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Articles

READING THE *HELICON* COLLAGE: HIDDEN STORIES IN THE COLLECTED FRAGMENTS

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Helicon Anthology —Parts into Wholes and Vice-versa

The pastoral anthology *Englands Helicon* is a collection of 150 poems which was first published in 1600 and republished with additions in 1614. Nine new poems were included in the 1614 edition of the work. Besides the nine new poems located among the first 150, the second edition also added a table of "All the songs and pastorals with the authors names contained in this book", including the nine new poems as well as a title page which emphasises the bucolic tone of the work.

The tendency to break wholes into parts and separate them from the original was strong at the time. Robert Graves and Laura Riding's *Pamphlet against Anthologies* (1928) claims, for instance, that anthologies spoil their users' reading habits making them read too superficially and blunting their sensitivity to the "handwriting quality" of individual poets. The Tudors, however, also had a clear notion of the wholeness of a work and of the principle that some of its parts could not be made sense of or properly understood without the patience to hear the whole, whether that whole was a collection of scattered parts in the Petrarchan manner, a story, a mystery, or a point of Christian dogma.

The study of Tudor reading, writing and printing habits leads in fact to the conclusion that the Tudors read, wrote and printed fragmentarily but also structurally or organically. Even specialised anthologies can be read either as

random fragments, that is, making no connections and no generalizations about the whole, or as structured wholes composed of parts onto which a structure is imposed. The only point that emerges with clarity is that the purpose for which one reads affects how one reads. The suggestion made by Barbara Korte (2000: 20) that certain poems "belong together" when more than one poem is found on one page is also very strong.

Barbara Korte's (2000: 20) idea that "printing poems in close vicinity was not only used to save space but also specifically to signify unity and coherence", hence, justifies the attempt to read some of the poems of the *Helicon* as sequences. All the poems are arranged like this in both editions. For that reason, the present study sets out to show that the pastoral anthology *Englands Helicon* can be read as a compilation of separate poems or fragments, or of fragments interspersed with sequences of poems that form love stories here and there throughout the anthology. Both possibilities were equally valid for seventeenth century readers who knew the literary tradition of the time. It all depended on how they chose to approach the text. This study also contends that most contemporary readers —unless specialists in Early Modern Literature— would need to be given the appropriate tools in order to be able to organise the fragments into love stories, that is, to read the *Helicon* poems in sequence.

Anthological Meaning —Editorial Specialisation and Commercialisation

H.E. Rollins (1935: 64) does not acknowledge the commercial interests of pastoral in the *Helicon*. Nevertheless, the author does underline the editor's interest in making it a pastoral anthology. He says bluntly that the editor "bucolises" or turns into pastoral the original poems that he has selected from previous printed works in order to make the anthology work as a pastoral sequence. His position is supported by those poems of the work in which "a silly man" has been turned into "a silly swain" [30: 1], "the foster" into "the Sheepheard" [121: 27], "a Sweet saint" into "a Sweet nimph" [121: 29], or an unmeaning title like "An Ode" into "The Sheepheards Ode" [51]. As H.E. Rollins points out, some poems have added titles and bucolic characters [58, 71, 77, 80, 82, 91]. As an example of a poem with title and first line added he referes to "The Sheepheards description of Love" [54] Rollins also warns the readers of his edition of the presence of some poems which are only pastoral in their added titles [79, 89 y 148].

Similarly, Rollins also points out that the compiler seems to be less concerned with great names and great poetry than with choosing "pastorals" wherever he could find them:

> All is fish that came to his net, and it is noticeable that minor verse-mongers are given more space than the great poets, and that the compiler enjoyed mediocre as well as good poems. Thus it happens that the leading contributor, so far as concerns quantity, is Bartholomew Young with twenty-five poems; Sidney is a poor second with fifteen; Lodge follows with fourteen (only ten of which are actually credited to him), Breton with eight, Shepherd Tony and Greene with seven, and so down the number goes, through the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease, to authors as important as William Browne and Shakespeare or as unimportant as T.B. or Christopher Brooke. (1935: 23-24)

Moreover, H.E. Rollins also considers that there is a considerable directness, as well as naiveté, in the method of procedure followed by the editor of the 1600 edition:

> The editor had his own standard, elementary and superficial though it was, of judging poems, and he lopped or stretched them on his pastoral Procrustean bed with no excuses and no compunction. Various poems that at first did not harmonize with his plan became pastoral with revised or invented titles […] For texts as texts the editor had little respect. He altered at will, not only wherever he wished to make a "pastoral" out of a simple lyric, but also whenever he thought he could improve the rhythm or the sense. (1935: 64-65)

For this reason, Rollins can be considered to be here one of "these days readers" mentioned by Anne Ferry (2001: 37) who are "likely to be surprised by the way in which the texts of poems in early English anthologies were handled". Much more surprising is the fact that such mistreatments went on being perpetrated even long after vastly stricter notions of textual authenticity and editorial accuracy were firmly in place.[1] Still —Anne Ferry also explains (2001: 69)— "anthologists since the beginning, and at least until quite recently, have left their imprint on poems by adding or changing their titles, correcting or modernising their language, even restructuring their forms". Inevitably, to some degree or other, these revisions lead to reinterpretations of the poems so treated. Failure to realise this fact is hence to miss the anthological meaning of the work.

This point will be exemplified in the following sections by analysing the importance of perceiving the influence of Virgil and Barnfield in the *Helicon* for the full understanding of the meaning of the work as a collection of closely juxtaposed poems.

Cycles and Romances: Virgil and Barnfield —*Helicon* Linkers

In order to make it a pastoral anthology, the editor of *Englands Helicon* goes for his poems to such books as the *Arcadia*, Robert Greene's *Menaphon*, Thomas

Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Bartholomew Yong's translation of the Spanish pastoral romance by Jorge de Montemayor entitled *Diana*.[2] Thus, *Englands Helicon* shares the characteristics of the pastoral romances and pastoral dramas, as well as the sonnet cycles which were so popular at the time. Both the Classic and the Early Modern sources of *Englands Helicon* provide the key to the arrangement of many of the poems in this pastoral anthology that has remained unstudied for years in spite of its popularity at the time it was published.[3] They also provide an explanation for the importance and the novelty of the anthology at a time when readers had already started to get tired of conventional compilations of poems.

Englands Helicon takes advantage indeed of the popularity of its pastoral romances and sonnet cycle models. But it goes beyond these models, always incorporating the necessary innovation to catch the readers' attention. The use of Virgil's Eclogues II and VII—"Corydon's Love for Alexis" and the conventional alternate singing in "Meliboeus, Corydon, Thyrsis"—and the novelty that this classical influence brings with it was a notable innovation. In fact, the acquaintance with this classical source allows the identification of a group or sequence of poems in the anthology with Phillis and Coridon's love story, which takes the form of any number of the conventional pastoral narratives to be found in any pastoral romance or sonnet cycle of the time.

Pastoral romances were very popular in Elizabethan England. J.J. Jusserand explains it in the introduction to his *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*:

> The truth is that the novel shed its first splendour during the age of Elizabeth; but the glory of Shakespeare has overshadowed the multitude of the lesser authors of his time, a multitude which included the early novelists. While they lived, however, they played no significant part; now they are so entirely forgotten that it will perhaps be heard with some surprise that they were prolific, numerous and very popular. So great was the demand of this kind of literature that some succeeded in making an income out of their novels. Their books went through many editions for that age, many more than the majority of Shakespeare's plays. They were translated into French at a time when even the name of the great dramatist was entirely unknown to the French people. (1966: 26-27)

And, within the novel, the pastoral enjoyed great popularity. As J.J. Jusserand goes on to explain in his chapter on pastoral romances:

> No class of heroes either in history or fiction has uttered so much verse and prose as the keepers of sheep. Neither Ajax son of Telamon, nor the wise king of Ithaca, nor Merlin, Lancelot, or Charlemagne, nor even the inexhaustible Grandison, can bear the least comparison with Tytirus. (1966: 217-218)

The last decade of the sixteenth century was also marked by an outburst of sonneteering and collections of poems. The production of sonnet cycles at the

time was such that Chapman already reveals his critical attitude in the opening sonnet of his *Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy* (1595):

> Muses that sing Love's sensual empery,
> And lovers kindling your enraged fires
> At Cupid's bonfires burning in the eye,
> Blown with the empty breath of vain desires
> You that prefer the painted cabinet
> Before the wealthy it doth store ye,
> That all your joys in dying figures set,
> And stain the living substance of your glory,
> Abjure those joys abhor their memory,
> And let my love the honoured subject be
> Of love, and honour's complete history;
> Your eyes were never yet let in to see
> The majesty and riches of the mind
> But dwell in darkness; for your god is blind.

Martha Foote Crow explains the monotony of the sonnet-cycle in the following terms:

> It may reasonably be expected that in any sonnet-cycle there will be found many sonnets in praise of the loved one's beauty, many lamenting her or his hardness of heart; all the wonders of heaven and earth will be catalogued to find comparisons for her loveliness; the river by which she dwells will be more pleasant than all other rivers in the world, a list of them being appended in proof; the thoughts of night-time, when the lover bemoans himself and his rejected state, or dreams of happy love, will be dwelt upon; oblivious sleep and the wan-faced moon will be invoked, and death will be called upon for respite. (1896: viii)

The monotonous love and the praise of the beloved were always themes in the ever-popular sonnet cycles as they were in the pastoral romances of the time. This is also the case in the *Helicon*, though with innovative variations, as in the previous collection of poems by Richard Barnfield entitled *The Affectionate Shepheard* (1594). Harry Morris (1960: 13) points out that "Barnfield belongs, perhaps, no higher than in the third rank of Elizabethan poets, but his work is not completely insignificant".

It is my contention in this essay that his work is not insignificant at all, that he achieves innovation thanks to his use of the classics and that his *The Affectionate Shepheard* owes much to his use of the classical model of Virgil's Eclogue II. That is exactly what the editor of *Englands Helicon* does when he follows Virgil's Eclogues II and VII using Barnfield's model to make his a popular anthology some years later.

