

A Cuban in Mayberry se divide en una introducción, “To the Fishing Hole”, seguida de dos partes, *The Place* y *The People*, ambas enlazadas por un interludio y cerradas por un breve, personal y dramático (en todo el sentido del adjetivo) epílogo.

El lugar, los recursos y las relaciones sociales de Mayberry descritos en la primera parte, “The Place”, van cobrando unidad y sentido a los ojos de un exiliado cubano. Porque si el exilio supone una pérdida de comunidad y con ello una fractura en el sentido de identidad y pertenencia, la experiencia de TAGS, para Pérez Firmat, fue el bálsamo que lo hizo reconstruir ciertas nociones perdidas en Cuba y reconocerse tanto en la nueva comunidad exiliada de Miami como a la larga en la sociedad norteamericana. Así, Pérez Firmat fue intuyendo analogías entre los cubanos del sur de La Florida y la gente de Mayberry que los complementaban unos a otros. Ambas comunidades, por

ejemplo, están fuera del tiempo: el exilio cubano siguió viviendo y soñando en regresar a un sitio que había dejado de existir, la “Cuba de ayer”, que sólo existía en su recuerdo, de un modo que anulaba todo sentido de inmediatez e historicidad, como una vuelta a las esencias. Del mismo modo sucede en Mayberry, donde la temporalidad es difusa y la historicidad *real* no hace mella. Por lo tanto, las relaciones familiares tradicionales ceden en aras de otras más amplias y complejas. En ambos sitios la comunidad está unida por fuertes lazos interpersonales, supra-familiares, viviendo en mundos que se bastan a sí mismos y que desconocen el cambio.

Una última característica que vincula Mayberry con Miami es, otra vez en palabras de Pérez Firmat, “the conviction of loss”. La academia norteamericana tradicionalmente ha desdeñado a TAGS, especialmente por su ambiente sureño. Este sentido de pérdida que deja un imaginario del sur de los Estados Unidos después de la Guerra Civil se hace análogo al caso de Cuba. Es la pérdida de todo un orden social. Tanto la “Cuba de ayer” a la que los padres de Gustavo Pérez Firmat soñaban con volver como el Sur de los Estados Unidos estaban perdidos para siempre. Para Pérez Firmat, el Miami de la década del sesenta y Mayberry eran comunidades conformadas por sujetos que, sin ningún alarde retórico, devinieron apóstoles de causas perdidas, a la vez que entelequias de un mundo que ya sólo existía en su memoria: “Cuban exiles felt the same way [as the Southerners], conquered but unreconciled”.

En la segunda parte del libro “The People”, la complejidad psicológica de los personajes es explicada y articulada en relación con el espacio y el sentido de comunidad que ofreció la primera, cerrando con ello la unidad del análisis. La plurivalencia de Andy Taylor (Andy Griffith) en Mayberry es inmensa: él es el sheriff, juez de paz y el editor del periódico local, a la vez que funge de “midwife, marriage counselor, matchmaker, town psychologist, and village guru –as well as big brother, surrogate father, Dutch uncle, and best friend-”. Esta totalidad del personaje se complementa con aquella idea del pueblo presentado como un mundo que se basta a sí mismo. Es que Mayberry es el pueblo de Andy, recordemos que el lugar casi fue bautizado como Taylortown, en homenaje a su ilustre Carlton Taylor, “one of the heroes of the Battle of Mayberry” y antepasado de Andy. Andy Taylor es la esencia patricia de Mayberry, su soberano, el personaje que une a la comunidad en torno a sí y en torno al pueblo.

El resto de la comunidad de Mayberry está conformada por un conjunto de personajes estables (e.g. Andy, Opie y Barney), por otros que van y vienen o aparecen sólo una vez y por otros que no son más que voces y nombres, que jamás aparecen en escena pero que cooperan y se entrecruzan para conformar una comunidad tan completa y densa como la realidad misma.

El epílogo del libro es breve y dramático, en la doble acepción del adjetivo. En su sentido figurado, es capaz de conmover y en su sentido literal. Pérez Firmat imagina un episodio de TAGS y este epílogo, “The Lost Boy”, es su guión escrito en dos actos. En el primero, un niño cubano recién llegado es llevado e introducido por Opie a la comunidad. El cubanito apenas habla unas pocas palabras de inglés pero su presencia

suscita un conjunto de respuestas de la comunidad que busca acomodarlo en sus propias nociones estereotipadas de *lo cubano*. El niño, a su vez, lleva con él un conjunto de resonancias que de un modo propio cubanizan el ambiente de Mayberry y con ello mitiga su propio trauma del exilio.

Martín López-Vega. *La eterna cualquiercosa*. (Poemas 2010-2014). Valencia: Pre-Textos, 2014. 69 pp. ISBN 978-84-15894-52-0.

Reviewed by
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El más reciente poemario del asturiano Martín López-Vega (Poo de Llanes, 1975), publicado en la colección Cruz del Sur de la editorial Pre-Textos, confirma a lo largo de los 32 poemas que contiene que estamos ante una voz poética sólida, singular y compleja; una escritura articulada desde una rica multiplicidad de matices y ángulos. De entre esta colección de textos emerge un hilo conductor de temas recurrentes, hilvanados por una poesía que busca siempre explorar la cotidianeidad como punto de partida hacia la trascendencia. Si bien es este un empeño frecuente en la lírica, no siempre es llevado a buen puerto por quienes lo intentan. Afortunadamente para los lectores, López-Vega maneja su nave con pulso experto.

La escritura de López-Vega, de corte marcadamente realista, indaga en la aparente sencillez de las cosas para descubrirnos reveladoras metáforas de la existencia donde menos lo esperamos: “Es hermosa la cuchara de madera para la miel/ y el brillo turbio de la miel y su sabor dulce-amargo-dulce./ Es hermoso el olor a café recién hecho y a pan recién tostado/ que se abre paso desde una cocina en la que nunca estuvimos”. (9)

Es muy de agradecer una voz poética como esta, de tono cercano y nunca impostado ni artificioso. La impronta de la poesía oriental, del haiku y su mirada hacia la naturaleza e indirectamente hacia el hecho poético están muy presentes en varios de estos textos, como en el muy logrado “Junio”, que se abre y se cierra con una misma imagen:

Conducíamos hacia Piran
mientras un mirlo
picoteaba una cereza
y dejaba dentro su canción.
(...)
Ya de vuelta
nos detuvimos junto al camino
para comprar fruta recién cogida.
La primera cereza que comí

estaba picoteada por un pájaro,
y ahora llevo dentro su canción. (13)

Otra imagen inspirada en la naturaleza, esta quizá más peculiar, es la del rinoceronte. En varios poemas la encontramos como trasunto del poeta en tanto que figura solitaria, apartada del resto de sus congéneres para buscar su propio camino: “Camino solo entre la bruma/ como un rinoceronte entre las ruinas/ de un mundo suyo y no suyo”. (11) Más adelante, el poeta reincide en la idea de la soledad como única vía posible para hallar y ejercitar una voz propia: “El verdadero poeta va solo. / Los que van en manada son el coro”. (48)

Los poemas de *La eterna cualquiercosa* contienen una sutil vena metapoética, no obvia pero definitivamente presente. Las referencias intertextuales evidencian las muchas lecturas que el autor lleva a sus espaldas, estableciendo el diálogo con una cuidada selección de voces que le sirven de inspiración. En “Autorretrato hacia 2009”, leemos:

De qué me sirven estas gafas-poema de ver en todo
una interrogación sobre la propia vida.
“Haz de tu dolor un arpa” dice Kariotakis,
pero no creo que se trate de eso;
tal vez se trata de despojarse después de conocerse.(19)

Estamos ante una mirada que transforma en poesía todo cuanto le rodea. Como muestra, un botón: el delicioso texto cuyo título ya adelanta lo inusual del poema “Relación de reparaciones efectuadas en la iglesia del Bom Jesús de Braga en 1853 según consta en la factura del maestro de obras”, y que nos regala versos como estos:

Recolocar una estrella caída.
Un gallo nuevo para San Pedro y pintarle la cresta.
Poner una piedra en la honda de David.
(...)
Renovar el cielo y lavar la luna.
Retocar el purgatorio y añadirle almas nuevas.
Avivar las llamas del infierno y varios arreglos a los condenados.
Limar las uñas del diablo. (49)

Las referencias literarias que encontramos en estas páginas rinden homenaje a poetas admirados por el autor, como en el caso de Lêdo Ivo -cuya “aparición” es uno de los textos más recomendables del libro-, Xuan Bello, el oscuro poeta hindú Bhartrhari, T. S. Eliot, o Lucrecio. Los poemas “Canción del Rinoceronte” y “La eterna cualquiercosa”, que abren y cierran el libro respectivamente, son espléndidos ejemplos

del buen hacer poético del autor. A un tiempo declaración de principios, confesión, metapoesía y reflexión acerca de la propia existencia, brotan de una cotidianidad en apariencia ordinaria, pero que da paso a una asombrosa lectura de la realidad, cautelosamente feliz la voz poética, aunque abordando la vida con una mirada ambivalente; en este sentido, hay una conciencia permanente de lo efímero, y del carácter de mero eslabón del presente dentro de una infinita cadena de instantes, algunos posibles, otros quizás tan solo probables. No es posible entender *La eterna cualquiercosa* obviando la conciencia de temporalidad, la reflexión existencial y la ineludible presencia latente de la finitud, como ponen de manifiesto estos versos de “Canción del Rinoceronte”:

Es hermoso saberse aquí,
 en el ínfimo instante de estar en parte alguna,
 moderadamente feliz y no desdichado, tan común.
 Existente y no existente.

(...)

Soy lo que queda de una infinidad de futuros
 que viven su truncada existencia dentro de mí.
 Es hermoso haber elegido tantas veces:
 soy un cruce de cruces de caminos. (11)

El audaz neologismo que da título al libro –la eterna “cualquiercosa”- resume a la perfección la escritura de López-Vega y su talante de aspiraciones utópicas, aunque modestas. Como si fuera peligroso esperar demasiado, y para evitarnos decepciones innecesarias, la voz poética parece preferir la conformidad con el presente y la aceptación de su imperfecta naturaleza. Sin embargo, a pesar del tono escéptico que a veces adopta, la voz poética mantiene siempre abierta la puerta a la posibilidad de trascendencia, trazando una búsqueda continua poema tras poema. En esta misma línea, no quisiera cerrar esta reseña sin mencionar varios poemas excepcionalmente perceptivos y bellos aquí recogidos, cuya detenida lectura recomiendo vivamente: “Leyendo a Bhartrhari”, “Esfera”, “Félix Romeo (1968-2011)” y “La corriente del Golfo”, todos ellos excelentes muestras de buen hacer poético. En definitiva, lectura muy recomendable la de este libro, esta “cualquiercosa” que nos regala un poeta como Martín López-Vega, cuya sólida trayectoria hasta el momento augura que tiene aún mucho que ofrecernos en el futuro.