Like conventional shepherds, Richard Barnfield's praises his beloved Ganimede's beauty:

If it be sinne to love a sweet-fac'd boy,
Whose amber locks trust up in golden trammels
Dangle adowne his lovely cheekes with joy,
When pearle and flowers his faire haire enamels;
If it be sinne to love a lovely lad,
Oh then sinne I, for whom my soule is sad.
His ivory-white and alabaster skin
Is staind throughout with rare vermillion red,
Whose twinckling starrie lights doe never blin
To shine on lovely Venus, Beauties bed;
But as the lillie and the blushing rose,
So white and red on him in order growes. (7-12)

He laments his loved one's hardness of heart and explains the painful love triangle in which he has become involved by loving Ganimede. That is, though he is deeply in love with Ganimede, the shepherd's love is despised because Ganimede is in love with fair Guendolena, Queen of Beauty. At the same time, though, she is in love with a third party who does not love her in return:[4]

Face, that was to Guendolen more deere
Than love of lords, or any lordly peere.
This was that fair and beautiful young man,
Whom Guendolena so lamented for;
This is that Love whom she doth curse and ban,
Because she doth that dismall chaunce abhor:
And if it were nor for his mothers sake,
Even Ganimede himselfe she would forsake. (78-83)

In trying to convince Ganimede to accept his love, the affectionate shepherd even includes the possibility of death on two different occasions in his speech as the only possible solution —*remedium amoris*— to his unrequited love:

But if thou wilt not pittie my complaint,
My teares, nor vowes, nor oathes, made to thy beautie:
What shall I doo but languish, die, or faint,
Since thou dost scorne my teares, and my soules duetie:
And teares contemned, vowes and oaths must faile,
And where teares cannot, nothing can prevaile. (198-203)

If thou wilt love me, thou shalt be my boy,
My sweet delight, the comfort of my minde,
My love, my dove, my solace, and my joy;
But if I can no grace nor mercie finde,
Ile go to Caucasus to ease my smart,
And let a vulture gnaw upon my heart. (253-258)

Virgil's Eclogue II is also present in the catalogue of all the possessions the affectionate shepherd says he would share with his beloved if he were willing to live with him and to be his love:

> If thou wilt come and dwell with me at home,
> My sheepcote shall be strowed with new greene rushes
> Weele haunt the trembling prickets as they rome
> About the fields, along the hauthorne bushes;
> I have a pie-bald curre to hunt the hare,
> So we will live with daintie forrest fare. (82-87)

The image of the rustic wooer courting some comparatively refined mistress is a common aspect of pastoral courtship based on the well-known story of Polyphemus and Galatea.[5] H.M. Richmond describes the convention in the following terms:

> It might aptly be called "the bucolic temptation", since what happens is that the unpolished countryman addresses his intended mistress in uncouth but forthright speech —attempting to translate into terms of rural resources those costly temptations to indulgence of which a metropolitan lover might dispose. (1960: 230)

Nevertheless, the monotonous conventions of earlier sonnet cycles and pastoral romances apart, the author takes Corydon's homosexual love in Eclogue II as the perfect model for his innovative work. Thus, following the same convention of "the bucolic temptation" that typifies Corydon in Eclogue II, the affectionate shepherd tries here to prove himself a good homosexual lover, superior to his opponent in love:

> Compare the love of faire Queen Guendolin
> With mine, and thou shalt [s]ee how she doth love thee:
> I love thee for thy qualities divine,
> But she doth love another swaine above thee:
> I love thee for thy gifts, she for hir pleasure;
> I for thy virtue, she for beauties treasure. (203-208)

Daniel F. Pigg (1998: 14) agrees that it is possible to see that "Barnfield attempts a critique of the normative, heterosexual sonnet tradition". But Pigg points to Barnfield's refashioning and reappropriation of that discourse to represent same-sex attraction under the guise of sublimation and transferred desire without mentioning Virgil. Nevertheless, the classical convention is clearly used for purposes of innovation in this work by Richard Barnfield.

As pointed out by Rafael Vélez (2004: 5-6) Virgil's second Eclogue celebrates homosexual desire between two shepherds called Corydon and Alexis. But the allegorical readings of and commentaries on Virgil's *Bucolics* appeared soon after

Virgil's death, and the Middle Ages witnessed an important revival of his work, which was adapted to, interpreted as, and commented on from a Christian perspective, obviously implying an erasure of the homoerotic nuances. This tradition was handed down unchanged to Renaissance times when the same-sex tone of the second eclogue was accordingly read as an allegory of friendship.

Nevertheless, this particular Latin poem continuously challenges the traditional unsexing or heteronormativity of the great literary and moral icons. And Richard Barnfield's *The Affectionate Shepheard* (1594) openly reinterprets the eclogue's unambiguous discourse on same-sex affection. One year later, the author had to answer the criticism levelled at his introduction to *Cynthia* (1595). And he argued that his pastoral was just an imitation of the great classic poet Virgil:

> Some there were, that did interpret *The affectionate Shepheard*, otherwise then (in truth) I meant, touching the subject thereof, to wit, the love of a Shepheard to a boy; a fault, the which I will not excuse, because I never made. Onely this, I will unshaddow my conceit: being nothing else, but an imitation of *Virgill*, in the second Eglogue of *Alexis* (1595: 3).

Eclogues II, VII and the *Helicon* —The Collage Cycle

The editor of *Englands Helicon* was familiar with Richard Barnfield's work. Love and the praises of the loved one are also the themes of many of the poems in the *Helicon*. He even takes one of Barnfield's poems in the narrative sequence of Coridon and Phillis that can be read in the *Helicon*. But at the same time, he makes his selection of poems fit the organizational pattern of Virgil's Eclogues II and VII so that his visitation of Barnfield, combined with that of the Latin author, results in innovation.

As pointed out already, some of the 159 poems of the *Helicon* deal with the love story of two shepherds, Phillis and Coridon. This fact allows the possibility of reading this group of poems in the anthology as a kind of pastoral narrative which could be entitled "Pastoral of Phillis and Coridon". Read together, this group of poems takes on the structure of a creative imitation —imitation with slight variation or *imitatio cum variatione*— of what would be a combination —*contaminatio* in Latin terms— of Virgil's Eclogues II and VII.

The editor of the *Helicon* follows the Latin models when selecting the poems that deal with Coridon and Phillis' amorous story and thus he provides a clear thematic and structural unity that allows for a sequenced reading of the group of poems in the anthology that constitute the pastoral narrative of Phillis and Coridon. Thus,

the poem of the pastoral entitled "Harpalus complaynt on Phillidaes love bestowed on Corin, who loved her not, and denyed him that loved her" [24], can be analyzed as a variation of the first 44 lines of Virgil's second eclogue. It bears clear thematic and structural similarities to the first 44 lines of Eclogue II. Both poems present a mixed structure consisting of a narrative in third person and a song by a desperate shepherd who suffers from unrequited love:[6]

> Corydon, the shepherd, was aflame for the fair Alexis, his master's pet, nor knew he what to hope. As his one solace, he would day by day come among the thick beeches with their shady summits, and there alone in fruitless passion fling these artless strains to the hills and woods.[7]

Moreover, both songs follow a similar line of argument when the two shepherds introduce themselves as worthy lovers and take both mythological *exempla* and examples from nature before reaching the conclusion that they will never gain their beloveds' favours:

> Corydon, you are a clown! Alexis cares not for gifts, nor if with gifts you were to vie, would Iollas yield. Alas, alas! what wish, poor wretch, has been mine? Madman I have let in the south wind to my flowers, and boars to my crystal springs![8]

In lines 40-44 in Eclogue II, Virgil's Corydon accepts the situation and adopts an Epicurean stance:

> Nay more, two roes —I found them in a dangerous valley— their hides still sprinkled with white, drain a ewes udders twice a day. These I keep for you. Thestylis has long been begging to get them from me —and so she shall, as in your eyes my gifts are mean.[9]

The shepherd of the *Helicon*, meanwhile, resorts to the idea of suicide at the end of the poem by the Earl of Surrey entitled "Harpalus Complaynt" [24]. In this poem, he reflects upon the idea that the traditional motif known as *taedium vitae* is the only possible solution to his sufferings:[10]

> I see therefore to shape my death,
> she cruelly is prest:
> To th' end that I may want my breath,
> my dayes beene at the best. (85-88)[11]

Lines 45-55 in Eclogue II are represented in the pastoral by the poem entitled "Phillidaes Love-call to her Coridon and his replying" [46], a poem signed Ignoto though attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh. Nevertheless, this Coridon and his beloved Phillis' exchange of offerings reaches the anthology as a variation of lines 29-36 of Eclogue VII by Virgil. It follows the structure of those lines of Virgil's

seventh eclogue rather than that of Eclogue II. In Eclogue II, Corydon is the only one who uses a catalogue of the possessions that he would like to give to his beloved in exchange for his favours. But there is not any kind of dialogue whatsoever:

> Come hither, lovely boy! See, for you the Nymphs bring lilies in heaped-up baskets; for you the fair Naiad, plucking pale violets and poppy-heads, blends narcissus and sweet scented fennel-flower; then, twinning them with cassia and other sweet herbs, sets off the delicate hyacinth with the golden marigold. My own hands will gather quinces, pale with tender down, and chestnuts, which my Amaryllis loved. Waxen plums I will add —this fruit, too, shall have its honour. You too, O laurels, I will pluck, and you, their neighbour myrtle, for so placed you blend sweet fragrance.[12]

In lines 29-36 of Eclogue VII, as in the poem by Sir Walter Raleigh entitled "Phillidaes Love-call" [46], Virgil's Corydon and his opponent Thyrsis participate in a *carmen amobaeum* or alternate singing in which they take it in turns to introduce votive epigrams, just as if they were exchanging offerings:

> CORYDON
>
> To thee, Delia, young Micon offers this head of a bristling boar and the branching antlers of a long lived stag. If this fortune still abides, thou shalt stand full length in polished marble, thy ankles bound high with purple buskins.
>
> THYRSIS
>
> A bowl of milk, Priapus, and these cakes, are all thou canst expect year by year; the garden thou watchest is poor. Now we have made thee of marble for the time; but if birds make full the flock, then be thou of gold.[13]