Epstein, Josh. *Sublime Noise*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. 338 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1421415239

Reviewed by
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“Which is more musical, a truck passing by a factory or a truck passing by a music school? Are the people inside the school musical and the ones outside unmusical?”¹

These two questions by John Cage illustrate a common dilemma on the meaning of music that some western composers -- and some western writers, likewise -- have been reflecting upon for a long time. More specifically speaking, music composers as well as writers have been confronting the increasing necessity of responding to a noisy environment by including into their compositions sounds inspired or generated by modern industry, agitated large-city life, warfare, and electronic devices, among others. Looking into recent western-world history, one can find the reasons and means that have provoked such unprecedented artistic necessity. Thus, for the last one hundred fifty years, creators in all the arts -- especially in music and literature -- have been immersed in one of the most revolutionary periods in the history of human race.

That revolution is evident in the field of music composition, as never before, had composers experienced the coexistence of a great plurality of conceptually opposing compositional approaches, techniques and styles; such as, tonality vs. atonality; serialism vs. indeterminacy, acoustical instrumented vs. new electronic instruments, among other compositional trends. Never before, had composers engaged in such a fascinating “dialogue” with amazing yet overwhelming technological advances; for instance, computer-generated compositions, electronically manipulation of sounds, mixed media resources, etc. Never before had composers been challenged by so many multicultural, economic and socio-political factors; for example, two world wars, nuclear weapons development, the threat of global warming, etc. Such an intricate tapestry of contrasting elements and paradoxical conditions situates composers, as well as writers, in an ever more “noisy” world. Consequently, noise is no longer seen as a sonic category, aesthetically “contrary” to sound. Indeed, noise is considered as a means to approach and interpret the development of music and literature in our modern society. It is in this

¹ John Cage (Taken from, “Communication,” the third of the Composition as a Process lectures given in Darmstadt in 1958 and published in *Silence*, by John Cage.)

context of a meaningful noise “landscape,” where *Sublime Noise: Musical Culture and the Modernist Writer* emerges to find the significance of noise in modernist music and literature.

Sublime Noise is the first book written by Josh Epstein, an Assistant Professor of English at Portland State University. There, he researches and teaches in 20th-century Anglophone modernism, critical theory, sound studies, film, musicology, and adaptation studies. On Professor Epstein’s own words, *Sublime Noise*

“addresses the intersections among noise, literature, music, and Frankfurt Schoolish critical theory. I argue that noise operates as a symptom of art’s economic and social condition: both writers and composers, in other words, think about noise as the point where their autonomy as artists breaks down and the material/social value of their art becomes audible. Focusing on writers such as James Joyce, E.M. Forster, Edith Sitwell, T.S. Eliot, Theodor Adorno, and Ezra Pound, as well as composers such as George Antheil, William Walton, and Benjamin Britten, this project merges modern literary and cultural studies with the so-called “new musicology.”²

Sublime Noise presents an erudite analysis of selected works of major modernist writers from America, Ireland, and England, in relation to major musical compositions and cultures from these countries in the 20th Century. The book structure consists of a long introduction and six chapters. Each one is carefully articulated with clear examples of musical and literary works. In every chapter, Epstein gives us an excellent and well substantiated analysis of the theoretical and aesthetic interconnections between music, literature and culture which took place during the complex and interdisciplinary modernist period.

It is interesting to observe that by using dissonance and rhythm as prominent structural parameters, the author presents detailed explanations of the reasons why noise becomes so relevant in the creation of music and modernist literature. Also, he exhaustively examines the means and conditions in which-composers and writers absorb and process into their works the surrounding noise from factories, transportation vehicles, warfare, and stressful urban life.

Prof. Epstein uses a highly organized discourse which makes this book a real treasure for acquiring a profound knowledge and understanding of the relationship between music, literature and culture in the Anglophone modernist society. Furthermore, through the employment of accurate technical language in all related fields, the author demonstrates the way music, literature and culture execute a mutual influence during this interdisciplinary period of history. As a matter of fact, music, and literature gain from and exchange new meaning with each other.

This book is a valuable resource, not only for scholars of Anglophone literary modernism, musicologists, culture sociologists and composers, but also, for scholars

² Josh Epstein’s webpage: <https://jbepstein.wordpress.com/>

interested in interdisciplinary research in the arts. It is relevant to point out that Prof. Epstein's thesis and methodology on the relationship between musical culture and the modernist writer could possibly apply to analyze the connection that Hispanic Modernist writers -- such as Ruben Dario -- had with music and culture from Hispanic America. Moreover, instead of considering "noise" as an influential factor in the works of modernist Hispanic composers and writers, the analysis would have to address the interaction between sound, literature and music. Also, it would have to focus on the reason and purpose modernist Hispanic writers had for giving a new sound and meaning to the Spanish language through the assimilation of a foreign "sonic landscape" --- specifically, the French language as well as art and music from the Impressionist period --- leading to the reinterpretation of the Hispanic American cultural identity.

Through exploring, analyzing and interpreting the relationships among modernist literature, music, noise, and aural culture, *Sublime Noise*, on one hand, opens an interdisciplinary route to discover new literary and cultural meaning to music. On the other hand, it reveals a new musical appreciation of, not only modernist literature, but also, many literary works of our times.

Sessarego, Sandro. *The Afro-Bolivian Spanish Determiner Phrase*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8142-1265-3.

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Background

Afro-Bolivian or Afro-Yungueño (henceforth AY) Spanish is a remarkable variety of Spanish spoken in a number of towns in *yungas*, high parts of the eastern slopes of the Andes descending towards the Amazon basin, in the Bolivian Department of La Paz. The term Afro-Bolivian Spanish has the virtue of clarity but is slightly confusing since there are several Afro-Bolivian speech communities in the country that speak varieties much closer to regional standard Spanish. AY is thus more precise, but perhaps not as clear to readers outside Bolivia.

AY has several features that make it stand out among Afro-Hispanic varieties in South America. It is potentially quite old; the first Africans brought to Bolivia arrived in the mid-16th century. In addition, it has developed in an environment where not Spanish but several indigenous languages were the dominant ones (see below). The current AY community culturally has close ties with nearby Aymara-speaking communities, for instance. The number of speakers of the more traditional, basilectal, varieties is not very large: rather thousands than tens of thousands, out of an overall number of possibly fifteen thousand Afro-Bolivians.

Four people have done serious work so far on this variety. I will discuss their contributions in chronological order. Native speaker and community member Juan Angola Maconde is an economist by training but has been an activist for the AY language and culture for many years now. His main general contribution is a book from 2000, where he presents data on the communities and their history. In a subsequent 2012 publication Angola Maconde lists about a 1000 words in AY with analyses of their meaning, example sentences of their use and where possible etymologies.

John Lipski carried out fieldwork in the Yungas in four consecutive summers between 2004 and 2007, much helped by Angola Maconde and introduced to the speaker communities. Lipski has published extensively on this variety, notably in a 2005 initial paper, a 2008 book and recently in a Spanish-language article (Lipski 2015).

Sandro Sessarego did fieldwork in three consecutive periods in 2008-2010. He published a book on the variety in Spanish in (2011), a number of research articles, and now the volume being reviewed here.

While she did more ethnographically oriented work in the community earlier, Danae M. Pérez-Inofuentes carried out linguistic fieldwork there on several trips between 2009 and 2013. In addition to her 2010 Zurich M.A. Thesis and a research article, she recently reanalyzed her material for another research paper (in press.).

Most of the data collected by these researchers came from roughly the same communities, in the Coroico area (North Yungas). The following table lists these communities (in bold those mentioned by at least three researchers).

Angola Maconde	Tocaña, Mururata, Lacahuarca, Comunidad Marca, Dorado Chico, Chicaloma
Lipski	Dorado Chico, Coscoma, Khala Khala, Coripata, Arapata, Coroico, Tocaña, Mururata, Chijchipa, Negrillani and Chicaloma
Sessarego	Tocaña, Mururata, Chijchipa
Pérez- Inofuentes	Mururata, Chijchipa, Tocaña

It is also likely that the same speakers were involved in many of these projects, given the small size of the communities and the fact that Angola Maconde's network played an important role in three studies. Sessarego operated separately from Angola Maconde, but the latter mentions one of Sessarego's main informants, Manuel Barra, explicitly as a main source. From the descriptions, it also appears that all four researchers used roughly the same fieldwork techniques: informal sociolinguistic audio-interviews (Sessarego also worked with direct acceptability judgments, see below).

I stress all these correspondences because the four researchers arrive at rather different conclusions from their analysis of the data. Angola Maconde emphasizes the important lexical contributions in his book from Quechua and Aymara. Since the communities are surrounded by Aymara villages, this is not surprising for that language, but the large number of Quechua words is striking. It may be indicative of strong influence of the Potosí mining language, and reveal Potosí roots of AY (Muysken, in prep.).

Lipski has tried to argue that A, albeit tentatively, has its roots in an antecedent general Afro-Hispanic creole, citing the radically different nominal and verbal morphology of its basilectal forms.

Pérez-Inofuentes sides with Lipski on the probable creole origin of AY but proposes that most likely the relevant groups of enslaved Africans entered Bolivia from the River Plate (and ultimately Brazil), and that there are close historical parallels between AY and pockets of Afro-Portuguese creole in Brazil.

Sessarego, in turn, argues that neither the historical nor the linguistic evidence makes a creole origin for AY very likely, and that it is best regarded as the result of incomplete second language acquisition of Bolivian Spanish.

I will not try to evaluate these contrasting claims here. Probably the most productive strategy would be to first bring together all the recordings made by different researchers into a single data base, which would also be a great asset in any case for the Afro-Bolivian community. This single data base would be useful for seeing whether there are subtle lectal differences between the different data sets (basilectal versus mesolectal), which could help explain differences of interpretation. However, the creole field of studies is full of diverging interpretations of the same data, so agreement may be too much to hope for.

The present study

High time to turn to Sessarego's book, the object of this review. Its aim is to contribute to the literature on formal approaches to syntactic dialect variation, with an emphasis on South American Spanish varieties. It consists of three main parts: introductory, theoretical, and results-oriented.