From line 56 and to the end of Eclogue II, Virgil's Corydon reflects upon the Epicurean need to wait for another beloved:

> Corydon you are a clown! Alexis cares not for gifts, nor if with gifts you were to vie, would Iollas yield.[14]
> Ah, Corydon, Corydon, what madness has gripped you? Your vine is but half-pruned on the leafy elm. Nay, why not at least set about plaiting some thing your need calls for, with twigs and pliant rushes? You will find another Alexis, if this one scorns you?[15]

Otherwise, he would be heading for suicide. But this is a possibility the shepherd only refers to at the beginning of his song, where he tries to convince Alexis to pity him:

> O cruel Alexis, care you naught for my songs? Have you no pity for me? You will drive me at last to death.[16]

Similar reflections are present in the poems of the pastoral narrative "Coridon to his Phillis" [53] by Sir Edward Dyer, and Thomas Bastard's "Coridons Hymne in praise of Amarillis" [59]. On the one hand, the poem by Dyer connects with the beginning of Corydon's song in Eclogue II, as well as with the last lines of the poem attributed to Surrey:[17]

> Poore Coridon for love of thee must die:
> Thy beauties thrall, and conquest of thine eye. [53: 24-25]
> Oh cruel Alexis, care you naught for my songs? Have you no pity for me? You will drive me at last to death.[18]

On the other hand, the Epicurean intentions expressed by Corydon at the end of his song materialize in the poem by Thomas Bastard. The shepherd of the pastoral makes up his mind here not to keep on suffering from unrequited love of Phillis' and starts singing to a new beloved called Amarillis.

As has been already explained, "Harpalus complaynt on Phillidaes love" is a mixed poem attributed to Surrey now and may be analysed as an *imitatio cum variatione,* or variation, of the first 44 lines of Virgil's second eclogue. This eclogue also presents a mixed structure in which Virgil introduces a narrative preceding Corydon's song. Thus, both poems start with a third person narrative introducing two shepherds who spend the hot summer afternoons burning with love and singing to those who do not love them: whereas Phillis is clearly in love with Corin and makes garlands of flowers for him in the poem of the pastoral, Alexis seems to be his master Iollas' favourite in Eclogue II. In similar contexts, both shepherds start their songs by showing the sorrows that unrequited love provokes. They both portray themselves as victims of their cruel beloveds who do not hesitate to "make their grief a game" [24: 52].

After contemplating suicide at the beginning of his song, Virgil's Corydon introduces a catalogue of his possessions (lines 19-44, Eclogue II). He needs to prove that he is worthy of Alexis' love. With the same intention, but using an argument based on his superiority (lines 57-64), Surrey's shepherd will try to convince Phillis to consider him a better lover than his opponent Corin:

> Corin, he liveth carelesse,
> he leapes among the leaves:
> He eates the fruites of thy redresse,
> thou reap'st, he takes the sheaves.
> My beast a-while your food refrain,
> and harke your Heard-mans sound. [24: 59-61][19]

Fernández-Galiano (1984: 236) speculates on the possibility of linking line 44 to line 56 in Eclogue II:

> and so she shall, as in your eyes my gifts are mean[20]
> Corydon you are a clown! Alexis cares not for gifts, nor if with gifts you were to vie, would Iollas yield.[21]

In this way, line 44 would directly lead to the final reaction of the despised Corydon who feels the Epicurean need to look for another beloved who would really appreciate his gifts. From line 56 and to the end of the eclogue, Virgil's Corydon goes on reflecting upon the impossibility of winning Alexis' favours as already expressed in line 44:

> Alas, alas! What wish, poor wretch, has been mine? Madman, I have let in the south wind to my flowers, and boars to my crystal springs.[22]

After this, in the last lines of the Eclogue, he simply makes up his mind to wait for another Alexis. But he will only reach this conclusion once he has made use of a *priamel*[23] with examples taken from nature with which he tries to prove his love for the boy to be an instinctive attraction impossible to repress:

> The grim lioness follows the wolf, the wolf himself the goat, the wanton goat the flowering clover, and Corydon follows you, Alexis. Each is led by his liking.[24]

Fernández-Galiano (1984: 236) would then see the second catalogue of offerings in lines 45-55 to be a mere *amplificatio* or enlargement of Eclogue II which could be easily removed without changing its meaning. Since the catalogue is not to be found in the poem by Surrey, this hypothesis could definitely justify the identification of the poem of the anthology with an *imitatio cum variatione* of the first 44 lines of Eclogue II by Virgil. Surrey's shepherd also takes examples from nature in lines 71-76 of this poem. In doing so, he arrives at the conclusion that he will never be able to win Phillis' love, for "tyranny and cruelty dwell in beautiful women's hearts" [24: 81-83]. Women do not seem to need a partner in the same way as men do:

> The Turtle-Dove is not unkind
> to Him that loves her so.
> The Ewe she hath by her the Ram,
> the young Cow hath the Bull:
>
> The Calfe with many a lusty Lamb,
> doo feede their hunger full. [24: 71-76]

For this reason, he even thinks of suicide as the only possible solution to his unrequited love, making reference to his own epitaph in the last lines of his amorous complaint:[25]

> Write you my friends upon my grave,
> this chaunce that is befall:
> Heere lyeth unhappy Harpalus,
> by cruell love now slaine:
> Whom Phillida unjustly thus,
> hath murdred with disdaine. [24: 99-102]

Surrey's shepherd resorts to the motif of the *taedium vitae* or suicide whereas Corydon opts for an Epicurean solution in Eclogue II by Virgil, only thinking of suicide at the beginning of his song. But the thematic and structural similarities between the two poems seem to be clear.

The catalogue of offerings in lines 45-55 of Eclogue II is represented in the pastoral by a *carmen amobaeum* or alternate singing not preceded by narrative and entitled "Phillidaes love-call to her Coridon, and his replying" [46]. Through this poem, Phillis and Corydon exchange offerings while they sing together. But this time, it is Phillis who calls Corydon. He had already lost his hopes in a previous poem by Richard Barnfield called "The unknowne shepheards complaint" [35], where he had been reflecting upon Phillis' inconstancy: "For now I see, inconstancie/ More in women than in men remaine" [35: 11-12], and had thought of loneliness and resignation as an Epicurean solution to his unrequited love: "Poore Coridon must live alone,/ other helpe for him, I see that there is none" [35: 36-37]. He had even wished "The Fates that favor Love" to curse Phillis for being unkind in lines 25-30 of a following poem by Nicholas Breton entitled "Coridons supplication to Phillis" [40].

These two poems by Richard Barnfield and Nicholas Breton provide the plot of the pastoral with an evolution of the amorous state of the shepherd that Corydon's complaint lacks in Eclogue II. But, at the same time, they also seem to take the line of argument of the pastoral narrative back to line 44 by Virgil, as well as to the last part of Surrey's poem. In this way, the poem entitled "Phillidaes' Love-call" [46] could be considered to be a section of the pastoral narrative which corresponds to lines 45-55 of Eclogue II, though following the structure of lines 29-36 of Eclogue VII.

Eclogue II includes the catalogue of offerings that Corydon introduces in his solitary song, which represents a kind of love which has not even been declared. Vicente Cristóbal (1996: 93) explains that lines 4 and 5 of this introductory narrative already point out that Corydon's complaint should be understood as a monologue the shepherd recites in the solitude of the forest:

> and there alone in fruitless passion fling these artless strains to the hills and woods.[26]

Nevertheless, it is in Eclogue VII that the reader will really be able to appreciate a *carmen amobaeum* similar to the alternate singing found in the pastoral entitled

"Phillidaes Love-call" [46]. Only in lines 29-36 of Eclogue VII, do Corydon and his opponent Thyrsis sing two stanzas which, according to Vicente Cristóbal (1996:187), follow the structure of the Greek votive epigrams.[27] That is to say, a similar structure to the one used by Phillis and Coridon when they exchange offerings in this poem of the pastoral:

Phil. Heere are cherries ripe my Corydon,
eate them for my sake:
Cor. Heere's my oaten pipe my lovely one,
sport for thee to make"
Phil. Heere are threeds my true-Love, fine as silke,
to knit thee, to knit thee
a pair of stockings white as milke.
Cor. Heere are my Reedes my true-Love, fine and neate,
to make thee, to make thee
a Bonnet to with-stand the heate.
Phil. I will gather flowers my Coridon,
to set in thy cap:
Cor. I will gather Peares my lovely one,
to put in thy lap.
Phil. I will buy my true-Love Garters gay,
for Sundayes, for Sundayes,
to weare about his legs so tall:
Cor. I will buy my true-Love yellow Say,
for Sundayes, for Sundayes,
to weare about her middle small. [46: 11-30]

In fact, the only difficulty in relating this poem of the pastoral to those lines of Eclogue VII would be that the poem is not preceded by a narrative in the same way as the Eclogue is. But this possible problem can be solved by just including a new poem by Anthony Munday in the pastoral narrative entitled "Another of the same subject but made as it were in answer" [25]. This poem consists of two narratives preceding each of the two parts of the alternate singing in which Phillis answers Coridon's complaints for the first time in the pastoral. Phillis arranges to meet Coridon the following day, in this poem by Anthony Munday:

Harpalus, I thanke not thee,
For this sorry tale to mee.
Meete me heere againe to morrow,
Then I will conclude my sorrow
Mildly, if may be: [25: 111-115].

But they do not meet again until the poem entitled "Phillidaes Love-call to her Coridon and his replying" [46], that is to say, the poem of the pastoral which has

been previously identified with the catalogue of offerings in lines 45-55 of Eclogue II.