In chapters 1 and 2 the author explains the purpose of the study, presents background information about AY, and discusses Lipski's earlier claims about its possible creole history. There is detailed historical information about the Afro-Bolivian population, and Sessarego argues that the conclusion that AY presents evidence for earlier creolization is unwarranted. The historical section is fairly solid, but the description of the structural features of AY is too sketchy to be fully comprehensible. To some extent the discussion about the origin of AY is tangential to the central theme of the book, while a grammar sketch (possibly with an indication where basilectal varieties differ from mesolectal ones) would have been very helpful.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the theoretical basis for the study: the analysis of linguistic variation within the minimalist program (chapter 3) and the minimalist analysis of the noun phrase (chapter 4). The latter chapter fairly clearly outlines the steps by which the Noun Phrase gained in structural complexity and was reinterpreted as a Determiner Phrase, through the proposals of researchers such as Abney, Szabolcsi and Longobardi (to name but a few). It is not clear to me from chapter 3, which surveys a number of formal approaches to syntactic variation, whether the main model adapted is microparametric or minimalist. They are taken together here, although there are important differences between them as far as I can see.

Chapters 5 to 8, finally, offer a number a case studies of specific features of the noun phrase. Chapter 5 argues against a typological claim made by Chierchia (the Nominal Mapping Parameter), since its predictions do not fit the AY data. It is problematic for me that Sessarego does not give source codes for his data, and does not indicate systematically which ones were spontaneously recorded and which ones reflect grammaticality judgments. I was also confused by examples such as (52) and (53) on p.

75, where we get *yo compró* and *yo va comprar*. Are these AY sentences, and if not, why is the agreement off? However, they are very different from other AY sentences cited. For the next chapter, on the possibilities for ellipsis, it is made clear that all examples are elicited rather than spontaneous; the main point concerns differences in the use of prepositions such as *cum* ‘with’ in AY. Chapter 7 is about gender and number agreement in AY; again it is based on intuitions. It is not clear to me why a substantial corpus would not also contain enough information to back these intuitions up. The crucial point (p. 112) seems to be that there is gender agreement in articles (although this is only for singular nouns; cf. p. 71), but not in quantifiers and adjectives; for number agreement, there is one plural marked per noun phrase.

The most interesting and ambitious chapter in this respect is chapter 8, where a quantitative approach to variation in the Determiner Phrase, with factor weights for agreement in different syntactic environments, is combined with the proposal in Adger and Smith (2005). I hope Sessarego further develops the line explored in this chapter.

It is clear that AY has much to offer for researchers in the domain of grammatical variation, both those with an interest in language genesis and people with more formal concerns. It is to be very interesting if the verb phrase, which is probably much more complex, will receive a similar detailed treatment as the one allotted to the Determiner Phrase in this volume, hopefully with a pooled data set of all the researchers who have worked on this fascinating variety.

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El volumen monográfico *El celuloide mecanografiado: la poesía cinematográfica de E. A. Westphalen* explora con singular maestría aspectos desconocidos de la obra del gran poeta peruano, así como reexamina usuales exageraciones o ligeras generalizaciones sobre la escritura poética que practicaba Westphalen, nacido en Lima el año de 1911.

La investigación de Zegarra Benites se destaca de diferentes maneras. Primero, por el riguroso trabajo de archivo realizado en el Getty Institute de Los Angeles, el mismo que cuenta con valiosos documentos relacionados a la obra de Westphalen. Luego presenta una lectura acertada de la crítica académica latinoamericana, europea y norteamericana sobre el fenómeno de la modernidad, la vanguardia artística, el cine y su marcada influencia en la literatura de las primeras décadas del siglo XX. Por último, el estudio de Zegarra Benites no solo se detiene en la automática traducción de la crítica especializada y del fenómeno cinematográfico en la poesía de Westphalen, sino que propone una lectura detallada de los poemas, no sólo una lectura culturalista y política de los mismos, enfocándose en cómo la técnica del montaje cinematográfico permite una revaloración de una figura privilegiada en la historia de la poesía, me refiero a la imagen poética. El traslado del montaje cinematográfico al poema permite el renacer de la imagen poética, la metáfora, esta vez de carácter vanguardista. Esto sí resulta una lectura novedosa del fenómeno poético vanguardista de Latinoamérica.

En la introducción se señala que se estudiará la influencia del cine (occidental) en los tres primeros libros escritos por el poeta peruano: *Las islas extrañas* (1933), *Abolición de la muerte* (1935) y *Cuál es la risa* (publicado en 1989, pero compuesto entre los años de 1934 y 1935). Uno de los aportes claves de *El celuloide* queda registrado en la misma introducción. La propuesta de Zegarra Benites reconoce que, desde la crítica temprana, la poesía de Westphalen ha sido ligada automáticamente al surrealismo, lo cual no es necesariamente correcto. Zegarra Benites cuestiona esta inmediata asociación en emparentar a Westphalen con el surrealismo por el tipo de imagen poética que utiliza. Westphalen, según el estudioso, más bien cuestiona la percepción del tiempo y del movimiento de esta práctica artística moderna. A esto se añade, siguiendo al autor, la traducción que ejecuta el poeta vanguardista de ciertas técnicas cinematográficas al

plano del lenguaje escrito del papel para cuestionar algunos aspectos de la modernidad. Además la introducción presenta el carácter interdisciplinario, la combinación de técnicas propias del cine con otras de la escritura literaria, con que trabaja su poesía Westphalen.