From line 56 and to the end of Eclogue II, Virgil's Corydon reflects upon the Epicurean need to wait for another beloved:

> Ah, Corydon, Corydon, what madness has gripped you? Your vine is but half-pruned on the leafy elm... You will find another Alexis if this one scorns you.[28]

At the beginning of his song in Eclogue II, all he can think about is the possibility of suicide:

> O cruel Alexis, care you not for my songs? Have you no pity for me? You will drive me at last to death.[29]

Nevertheless, the motif of suicide is not only present in the last lines of the poem by Surrey —as has already been explained— but also in the poem by Sir Edward Dyer entitled "Corydon to his Phillis" [53]. In this poem by Dyer, the shepherd of the pastoral thinks of suicide as the only possible solution to his unrequited love:

> For Phillis lookes no harty love doo yeeld,
> Nor can she love, for all her lovely face.
> Die Coridon, the spoile of Phillis eye:
> She can not love, and therefore thou must die. [53: 29-32]

The Epicurean intentions expressed by Virgil's Corydon at the end of Eclogue II are to be found in the poem of the pastoral by Thomas Bastard entitled "Coridons Hymne in praise of Amarilis". The shepherd of the pastoral sings to Amarilis, a new beloved, saying that he would not hesitate to die once and again for her favours.

Conclusions

All the *Helicon* poems that have been analysed in this study deal somehow with the love story of the shepherds Phillis and Coridon. For this reason, they have been said to be part of a single pastoral narrative within the anthology that could be entitled "Pastoral of Phillis and Coridon". Moreover, when read in sequence, these poems can also be said to make up an imitation of what would be a *contaminatio* or mixture of Virgil's Eclogues II and VII. The editor of the anthology seems to have followed the Latin models for his selection with the intention of providing the pastoral with a clear thematic and structural unity that is reinforced, at the same time, by the possibility of reading these poems as a single

contaminatio or mixture of Eclogues II and VII. That is, as a single pastoral narrative that makes the anthology innovative and attractive to the readers of the time thanks to the use of the classical models. If Richard Barnfield resorts to Eclogue II to break conventions and to avoid the monotony of common compilations of poems and sonnet cycles, the editor of *Englands Helicon* is definitely aware of this fact and seems to have made up his mind to go a little bit further than his predecessor. For *Englands Helicon*, he takes Eclogues II and VII in order to create a sequence of fragment poems or pastoral narrative within his pastoral anthology. Both of them are using classical conventions to counteract the monotony of the conventions of their time.

Notes

[1]. Anne Ferry exemplifies what she calls "These continuing abuses by anthologists of the poems in their charge" in her chapter "Anthologist in the Poem": In the first sections of *Songs and Sonnets* given separately to Surrey and Wyatt, the compiler acted as editor (2001: 37). That is, it seems he tried to gather and arrange all the poems —never before collected in print— that he could find by each of these poets (he added at the end of the book some presumably found after the first arrangement was made); grouped them separately, roughly according to formal kinds; and gave a title to each of the entries attributed to each poet. In the section at the end of *Songs and Sonnets* consisting of a miscellaneous gathering of separate pieces by many unidentified authors, the compiler acted as an anthologist.

[2]. The pastoral romance by John Dickenson entitled *The Shepherd's Complaint* (1595), *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) by Edmund Spenser, George Peele's *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584), some books of madrigals by John Dowland or Thomas Morley and some anthologies such as *Bower of Delights* (1591), *The Phoenix Nest* (1593), or *Songs and Sonnets* (1557) can be also mentioned as important sources of poems for the editor of *Englands Helicon*.

[3]. It was not forgotten during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as was so much other Elizabethan poetry.

[4]. Love triangles are very common in pastoral romances. Hallet Smith explains that love is simple in essence, but the variety and complexity of its consequences make for a total paradox: "Though there is no jot of reason in love, the lover invariably reasons about it. Pastoral provides amply for this paradox. It utilizes for the purpose various devices which taken out of their context seem absurd. The most common perhaps is the "cross-eyed Cupid" situation, in which A loves B, B loves C, C loves D, and D loves A. It is used in Montemayor, and of course it is a device in Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, as well as in the woodland part of a *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The paradox is that love itself is so simple; the Lyric and plot elements of pastoral romance work together to enforce the contrast between simplicity and complexity" (1952: 17-18).

[5]. This theme has regularly attracted major poets as varied as Homer (*Odyssey*, Book 9), Theocritus (*Idylls* 6, 11), Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, "Acis and Galatea"), Virgil (*Aeneid*), Ben Jonson and Marlowe.

[6]. Corydon reflects as an Epicurean philosopher when he stops to consider the inconveniences of blind love. See Lucrecius (IV 1063-1067) and Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* (vv.169-199) where he recommends agriculture as a solution to unrequited love: Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexim, / delicias domini, nee, quid speraret, habebat. / tantum inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos / absidue veniebat. ibi haec incondite solus / montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani (II: 1-5).

[7]. All translations from Virgil's *Eclogues* have been taken from *Virgil*. Rushton Fairclough, H. Trans. 1999-2000. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P.

[8]. In the original: rusticus es, Corydon; nec munera curat Alexis, / nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas. / heu, heu, quid volui misero mihi? floribus Austrum / perditus et liquidis immisi fontibus apros (II: 56-59).

[9]. In the original: praeterea duo, nec tuta mihi valle reperti, / capreoli, sparsis etiam nunc pellibus albo; / bina die siccant ovis ubera; quos tibi servo. / iam pridem a me illos abducere Thestilis orat; / et faciet, quoniam sordent tibi munera nostra (II: 40-44).

[10]. On this occasion *taedium vitae* appears as *remedia amoris acerbi*; that is to say, suicide due to amorous despair.

[11]. All quotations from *Englands Helicon* have been taken from Rollins, H.E. Ed. 1935. *Englands Helicon*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P.

[12]. In the original: huc ades, o formose puer: tibi lilia plenis / ecce ferunt Nymphae calathis, tibi candida Nais, / pallentis violas et summa papavera carpens, / narcissum et florem iungit bene olentis anethi; / tum, cassia atque aliis intexens suavibus herbis, / mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha. / ipse ego cana legam tenera lanugine mala / castaneasque nuces, mea quas Amaryllis amabat; / addam cerea pruna: honos erit huic quoque pomo; / et vos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxima myrte, / sic positae quoniam suavis miscetis odores (II: 45-55).

[13]. In the original: CORYDON: Saetosi caput hoc apri tibi, Delia, parvus / et ramose Micon vivacis cornua cervi. / Si proprium hoc fuerit, levi de marmore tota / puniceo stabis suras evincta coturno. THYRSIS: Sinum lactis et haec te liba, Priape, quotannis / exspectare sat est: custos es pauperis horti. / nunc te marmoreum pro tempore fecimus; at tu, / si fetura gregem suppleverit, aureus esto (VII: 29-36).

[14]. In the original: rusticus es, Corydon; nec munera curat Alexis, / nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas (II: 56-57).

[15]. In the original : ah, Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit? / semiputata tibi frondosa vitis in ulmo est. / quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indigent usus, / viminibus mollique paras detexere iunco? / invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexim (II: 69-73).

[16]. In the original: O crudelis Alexis, nihil mea carmina curas? / nil nostri miserere? mori me denique coges (II: 6-7).

[17]. Remember lines 85-88: "I see therefore to shape my death, / she cruelly is prest: / To th' end that I may want my breath, / my dayes beene at the best".

[18]. In the Latin version: O crudelis Alexi, nihil mea carmina curas? / nil nostri miserere? Mori me denique coges (II: 6-7).

[19]. Notice that the comparison makes sense if understanding the identification of the shepherd with his flock. This is a very common motif in pastoral tradition.

[20]. In the original: et faciet, quoniam sordent tibi munera nostra (II: 44).

[21]. In the Latin version: rusticus es, Corydon; nec munera curat Alexis, / nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas (II: 56).

[22]. In the original : heu heu, quid volui misero mihi? Floribus Austrum / perditus et liquidis immisi fontibus apros (II: 58-59).

[23]. *Priamel* is a rhetorical device consisting of a series of listed alternatives that

serve as foils to the true subject of the poem, which is revealed in a climax. See, for example, Fragment 16 by Sappho.

[24]. In the original: torva leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam, / florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella, / te Corydon, o Alexi: trahit sua quemque voluptas (II: 63-65).

[25]. From the time of Meleagrus (AP. V 215; XII 19; XII 74), the erotic epitaph was very important in authors such as Ovid (*Her*. II 145-148; VII 195-196; *Ars*. III 39-40; *Fasti* III 549-550; *Met*. IX 563) and Propertius (II 1, 77-78; II 13, 35-36); it accordingly had an important place in Renaissance poetry.

[26]. In the original: ibi haec incondita solus / montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani (II: 4-5).

[27]. Remember lines 29-32 in Eclogue VII: Cor. "To thee, Delia, young Micon offers this head of a bristling boar..." Thy. "A bowl of milk, Priapus, and these cakes, are all thou canst expect year by year..."

[28]. In the Virgilian version: ah, Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit? / semiputata tibi frondosa vitis in ulmo est... / invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexim (II: 69-73).

[29]. In the original: O crudelis Alexi, nihil mea carmina curas? / nil nostri Miserere? mori me denique coges (II: 6-7).

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TRANSFORMING THE WILDERNESS INTO GOD'S CREATION: JOHN JAMES AUDUBON IN A CANADIAN LITERARY SPACE[1]

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> "Creation, property, enjoyment form a sinister trinity in the human mind". E.M. Forster (1988: 208)
>
> "Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things. A tree is a tree. Yes, of course. But a tree as expressed… is no longer quite a tree, it is a tree which is decorated, adapted to a certain type of consumption, laden with literary self-indulgence, revolt, images, in short with a type of social *usage* which is added to pure matter". Roland Barthes, "Myth Today" (in Dana Phillips 2003: 9)

It is a long-established belief in our civilization that reality is only complete when it has been expressed verbally, when it has been organized within the structure of human language so that it can be transmitted to other individuals as information or knowledge. This is not always made explicit in cultural manifestos, but our eternal search for meaning implies that this quest requires some kind of articulation, and the word has been conceived of since the beginning of time as the light thrown by intellect.[2]

The European colonizing process of new territories has historically exemplified the assumption that reality without language is a blank or a chaos and cannot be possessed by humans. A taxonomic fever took over the Natural Sciences in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the discovery of new species of animals and plants at an astonishing pace made it necessary to find a common nomenclature, and once Linnaeus's naming system (1735) became popular, the almost Adamic experience of seeing and naming for the first time produced a classificatory eagerness among naturalists. This anxiety was both the product of the desire to accumulate facts for science and the desire to possess the 'contents' of the new lands.