El primer capítulo del volumen presenta una lectura de la modernidad occidental y del cambio que produjo la vida moderna en las ciudades, lo que el nuevo arte cinematográfico reprodujo con especial maestría. Se comentan los aportes de teóricos y creadores como Marshall Bergman, Zygmunt Bauman, George Simmel, Matei Calinescu, Renato Poggioli, F. T. Marinetti y Guillaume Appollinaire, entre otros, para dejar evidencia del aprecio por los artefactos mecánicos en el mundo moderno y para explicar la teoría de la vanguardia occidental. Con cuidado se matiza esta impresión occidental del fenómeno moderno con la recepción de la vanguardia artística en Latinoamérica a cargo de los aportes críticos de Nelson Osorio y Luis Monguió, por ejemplo. Se afirma, entonces, que hay entusiasmo en la poesía latinoamericana por el factor moderno pero también hay evidencia de la distancia y diferencia del mismo. En este sentido, se precisa que la poesía de Westphalen asimila elementos de la modernidad para discutirlos y cuestionarlos, aunque no busca aislarse de la modernidad, sino que la confronta con sus propias armas, el tiempo y el movimiento: “Vale aclarar que el hablante de la poesía de Westphalen no ejecuta una crítica a la modernidad con el fin de plantear un regreso idílico a tiempos anteriores. Nada más lejos de su objetivo revisionista. Por el contrario, la meta principal de esta escritura es dismantelar la empresa moderna desde dentro, es decir utilizando sus propios recursos y técnicas” (66-67).

También en el primer capítulo del estudio de Zegarra Benites se relativizan las afirmaciones de Alejandro Romualdo Valle, Sebastian Salazar Bondy, Mirko Lauer, Abelardo Oquendo, Stefan Baciú, Alonso Cueto, entre otros, los mismos que encasillan la práctica poética de Westphalen como meramente surrealista. Sin embargo, en el primer capítulo faltó incluir una lectura más compleja del gobierno de Augusto B. Leguía, que significó el correlato político para los escritores peruanos de vanguardia. Para esto se pudo recurrir al estudio *Apogeo y crisis de la República Aristocrática (1895-1930)* de 1980 de los críticos sociales Burga y Galindo: “En esta vena, es factible sostener la hipótesis de que la poesía de Westphalen desconfía de la mecanización introducida velozmente, pero con resultados fallidos, por el discurso político oficial del régimen autoritario de Augusto B. Leguía” (66).

El segundo capítulo del volumen presenta una extensa revisión de las conexiones entre el arte cinematográfico y la vanguardia histórica occidental y latinoamericana. Así se repasan y discuten los trabajos de creadores y críticos como Appollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, Artaud, Octavio Paz, Vallejo, Villaurutia, Huidobro, Guillermo de Torre, Bergson, Deleuze, entre otros sobre este vínculo artístico. También en este capítulo se presenta una genealogía de las ideas del autor sobre la imagen poética westphaliana con los comentarios a la tesis doctoral del especialista Iván Ruiz Ayala

sobre el poeta vanguardista, aunque este último no presenta un concluyente énfasis en el uso de las técnicas cinematográficas para la elaboración de la imagen poética del escritor limeño: “es el carácter conflictivo de la imagen cinematográfica, expresado en una mecánica dialéctica, lo que a Westphalen le interesa rescatar de ésta, para ser aplicado a su propia percepción poética” (101).

El tercer capítulo del volumen presenta las impresiones locales sobre la influencia del cine en la vanguardia peruana. Así se revisa y se comentan las opiniones de creadores y críticos como Vallejo, Valdelomar, Abril, Basadre, Eguren o Mariátegui, se incluye además la contribución fundamental de Mirko Lauer sobre las influencias de la modernidad en la vanguardia peruana. Se incluye, asimismo, con gran certeza, el hallazgo de Violeta Nuñez Gorriti sobre el tipo de películas que se proyectaban en Lima en la década de los años treinta, una información de archivo valiosa para la tesis del libro porque en éste se hace mención a la relación entre la literatura de vanguardia peruana y el cine vanguardista e experimental, que normalmente se encuentra fuera del circuito comercial: “Además, escapa a mi conocimiento el hecho de si existió o no, en Lima, algún circuito de exhibición paralelo a la cartelera comercial. Por esto, no puedo precisar con certeza si se proyectaron films de famosos realizadores europeos como Epstein, o algunos de los experimentos abstractos de la vanguardia cinematográfica alemana y francesa de los años veinte, así como la piedra angular del cine surrealista: *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) de Dalí y Buñuel” (141-42). Igualmente en este capítulo se incluye una relación de los diferentes libros de la vanguardia peruana inspirados en el arte cinematográfico como *Diánidas* (1925) de Juan José Lora, *Las barajas y los dados del alba* (1924-28) de Nicanor A. de la Fuente, *Hollywood* de Xavier Abril (1931), *Cinco metros de poemas* (1927) de Carlos Oquendo de Amat, *La casa de cartón* (1927) de Martín Adán, entre otras obras de interés.

El último capítulo del volumen presenta el análisis propiamente de los poemas de Westphalen de los tres primeros libros escritos por el autor peruano, *Las ínsulas extrañas*, *Abolición de la muerte* y *Cuál es la risa*, siguiendo la tesis de la influencia de las técnicas cinematográficas en la concepción de las tres obras: “la lírica westphaleana constituye un experimento estético por someter al tiempo y al movimiento a un proceso de manipulación, con lo cual manifiesta paralelismos con técnicas cinematográficas características de la época de la vanguardia” (159). Entre las técnicas cinematográficas que influyen en la construcción de la imagen poética de los poemas de Westphalen destaca el autor el esquema dialéctico que opera sobre la base de los polos de velocidad y lentitud, es decir, el montaje, junto con el collage, la yuxtaposición, el *close-up* generador del fragmento y la ruptura de la imagen. El autor se apoya en las tesis de la vanguardia propuestas por Peter Bürger y en las ideas de César Vallejo sobre la conexión entre poesía y cine. Hacia el final del capítulo se analiza brevemente los últimos textos poéticos de Westphalen como *Arriba bajo el cielo* (1982) o *Falsos rituales* (1999) sosteniendo que en ellos también se hace patente la influencia del motivo cinematográfico.

Esta reseña reconoce los méritos académicos del libro de Zegarra Benites, para finalizar es necesario presentar también las deudas del libro. En la introducción para comodidad de la lectura, se debería haber incluido un resumen de los capítulos del volumen. Además se extraña la falta de un apartado o sección de conclusiones que presente un balance de los hallazgos del libro. Por último, el investigador reconoce la continua mutación en la recepción e influencia de la poesía surrealista en la escritura de Westphalen, lo cual es uno de los grandes hallazgos del libro ya que éste propone una lectura diacrítica de la percepción del surrealismo en la obra del poeta peruano, sin embargo no se sigue el mismo criterio con respecto a la influencia del montaje cinematográfico en la construcción de las metáforas de los textos de Westphalen posteriores a los años treinta: *Arriba bajo el cielo* (1982) y *Falsos rituales* (1999). El cine ha cambiado mucho desde los años treinta y en el análisis de los libros del poeta escritos con posterioridad y aparecidos en la década de los ochenta y de los noventa del siglo pasado se sigue sosteniendo la misma influencia del montaje cinematográfico y de los mecanismos de *slow motion* o desaceleración sin cambio alguno aparente.

Zambujal, Mário. *Cafuné*. Lisboa: Clube do Autor, 2014. ISBN 978-989-724-035-5.

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Conhecido sobretudo como jornalista e autor da *Crónica dos Bons Malandros* (1980), uma das obras mais vendidas da literatura portuguesa, Mário Zambujal (1936) publicou em finais de 2012 um livro que se distingue dos muitos romances que se têm escrito em Portugal nos últimos anos. A originalidade de *Cafuné* está na combinação entre aspectos da forma e do conteúdo: o estilo coloquial e o bom humor que vêm já dos primeiros livros e das crónicas deste escritor, a exaltação do amor carnal livre e o diálogo entre um período da História de Portugal e uma história ficcional.

No apontamento introdutório “É Bom Que Se Diga”, Mário Zambujal afirma que quis inscrever mundos possíveis “num tempo real, neste caso o alucinante começo do século XIX” (9). O ambiente em que se movem Rodrigo Favinhas Mendes, “um rapagão de dezassete anos incompletos” (33), e o “frade desistente Urbino de Santiago” (16), é o da Lisboa das invasões francesas e o do Brasil para onde se deslocou a corte e a família real portuguesa. A veracidade dos elementos históricos, que são convocados às vezes com grande pormenor e abundantemente ao longo de todo o romance, é garantida pelas obras de investigação a que Mário Zambujal recorreu: “(...) foi um gosto ler ou reler trechos da inevitável *História de Portugal*, de Oliveira Martins, notáveis trabalhos de pesquisa e narrativa como *1808*, do escritor brasileiro Laurentino Gomes, e *Império à Deriva*, do australiano Patrick Wilker, não menos saborosas as crónicas do pastor sueco Carl Israel Ruders na *Viagem em Portugal – 1798-1802*” (9).

O capítulo “Um” de vinte, todos numerados por extenso e com uma passagem que antecipa um momento ou um juízo particularmente significativos, apresenta já ao leitor os principais temas e técnicas narrativas deste romance, que narra uma parte da vida de Rodrigo, um pícaro muito propenso aos prazeres da carne, e do ex-frade Urbino de Santiago. O “improvável relacionamento” (16) que se estabelece entre os dois estrutura toda a acção. “Improvável” porque Rodrigo Favinhas Mendes é, em matéria de relações sexuais, um incontinente, e Urbino um homem “que desistiu do convento sem desistir (até ver) da castidade” (10). Os dois conhecem-se quando o ex-frade protege Rodrigo dos “três sujeitos de jaqueta e botas grossas” (19) que o perseguiram, porque ele, alegadamente, faltara “ao respeito à morgada” (19).

No primeiro capítulo, o leitor fica familiarizado quer com o narrador de terceira pessoa, que diverte e se diverte com o que conta e dá a reflectir, quer com a estruturação do discurso em planos que se vão sucedendo com uma lógica evidente, acompanhando ora mais as personagens ora mais os comentários históricos que servem de fundo à história de Rodrigo e Urbino. O espaço em branco entre os vários momentos torna ainda mais evidente e funcional este tipo de composição do romance, que assim se torna mais legível.

Num nível como no outro, surgem as divagações muito caras ao narrador, que por vezes usa o passado para se referir, sempre de modo bem humorado, ao presente mais ou menos próximo. Por exemplo: a propósito dos “foguetes e salvas de canhão saudando a chegada do século XIX” (16), comenta o narrador, numa clara alusão ao que aconteceu um pouco por todo o mundo na passagem para o ano 2000, que “Não se colocara ainda a polémica sobre se os séculos começam no zero ou no um, pelo que ninguém pôs em causa os festejos iniciados pela meia-noite de 1799” (16).