John James Audubon, the American ornithologist, painter, and writer, incarnated this need to identify and copy God's creations through images and words in what was in effect a race to be the first to see, name, and portray. His life, like that of other naturalists, explorers, and surveyors, involved a tragic existential paradox: the description of wonders that disappear because of their very description. In order to *execute* a painting, he had to make life still, that is, he had to kill his birds. In her novel *Creation* (2002), Katherine Govier imagines John James Audubon's vicissitudes in the Labrador expedition he and his son undertook when, halfway through the mission of drawing every bird in North America, he decided to go "north and off the map" (3) to find new bird species. These few months in the life of the world's most famous "living bird" artist, partially documented in his Labrador journals, give Katherine Govier the opportunity to observe Audubon's encounter with an unapproachable and intractable wilderness where land and water are indistinguishable and birds become a blurred mass; the landscape an unusable space, hostile and unsuitable for people. This uncharted territory in Labrador baffles Audubon's usual power to name and to draw, and takes the reader back to the myth of creation, to the "Genesis", where it is clearly established that nothing really exists without the confirmation of language.

These two issues: the *kind* of knowledge historically imposed upon the wilderness of the New World and the threat that nonverbal reality poses to the human mind permeate all creation stories (i.e. narratives of origins) and exploration accounts; Govier's novel extracts these narrative genres from the whirlpool of history in order to identify some of the irrational assumptions which lie at the heart of what is regarded even today as the body of truths that science has extracted from nature. I will analyze her critical position in conjunction with John James Audubon´s *Journals* which, although heavily edited by Audubon's granddaughter Maria, still stand as a valuable biographical document which allows us to follow his train of thought and assess how Govier picked up on Audubon's reflections about the nature of his vocation.

The above-mentioned "kind of knowledge" refers to what Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 15) has called a new form of "Europe's planetary consciousness": while the project of mapping the world's coastlines had been underway for several centuries,

a new daunting task became a governmental and scientific duty: the systematizing of nature in order to construct global-scale meaning in view of the amount of discovery of plant and animal life in the European colonies. To throw the grid of classification over the American wilderness meant to render each species as discrete entities in visual terms and, especially, it meant giving them a name. This endeavor, however exhilarating, was further encouraged by the naming strategy devised by Carolus Linnaeus (Carl Linné) in *Systema Naturae* (1735), which enabled scientists to pin down living organisms yet unidentified. Latin was the chosen language because it did not belong to a particular nation. However this transnational attempt at knowledge transmission was in fact a gatekeeper for those without access to classical education: Latin's scientific aspirations obliterated earlier vernacular plant classifications (Shteir 1996: 29-30). Additionally, Latin established Europe as the main observer. Linné's achievement was really to launch an index of life forms through a two-word code phrase, the genus plus the species (Koerner 1999: 15-16). Particular nomenclatures over which there was some disagreement apart, the real influence that the apparatus of natural history had in all cultural spheres was that it considered nature as a container of separate *objects* of different sizes and shapes. Its strategy was to parcel out the natural world and give each item a term, and this practice imposed a structure of knowledge difficult to challenge because it was thought to be the handmaid to rationality.

The political circumstances in which Eurocentric Naturalism confronted the wilderness made of taxonomy more than an absorbing pursuit for collectors and scientists. The listing and describing of the new species of plants and animals found in the colonies responded to European expansionist desires and also to New World patriotism. Mapping landscape and describing its contents meant control over them. Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) demonstrates how natural history —more specifically the identification of more than one hundred American bird species— was used to argue for the uniqueness of the United States of America and for its right to classify the native national resources. Scientific projects (land surveys and biological classifications) sought administrative regulation under growing pressure for ownership.

The confluence of knowledge and commodity also worked at other levels: moral, aesthetic, heroic, and commemorative. Botany was regarded as morally uplifting because it showed the virtues of organization and of decorative art. There is a long tradition that unites women and botany within their roles of mothers and educators, and botany was also part of a polite British culture which relished the belief that there were discoverable patterns in nature (Shteir 1996: 4, 21, 29, 199, 234). At a more elitist scientific level, enlightened naturalists identified classification as the boundary between science and the disoriented efforts of the predecessors, whom

they considered mere collectors, and this move from the empirical toward the abstract was considered to be a triumph (Ritvo 1993: 238). Naturalists were considered to be the heroes of the scientific cause, and while, for example, the French naturalist and prolific writer Count Buffon (1707-1788) believed in the degeneration of American animal species, other naturalists, such as the father of American ornithology Alexander Wilson (1766-1813), was considered a hero in the cause of New World scientific independence because he showed the contrary to be true (Souder 2004: 10-17, 29-44). In view of all that organic hotchpotch waiting for a terminology, the New World was infinitely open to acts of commemoration, and its geographical and biological items became the recipients of names in memory of personalities of public or sometimes more private significance, contemporaneous with the explorers and scientists, a christening activity not devoid of the excesses of the ego (New 1997: 55-57; Spufford 2003: 150-159).[3]

Furthermore, taxonomy provided a new way to construct an identity for oneself through the epics of naming, and so produced a race of white males whose identity was secured through exploration, mapping, naming, and drawing the wilderness. John James Audubon (1785-1851), the "American woodsman" and naturalist who painted birds was among them (Audubon 1999: 865). His scientific zeal, his heroic status and the ethos in which he lived animated a life devoted to seeing for the first time as well as cataloguing what no other Euro-American eyes had seen before. This is what Audubon called "the non-descript" (1986 I: 88): an animal, a plant, or a piece of landscape thanks to which a man could achieve a sense of creation. The actual basis of this stereotyped climactic mental structure was that the act of knowledge was confused with the birth of the object. In this particular meaning-making approach to reality, the "act of knowledge" can be defined as the singling out of an uncatalogued natural item for the purpose of naming, and the "object" refers to the living organism under observation.

In her novel *Creation* Katherine Govier chooses for its plot Audubon's journey to Labrador, those three problem-ridden months otherwise cursorily mentioned in Audubon's biographies, and in so doing, the novel gets involved in an intricate site of meaning within the Canadian literary context. It is not only that the author rescues an American figure from sanitization (a common strategy in Canadian literature), but that she has to confront the idea of Labrador as the supreme wilderness, a space resistant to contour and definition. My essay will specifically focus on the clash between a man who represents a relentless will to draw animal distinctions and the existence of a Canadian space not amenable to geographical and animal segmentation.

The voyage through the dangerous passage between Labrador and Newfoundland had Audubon confined to the ship, desperately gazing at an unapproachable

shoreline, and finding the wilderness appalling for the first time in his life. In his journals, Audubon repeatedly speaks of a rugged, dreary, inhospitable and mournful country, barren, forbidding and terrifying. He speaks of "stubborn, precipitous rocks" (I: 404), of "terribly wild shores, fearfully high and rugged" (396), of "the most extensive and dreariest wilderness I have ever beheld. It chilled the heart to gaze on these barren lands of Labrador" (403). In addition, the birds Audubon expected to see, the Labrador Duck and the Great Auk, were already extinct. And true to history, the novel records that Audubon's powers to locate, discover, and draw distinct species of birds fail him for the first time.

The idea of a Canadian psyche dependent on the impact of "these vistas of desolation" (Atwood 1997: 1) has recurred in seminal literary works and in the declarations of important Canadian cultural figures, and Govier's novel brings together the nineteenth-century hunger for naming new species and the Canadian penchant for the unnamed and the undefined.[4] In spite of an alertness on our part towards the misapprehensions that generalizations may entail, there seems to be a lingering fixation in Canadian letters with the emotional implications of the clash between a stretch of land and a non-indigenous language, that is, with the moment/s where language is exiled from reality. This is due partly to the influence of postcolonial theory but also to the primacy of the construction of Canada as *space*. Thus, in the face of the inadequacy of words to capture the environment, there is "the temptation of silence" as Kroetsch (1980-1981: 16) calls it, which seems to surface as an important issue in many literary and critical works dealing with the way relevant Canadian figures have expressed an awareness of their history and geography.

The canonization of certain imaginative obsessions in Canadian literature has revolved precisely around an alleged failure in verbalizing nature. The impossibility of humanizing the wilderness through language is a dilemma often repeated in the Canadian literary imagination: for example, after the arrival of Europeans in Eastern Canada (Frye 1967: 824), and later first contacts made with the prairie (Harrison 1977: ix). The idea of geography as obstacle, not "morally explicable", impossible to express through the romantic perspective, and undermining the conventions of speech seems to fit a Canadian tendency toward namelessness. According to Kroetsch, this "nurturing of namelessness" (1989: 46) results not only from the deliberate avoidance of a name, but also from the will to un-name and to un-invent the world. Whereas Frye (1967: 826) had problematized a lack of articulateness: "One wonders if any other national consciousness has had so large an amount of the unknown, the unrealized, the humanly undigested, so built into it", Kroetsch (1989: 36-71) claimed a notion of definition that abolished any inherited system of identities.[5]

The entering and settling of Canada as a dumbfounding, annihilating experience has been made more recognizable by comparison with the way that the United States has imagined itself and exported its history. Whereas American history still insists on what the heroic explorer and purposeful pilgrim saw, Canadian history focuses on what the unlucky explorer and reluctant immigrant failed to see. We are equally familiar with Jacques Cartier's vengeful definition of Canada as the "land God gave to Cain" as compared with Captain John Smith's hopeful phrasing: "Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation". According to Simon Schama (1995: 517): "There have always been two kinds of Arcadia: shaggy and smooth; dark and light; a place of bucolic pleasure and a place of primitive panic". The characteristics of Labrador terrain provoke dismay and, by way of presenting their moment of origin, Canadians have preferred to quote the disappointment felt at the sight of this uninviting wilderness, a moment later theorized as the terror provoked by a nature which dwarfs the individual who tries to come to *terms* with it.[6]

Govier invokes Audubon within this unavoidable mystique of the Canadian landscape tradition, when halfway through his mission of identifying and drawing every bird of North America for his book *Birds of America* (1827-1838), he is transported to a place which cannot be defined as *land*. During this voyage North, Audubon meets the captain of a Royal Navy surveying vessel, Henry Bayfield, a man also involved in a life-giving and life-taking vocation related to the representation of the wilderness on paper: Bayfield is charting the elusive and murderous coast of Labrador. He is devoted to making the wilderness readable, to naming places and registering boundaries between sea and land. Bayfield represents the British Empire and has never allowed himself to question the validity of his mission: "containing" nature is a duty prescribed in the Bible (86-87). He had been in charge of verifying the American boundary from Montreal to Kingston; his job had proved a hellish task because the islands he found outnumbered the words they possessed to name them, and because this boundary was made of water, "a most unreliable surface":

> Come to survey a boundary and found nothing so simple as a line through water: found land smashed up and broken to bits, humped and rising out of water, shallow and sometimes disappearing. Irrational, useless and obstructing land, needing to be made sense of. (61)

While Bayfield's unflinching skills as a boundary maker are being constantly challenged by the fog and the violent ocean, Audubon revises his own personal origins and those of his civilization, and finds in the *Book of Genesis* the fateful phrases in which man —under the pretext of God's command— arranged the hierarchies of the living, positioned himself on top, and ranked the rest of living

creatures as servants at his beck and call. According to the Bible, God had said to man, "have dominion over" and "subdue the earth". What a convenient organization, Audubon thinks pitifully (244).[7]

In the King James version of *Book of Genesis* —initially published in 1611, when England's colonizing of the New World was just beginning— the original act of creation is immediately followed by the act of dividing and of naming: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (*The Holy Bible* 2002: 4). The second sentence makes the first sentence anti-climactic: it presents the first act of creation as deficient, an incomplete state of affairs which has to be remedied. The climax will occur later on, with the separation of the different kinds of matter and their categorization: "God divided the light from darkness" and "called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night" (4). After this, God established the boundary line separating earth and sea; then he gave them their names. After the separation and the branding of darkness and light, water and dry land, grass and trees, day and night, seasons and days, he blessed his divisions: "God saw that it was good" (4-5).

In this ever-present text, creation is not mainly a matter of making anew (only one sentence is devoted to the act of creation), but of desiring distinction and separation. Out of an original formless substance, things must take different shapes, and names are necessary so that they achieve the status of identifiable objects. As if the manifestations of nature did not exist until they were given a name; as if all pre-linguistic existence was to be discarded as blank or useless. As if the nondescript ran the risk of being swallowed back into a terrible void. It is the eternal clash of being versus nothingness, which our civilization has fully accepted as a linguistic triumph. Victory in this fight is represented in the Bible as the elimination of the threat of an undifferentiated wilderness. The wilderness was thus created in a context of fear and opposition, it was dark, sinister, and chaotic and it stood for moral chaos (see Nash 2001: 3, 24).

In the Bible, no time elapses between creation and language, and such simultaneity makes the act of naming as fundamental as the act of creation. Identity is made to depend primarily on language. Additionally, God hands the gift of naming over to Adam, and the name Adam decided upon for each living creature was to remain. This God-given faculty of first seeing and then verbally representing is the capacity explorers and surveyors can put to use in the New World. Audubon's role as a first seer of a parcel of God's creation and his will to coin a name for every living bird is based on the idea of the power of language over existence, on the power of representation over the life of the creature being named.

Audubon needs to kill birds in order to reproduce them as if they were alive, and in doing so, he becomes a kind of Noah in reverse: he kills animals in order to save them in eternal images. Abstraction is morally superior to contingent flesh. His duty is therefore to stop the life of his models in order to copy and organize God's creation; then he can produce information or knowledge. Once he translates the real creature into an image and a little biography, this image can become a visual reference with a classificatory caption.

The reader of *Creation* and particularly of Audubon's *Journals*, will surely be shocked at the degree of carnage in which Audubon was involved in his explorations; it is paradoxical that while he made of his animals subjects of visual adoration, he was often blind to their agonies.[8] A bird is not thought to be truly real until its life pours out on paper. Only then does the idea of a bird come into existence and ensures success for the painter: he can secure fame and another page for his book. Audubon imposes a paradoxical stillness on the most ethereal of creatures —wild birds do not stay put, they do not naturally lend themselves to observation. Nevertheless, he promoted himself as the only bird artist who drew birds from nature, the only "living bird artist".[9]

Audubon stands for the white man's agency in the nineteenth century, when new territories and their contents were claimed by naming them. His images perpetuate in another legible medium the lethal fixing power of the word because they rob birds of their movement and their sound in order to achieve a reproducible proof of their existence. Seeing comes before words and no other document can offer such direct testimony as the image. The painted image represents the moment of man's victory over the elusive, when reality is substituted for by a human code. An act of knowledge which, in Audubon's case, entailed the disappearance of the represented being, an act then mistakenly taken for a discovery and an addition. The painting also exerts the power of naming, and therefore of appropriation. The appetite for wild images of America —another confirmation of the power of ocularity— raises the question of why Audubon's subscribers wanted to buy his book, but more fundamentally, the question of *as who* or *as what* did they look —do we look now— at his pictures. John Berger (1972: 86-87) defined painting as an instrument of knowledge which denotes an assumption of property: it confirms the possession of all that is beautiful in the world. Audubon turned nature into a pleasurable spectacle; his precise drawings contained an aesthetic dimension, which turned them into a commodity for us. The spectator's relation with the image follows only one direction: we are observers/owners of an object once alive. The line between the scientific and the decorative fades away.

These ideological dilemmas are not forced into Govier's novel with a view to making Audubon either the victim or the mouthpiece of contemporary critical

apparatuses. The novel is built on careful attention to Audubon's life and historical background, attention which fuses the documentary and lyrical. The fluidity with which the novel is written, the philosophical digressions, the impact of the events themselves prevent an easy indictment of Audubon based on a failure to take into account commonly held beliefs of that day and age. Govier summons us to imagine the complications of that lost summer and restores us to a truth otherwise lost in the epic. She is not making Audubon too aware of his sins when the novel records the pain of every individual bird that the term "species" conceals. She has been faithful to Audubon's spirit as expressed in his journals: he registered every tragedy he left behind; he catalogued what birds and other animals do when wounded or about to be killed; his descriptions are full of birds trying to save their young from slaughter. He felt the tragedy first and then rejoiced at having found a new species ahead of his rivals. Then, he dissected the animal and measured its entrails.

That naming and killing happen simultaneously can be seen in the following passage from the chapter "Baffled":

> The body is there, in the moss. In a moment Audubon is holding it in his hand, its wings spread open in his palm. He strokes its feathers. He can feel the life ebbing, the heartbeat diminish.
> It is lovely. It was even lovelier when it sang, and now the air is lonely without it.
> When the young gentlemen catch up with him, he is still gazing into the palm of his hand.
> "A new species", he says.
> It was what he wanted, more than anything. It is what he must do here: find new species, to keep ahead of his rivals. To prove his worth, not just as a painter, but as a new kind of bird artist: an ornithologist who observes in the wild.
> "I'll name it for you, Tom. Tom Lincoln's Finch. *Fringilla lincolnii*"
> In that instant the bird grows cooler and lighter in Audubon's hand.
> "There must be another. And a nest as well".
> The two young men are off to prowl the thickets, squatting, reaching with their guns. He tucks the little creature into his basket and races back to the *Ripley*. He tries to remember the song but he cannot, exactly. Bachman is right when he tells him he needs bird-song lessons. (109-110)

In this passage, we become witnesses to Audubon's naming paradigm, the benign and abstract appropriation of the planet that Mary Pratt (1992:33) relates to a particular voice: urban, lettered, male, and authoritarian. It is this imaginary European nineteenth-century human being —an innocent man whose thirst for knowledge reduces to insignificance any possible harm caused by him— that Audubon tries to impersonate so that his experience rises to biographical record.[10]

The naturalist, as a desirable model of manhood, implied a detachment from the place and time in which animals made their first appearance and then died, an

abdication of experiential reality in favor of representation. After watching for a while a female bird and shooting her behind the head, Audubon thinks: "The time when he was one with the bird is all that ever was. And when the bird is gone it will be as if that time never happened" (279). However, literature, in contrast to science, makes the reenactment of the feeling possible. As Horace Engdahl (2002: 5) says about testimony literature: "[it] annihilates the time between the perpetration of a crime and our reading or its account", the event never stops happening.

Birds eventually prove to be moulds for a name (Audubon 1986 II: 19). Audubon's main regret is not that they disappear, but that they disappear before he is able to present his readers with their complete history.[11] Govier is recurrently able in her novel to capture the beauty and the gore that tinged Audubon's life within a delicate narrative where violence is registered but overridden by classificatory excitement. And this level of the narrative, which embodies the inherent paradox in the notion of *still life*, parallels an investigation of the effect of taxonomies, especially those of organic distinctions, which western civilization has used for clarification and knowledge as well as for empowerment.[12]

Natural science's penetration into reality is analogous to that of language: what every language does is to cut up the world into units for the sake of linguistic identification. Audubon's techniques of visuality show the same urge towards segmentation: he first separated a bird, or a couple of birds, from their natural context: a tree, a mountain, or a flock. Then he dissected their parts and reconstituted them, putting the birds in the foreground: neat, bulging out of the picture, as actors under the spotlight. Then he created an artificial background with plant species which enhanced the beauty of the main performers. Birds were painted as if caught in a climactic moment of self-exposure: Audubon did not register reality but encoded it. He even completed his pictures with drawings of parts of the bodies of birds for a better, more precise observation. For him, to think of nature otherwise would have been impossible, given the generic load of conventional observation of the wilderness. His shooting down and re-arranging becomes in the novel a metaphor for the power of language to falsely isolate elements from reality and for science's complicity with this linguistic project.[13]

Some linguists, such as Benjamin Lee Whorf (1993: 240-244), have warned against the dangers of ascribing a semi-fictitious isolation to parts of experience through words. Western Indo-European languages —unlike Native American languages, for example— make us regard the universe as a collection of detached objects of different sizes because the supreme kind of word is the noun: "as such it enjoys the superior prestige traditionally attaching to the subject or thing class" (244). According to him, nouns persuade us to regard some elusive aspect of

nature's endless variety as a distinct thing, almost like a table or a chair, and this kind of conceptual partition is crucial for our understanding of reality because languages are not only for voicing ideas, or even the shaper of ideas, but "the program for the individual's mental activities" (212). That is, the linguistic phenomena govern the speakers. Whorf (1993: 240-241) claims that English and similar tongues are too ready to manipulate concepts as if they were nouns, distinct things, ecstatic essences:

> What do different languages do, not with these artificially isolated objects but with the flowing face of nature in its motion, color, changing form; with clouds, beaches, and yonder flight of birds? For, as goes our segmentation of the face of nature, so goes our physics of the Cosmos.