É também com graça e boa disposição que este narrador consegue falar de episódios da vida privada, admitidos pelo discurso histórico oficial, de figuras históricas, e do comportamento maledicente português, sem nunca incorrer no tom panfletário de quem tudo sabe e insiste em transmitir uma verdade. Sobre a princesa Carlota Joaquina, que “apreciava recriar-se com as aias espanholas” (18), observa o narrador, a quem interessa captar, antes de mais, a alegria picaresca de viver das personagens, tanto as da realeza e da nobreza como as do povo: “E não só, bichanava a má-língua lusitana, que vinha de trás e prosseguiria em frente. Então mordía-se na princesa, dizendo-a tão pouco selectiva quanto a homens que chegava a deitar-se com o próprio marido” (18).

A primeira sequência, que narra um dos encontros entre a desinibida Lucrecia e Rodrigo, inclui já o grande tema do romance: o erotismo, o amor físico descomplexado, os jogos que tornam “desejável a carne” e a dão como fonte “de saúde, beleza” (Alexandrian 6) e deleite. Também nesta parte inicial se percebe já que o diálogo será um modo de expressão privilegiado. É no que Rodrigo diz a Lucrecia que se manifesta o seu misto de atrevimento e inocência, o seu gosto pelo corpo feminino, e é nas palavras de Lucrecia (e depois também nas de Dália, aia, como aquela, da rainha) que ela exhibe livremente a sua posição social e a sua sexualidade:

- Desabotoa a camisa.
- Desabotoou e percebeu o sinal para se sentar de novo ao lado dela.
- Assim fez, As mãos esguias passearam-lhe pelo peito ofegante,
- Faça-te cócegas?
- Não, é bom.
- E de que mais gostarias?
- De lhe poder tocar.
- Onde?

Então fosse o que Deus quisesse, Rodrigo estendeu as mãos para os seios que dançavam ao ritmo da respiração e pareciam dilatar-se. Nem risos, nem bofetadas. Quando o travou foi para ordenar, rouca:

– Despe-te. Todo.
Mal acreditando em tamanha felicidade, foi um foguete a desnudar-se. O olhar dela percorreu o corpo exposto, fixando-se no mais visível da excitação. (14)

Ao longo do romance haverá várias cenas em que o narrador nos mostra as linguagens verbais e não verbais do erotismo e do sexo de Rodrigo e das suas amantes, as portuguesas e uma brasileira, a mulata Estrudinha, que lhe ensina a palavra que dá o título ao romance e nomeia a carícia, feita com os dedos atrás do pescoço, que ele muito aprecia:

– Se gosto? Essa festinha põe-me maluco!
– Cafuné. A gente chama de cafuné.
Rodrigo lembrou-se então das artes de Dália, mestra de cafuné, ignorando que fazia cafuné. (224)

A emancipação sexual e moral de Dália e Lucrecia não se vê apenas no relacionamento com Rodrigo. Nas suas aventuras sexuais entram outros homens, como o francês Pierre, entendido na arte do amor que ensina a Dália a técnica dos beijos de “bocas abertas” (88), e o primo de Lucrecia, que, conversando e rindo com ela, “Com paciência de bom alentejano” “aliviou-a das complicações de indumentária que eram moda das damas elegantes” (89). O modo como esta cena está construída mostra bem que Mário Zambujal quer dar a ver o lado mais prosaico e intenso do amor carnal, e mesmo o que nele existe de burlesco, que, regra geral, não é tratado na ficção portuguesa, pelo menos nestes termos: “Com justa retribuição, a prima arrancou-lhe as ceroulas. Quando se encontraram de igual para igual, fizeram o que lhes pareceu aconselhável” (89).

O autor constrói cenas breves de erotismo em que os amantes alcançam, sem consciência de culpa e pecado, o absoluto do prazer corporal e psíquico. A consumação sexual na cópula é sugerida, não descrita pormenorizadamente:

Ao contrário da amiga, não teve de preocupar-se com botões, porquanto o vestido os dispensava. Tinha um notável decote e por aí enfiava Pierre os impacientes dedos. Às vezes, o sentido do tacto rende mais do que a própria visão. E também a fidalga tateou, na zona proscrita em que um homem pode crescer de um momento para o outro. (88)

Cafuné lê-se com gosto pela singularidade da história e pelo coloquialismo do narrador e das personagens, e até com proveito pela lição de aspectos da História de Portugal, que romances como este tornam inesquecíveis. É esta uma narrativa sobre a expressão do desejo no devir da História, que uma passagem como esta resume com precisão e ao mesmo tempo com humor: “já nesse tempo não existia quarto de dormir onde não pontificasse a cama. E antes. Inventar a cama foi a primeira urgência dos homens, pela vontade de se deitarem, sozinhos ou acompanhados. Em pé, tudo se torna mais dificultoso, incluindo o dormir” (89).

Mário Zambujal evoca momentos da História e lembra-nos que, à medida que eles se produzem, há histórias individuais cuja linguagem maior é a do erotismo e do sexo livres e libertadores, instintivos e intensos, integralmente libidinosos e puros na sua naturalidade. Porque, como se lê na contracapa do livro, “Uma particularidade do ser humano é não se limitar aos ciclos de cio. Todo o tempo é bom tempo”.

OBRAS CITADAS

Alexandrian, *História da Literatura Erótica*. Lisboa: Livros do Brasil, 1991. Print.