That is, the restricting thinking patterns of a language are the restricting thinking patterns of science. Science —and Whorf (1993: 269-270) is talking about the science that depends on "Western Aryan grammar"— has not freed itself from some illusory linguistic necessities: "necessities for substances which are only necessities for substantives in certain sentence positions, necessities for forces, attractions, etc. which are only necessities for verbs in certain other positions, and so on".[14]

Audubon's naming in the previous passage from *Creation* reflects this ingrained necessity to deal with living beings as if they were substance, substantives, and therefore isolatable, objects that the mind fixes in separate terms for the purpose of knowledge. In his drawings, Audubon applied his language to the wilderness: what he did was to break down nature into parts in order to fix and secure his unities of "visual" lexicon: the birds.[15]

Whorf suggests that it would be better to deal with the manifestations of reality as if they were verb-like concepts: different grammars lead us to different types of observations and evaluations (221). If we translate this proposal to our damaging linguistic formulation of birds, it would follow that a bird could be better thought of embodied in a different grammatical function, such as a verb, for example, and so it could be conceptualized as a description of movement, or as the enactment of song, or as a performing fluidity, and that way it would be less susceptible to being transformed into an object which suits our current techniques of observation and linguistic branding. Thus its dying would not be discounted as a negligible aspect of our experience of "it".

Audubon and Bayfield lived a dilemma: their attempt at charting the wilderness put that very wilderness at risk.[16] Their tragedy points up one of our human limitations: we cannot think, or live, without ordering systems (Hubbell 1999: 160). These characters embody the impulse to draw clear lines of definition and the coherence of their purpose is upset by their voyage to Labrador, a geography

which unremittingly blurs those desirable lines. Both in Govier's fiction and in Audubon's biographical notes, we see that Audubon temporarily becomes unable to draw birds, the loon, the Esquimaux curlew: "they are difficult to imitate or represent" (1986 I: 393-394, 422), he says. He also loses command of his so far reliable vocabulary and cannot find appropriate words to describe weather conditions or landscape structures: "This afternoon I thought the country looked more terrifyingly wild than ever; the dark clouds, casting their shadows on the stupendous masses of the rugged rock, lead the imagination into regions impossible to describe" (390). During his journey to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence Audubon felt that youth was leaving him (*Journals* I: 426, *Creation*: 266). And for the first time in his life, his vocation recedes: "I write now from a harbor which has no name, […]; but it matters little" (*Journals* I: 406).

Some exploration narratives tied to colonialism show an epistemological instability when explorers come across landscapes that produce humility or fear: they recognize their inability to use maps and language to describe territory, things turn more and more indescribable:[17] "Once underway, they are among rocks and islets, shoals and inlets so confusing they soon lose sight of what is mainland and what is an island masking the mainland, a kind of screen, or foil" (*Creation*: 191).

This instability is produced by the underlying notion, which ruled Audubon's entire career, that nature is a decipherable book (see Souder 2004: 32). Audubon thinks through the novel's narrator: "There were moments among those islands, moments of perfect stillness, heat, sunlight, with nothing around except the horizon like the dial of a compass, and he the pin that held the needle in place" (190). However, his strong belief in natural life as a legible and measurable system was at times about to give way as we notice throughout "The Labrador Journal"; an uneasiness also reflected in the novel.[18]

In *Creation*, the Labradorean landscape is used as a de facto element which represents a resistance against the foundations of modern knowledge. Naming is seen as futile as the drawing of lines over water: the fog, the tide, the hidden rocks prevent the preciseness of maps. The novel is full of bewildering mixtures and "chaotic messes" (79) of water and rock, grass and earth, air and sea, day and night, which characterize Labrador's landscape and seascape. Far from presenting the undefined or the "undigested" as a problem, the novel strives for a mode of truth that is beyond fixed categories. Thus, it reenacts Robert Kroetsch's (1989: 61) notion of "pre-history"; he identifies a recurrent Canadian meta-narrative that expresses a will toward silence, a refusal to name, and an impulse towards the uncreated. "We return to the condition preceding creation", Kroetsch (1989: 56) had remarked when analyzing the need to count and to catalogue and the absurd implications of our naming.

Govier describes the North in a chapter entitled "Counting" as "the unpainted version", "created by taking away" (267), showing the same understanding of the impulse to unwind history for the purpose of merging with nature's basic elements. Govier anchors her narrative in the ideas and emotions implicated in the existence of the "perfect" non-descript (Labrador), and adds new nuances with her analysis of our fear of the collapse of distinctions. And she does so through her resuscitation of another real legendary figure swamped by the Canadian wilderness' reluctance to be catalogued and understood. But Govier is not only nurturing or debunking myths in *Creation*; she finds the reasons for Canadian inversions of the Bible and for their difficulty in getting past the second sentence of Genesis.

Significantly, Govier has chosen Audubon's written testimony to present a view of nature where neither God nor man has yet imposed any distinction. The sight of this dark, blurred, and shapeless Canadian landmass with no sign of grass or trees resembles "the earth without form" (*Genesis* 4) that the Supreme Being created at the beginning before he separated day and night, earth and land, and named them, and "saw that it was good". It is a useless space, where earth and water cannot be separated, still unnamed, a void and a chaos. This Canadian landscape seems deeply anchored in the impasse between creation and language. *Creation* implies that the existence of such a space, yet unnamed and unconquered by the imagination, entails hope, however dangerously it threatens self-preservation and our mentality. The journey to such a land implies a voyage through time into a truly unique condition, claiming existence and identity for certain manifestations of nature not yet possessed by the white man's language and indeed threatened by it. In this space Adam does not fail because human language is not the only instrument of presence.

The characteristics of Labrador country take us back to an ancestral fear of impassable and appalling lands, as Audubon ironically remarks "where cupidity and the love of gold can alone induce man to reside for a while" (*Journals* I: 379).[19] Canadian writers such as Katherine Govier do not invoke this pre-linguistic world with terror but as a path to inquiry into the consequences of pacifying chaos through rational systems. Labrador is seen as the proof that the world can exist without the confirmation of language by imagining creation as a step away from, and not necessarily toward language. This pointing in a different direction shows how wrong we have been about the redemptive potential of some of our efforts toward knowledge. In an early passage of the novel we read:

> THE IMMENSITY AND THE SHEER STRANGENESS of this place never fails to astonish him. The way it can become, suddenly, one mass of rock and water and sky, one colour, and one deadly hazard to sailing. The opposing mood can strike: sun exploding out of cloud, water turning to turquoise and lichen to flame.
> And this is only the beginning. (8)

This passage describes the beginning of Audubon's journey to the North. The allusion to the first lines of "In the Beginning" in the "Genesis" is patent. But the view of a primeval sea depicted in the novel calls for enjoyment. It is so because *the aesthetic* has not been tainted by *the taxidermal* yet, and the novel's narrator seems to relish the moment when all matter is one single miraculous mixture and taxonomies have not yet been forced upon it.

Notes

[1]. Funding for this paper has been provided by the research project "Penelope's Embroidery: Literary Tradition, Cultural Identities and Theoretical Discourses in the Anglo-Canadian Fiction of the Late 20th Century" (HUM2006-09288).

[2]. Some well-known contemporary critics, such as Charles Taylor (1996), claim that the self is inescapably linguistic in essence, achieving its status only through narrative. According to Keith Harvey (1997: 1), for example, our verbal resources are the principal means we have to alleviate the effect of experience on us. As George Melnyk (2003: x) has put it: "We know that reality is separate from language and beyond language, although language claims to offer us the truth of reality. At the same time, we are not comfortable in a reality beyond the explanations of our language. If we find ourselves in a situation that is unexplainable we become either fearful or we struggle to find within our language some explanation. Trapped in the discourse created by our culture and our time, we are lost without it".

[3]. The classificatory craze worked differently for men and for women. Whereas men made themselves through feats of geographical and scientific discovery, botany was thought to be the science amenable to women's care-giving aptitudes. Their keenness for plants suited perfectly their aspirations towards mental cultivation and artistry. Botany, as a rational recreation which gave order to nature, was thought to teach moral and religious lessons (see Shteir 1996: 173). Audubon´s lover, Maria, is a clear example of the women's stance at the time: she was only allowed to paint the vegetation around the specimens that Audubon had previously discovered, captured, named, stuffed, and drawn. Her role was to add color and fantasy to the background of his pictures. She complains to Audubon in the novel: "Yours is the world; mine is the parlour? Yours is the frontier and mine the garden? Yours is the bird and mine the bud?" (115).

[4]. The image of Canada as a God-forsaken piece of land that precludes verbalization has been typified, among others, by well-known critical pieces of Northrop Frye (1967), Margaret Atwood (1972), Dick Harrison (1977), etc. Also in poems widely used in Canadian Literature classes: Douglas LePan ("A Country without a Mythology"), Atwood ("Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer" and *The*

Journals of Susanna Moodie), etc. Lecker (1991), Corse (1997), Moss (1999), Hulan (2002), or Blodgett (2003) have analyzed the prototypical patterns of Canadianness in literature created mainly for the sake of a homogeneous sense of nation. Many have been the attacks against the belief in a recurrent plot in Canadian literature, but although this initial canon has been widely contested, the idea of the Canadian landscape as a thorny psychological challenge still proves enticing for authors. Also for foreign teachers and students (see Stanzel 1986). Definitions of national character revolving around the ideas of invisibility and elusiveness have served to add strength to these views: see, for example, Cook (1984), Davies (1986), or Callaghan (1988).

[5]. For a gender-focused critique of Kroetsch's proposal, see Dorscht (1994).

[6]. Newfoundland and Labrador remained for centuries undefined colonies for the crown: their fishing resources and topographical characteristics turned them into places for trading, not for settling (Taylor 1994: 292, 300). Their political status was further complicated by the shifting of borders between the U.S.A. and Canada and also within the boundaries of some Canadian provinces (Taylor 1994: 409). Labrador has also historically represented a challenge for explorers due to its nihilistic appeal, and accounts of explorations ending in death in the Labrador wild have been popular reading in the twentieth century, such as Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild. The Story of the Exploring Expedition conducted by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.* Also in the twenty-first century, such as Roberta Buchanan's and Bryan Green's edition of Mrs. Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Exploration of the Nascaupee and George Rivers*. Mina Hubbard's expedition managed to complete her late husband's failed attempt at mapping Labrador.

[7]. Here one cannot avoid noticing that Audubon, both as ruthless hunter and as spokesman of preservation, is caught up in what Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 15) has described as "that hegemonic reflex that troubles westerners even as it continues to be second nature to them".

[8]. Extreme cruelty to animals is normally beyond the reach of moral judgment in Audubon's journals —see "The Missouri River Journals" (1843) (*Journals* I and II)—, but it became a problem for him in Labrador, especially when he witnessed the abominations of the eggers (see the episode "The Eggers of Labrador", *Journal*s I: 406-411. The pain inflicted on animals is also reflected in Govier's *Creation* (see pp. 74 and 201, for example).

[9]. He recounts in a chapter of his journals entitled "My Style of Drawing Birds" (*Journals* II) that his art came to him as a revelation: after hopelessly trying to imitate motion in birds by looking at dead specimens, he went to the river and shot the first kingfisher he saw. After stuffing it, he devised a complicated system of wires which allowed him to articulate the pierced bird's limbs in the desired position by fixing them on a board, simulating motion and vividness.

[10]. A similarly revealing example is analyzed by Gordon Sayre (2002: 36-37). In an episode of the account of an early exploration, in Le Page du Pratz's *Histoire de la Louisiane* (1758), the leader of an expedition of men who were observing a beaver team build a dam killed one of the beavers for the sake of disinterested scientific enquiry. His utopian image of himself as harmless observer prevented him from noticing the incompatibility of his approach.

[11]. See http://www.audubon.org/bird/BoA/BOA_index.html (Last retrieved 27 February, 2011), a webpage which collects Audubon's account of birds already extinct or endangered at his time. Some of the birds Audubon comments on are related to his experience in Labrador.

[12]. Although the novel does not deal with another terrifying use of taxonomy, that of human classifications, it is mandatory to note that, since organic distinctions helped to delineate the exact boundaries that each

being occupied, they were fitfully applied to the human races in order to prove the superiority of the Caucasian type or "knowledge-species": "no such nondescript as a white savage was every discovered" (Gutjarh 2001: 757), read one of the antiabolitionist tracts which circulated in America before and after the Civil War. The danger of the descriptive apparatus of natural history manifested itself more tellingly when authors of those tracts, also of phrenology treatises, show their disgust at intermarriages which blur the boundaries among human species and incur in "the foul sin of amalgamation" (Gutjarh 2001: 762). The savage was precisely defined because of his blindness to "fundamental distinctions between people" (Wahrman 2001: 1247). See also Young (1995), chapters 3 and 7.

[13]. In a different order, this time the appropriation of other peoples through the particular naming systems of an imperialist culture, *Orientalism* by Edward Said shows how a refinement in vocabulary did not historically serve to truly identify with Oriental cultures but to produce palatable or convenient scientific and artistic discourses distant from those cultures, i.e., to produce indexes that distorted and harmed the "subjects" under study.

[14]. All languages perform this artificial chopping up of the flow of existence in a different way. As speakers of a language, we project the linguistic relationships of a particular language upon the universe and *see* them there (Whorf 1993: 262). However, Whorf's thesis is that there are languages, such as Apache, Nootka, Shawnee and, in general American Indian languages, where separate terms in English are not so separate, since they are made to come together in synthetic creations (241). According to Whorf, the English technique of apprehending the universe depends on the contrast of two artificial classes, substantives and verbs, which produces a bipartite ideology of nature (242).

[15]. For a discussion, from a different perspective, on the parallelism between European visual codes and verbal structures, see New (1997: 22-23).

[16]. Audubon was obliged to manufacture his own version of reality before the times in which photography could fix life. The daguerreotype was invented one year after the fourth and final volume of the Folio edition of *Birds of America* was completed, in 1838.

[17]. See, for example, Rick Van Noy's interpretation of *The Exploration of the Colorado River of the West and Its Tributaries* (1875).

[18]. Apart from the references already mentioned, Audubon mentions the appalling or indescribable character of the Labrador wilderness on pp. 392, 394, 397, 403, 406, and 424 of his *Journals* I.

[19]. The absolute degree of wilderness of Labrador in the imaginary collective of the time can be seen, for example in an excerpt from Henry David Thoreau's *Journal*, August 30, 1856: "It is in vain to dream of a wildness/ distant from ourselves. There is none such./ It is the bog in our brains and bowels, the/ primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires/ that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of / Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess/ of Concord, i.e. than I import into it". (in Schama 1995: epigraph). In his journals, Thoreau often refers to Labrador as the paradigm of the wild and fearful space.

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"BIG EMPTY NEGROES" AND "GAY, EXCITING" MEXICANS: RECONTEXTUALIZING FELLAHEEN IDENTITIES IN JACK KEROUAC'S *ON THE ROAD*

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Introduction

Upon its first publication in 1957, *On the Road* marked Jack Kerouac's rise to fame, and the novel continues to bear significant aesthetic and cultural resonances today. The story is narrated by Sal Paradise, who, often together with Dean Moriarty, embarks on a series of road trips (five major ones, corresponding to the five parts of the novel) and encounters a multitude of adventures along the way. The legend around *On the Road* has it that the novel was written in three weeks, specifically "between April 2 and April 22 [1951]" (D. Brinkley 2004: xxiii).[1] However, it is in fact the outcome of experiences that had been building up for years. The fact that Kerouac shifted through various narrators and a host of characters and titles before deciding upon which he would use in the text published in 1957 is indicative of his numerous experimentations with narrative technique.[2]

The multiple changes in character names and draft titles are suggestive of the fluidity of the process of composition. The distinct typescripts of *On the Road* reflect different stages in Kerouac's compositional technique. Gewirtz argues that "the typescript copy of the scroll, which Kerouac executed so that he would have a readable text to send the publishers, may no longer be extant […] However, Kerouac prepared at least two other typescripts based on the scroll

text" (2008: 112). According to Theado it was the second typescript that Kerouac marketed to "Harcourt, Brace, and thus to the professional publishing industry" (2009: 23). Kerouac subsequently wrote the third typescript in late 1953 and 1954 and added to it in the late fall of 1955 and 1956". The third typescript included emendations that would safeguard the text from legal issues (Gewirtz 2008: 122).

A study of the typescripts of *On the Road* confirms that the text published in 1957 is far from being the "authoritative" version of the novel. The three typescripts demonstrate that *On the Road* is the result of a continuous process of revision and rewriting that refutes claims to one "authentic" text. *On the Road* is more aptly approached as a textual palimpsest, a multi-layered text that reflects a lengthy process of literary experimentation. In this, the composition of *On the Road* reflects a post-war concern with a lack of stability amidst rapid transformations in the cultural milieu of Cold War America.

Although the composition of *On the Road* admittedly bears the cultural influences of the late forties,[3] the 1957 text also reflects in many ways the historical and social conditions of 1950s America. Whereas the apparent affluence of the fifties seemed to ensure a successful living for middle-class Americans, it was in fact a largely simulated idea of happiness that was projected. A closer look beyond the seeming prosperity reveals "the stifling uniformity of modern suburban and organizational life" (A. Brinkley 2001: 71). Moreover, of exceptional importance is the expansion of the mass-media, and in particular television, which became increasingly prominent in 1950s America. The media started revealing their full potential at moments like the televised McCarthy-Army debates and Nixon's "Checkers Speech" (1952), which played a decisive role in the continuance of Nixon's political career. Those years were also marked by a large-scale hysteria about communism, most vehemently articulated by Senator Joseph McCarthy. This discourse against possible contamination from an 'alien', infectious body spread widely and led to a frantic nuclear arms race focused on fear of a nuclear attack. Ligairi notes that the image of the atomic bomb became an object of mass consumption (2009: 140), nurturing a simulated Cold War *threat*, when the probability of a disastrous war breaking out was in fact minimal. Artistic representations followed in the same vein, with the production of a multitude of horror and science fiction films which sustained this fear of contamination and impending doom, ultimately assisting social and political practices that "constructed and came to believe in an image of a world that did not exist" (A. Brinkley 2001: 72). My article aims to explore the ways in which Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty are influenced by such practices, and to examine the extent to which,

through their construction of simulated images, they reproduce the dominant discourses of the society that spawned them.

Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulation and the hyperreal proves particularly useful for an exploration of this aspect of Kerouac's novel. Written at a time when the power of simulation was becoming increasingly manifest through television, *On the Road* evinces signs of awareness of such changes in the social scene. Baudrillard adopts a historical framework in which he studies the development of simulation. Taking as his point of departure the "symbolic order", he identifies a stage where the image is the reflection of a basic reality, and subsequently moves on to a stage in which the image masks and perverts a basic reality.[4] As simulation gradually begins to take precedence over the real, Baudrillard sees a stage where the image comes to mask the *absence* of a basic reality, until it bears no relation to any reality whatever and becomes its own pure simulacrum (1983: 11).[5]

Baudrillard, in other words, believes that the process of simulation perpetuates itself until it comes to eradicate the concept of reality. He argues that this is the case in contemporary society, where "simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum" (1983: 11), to the point where it takes over the reality principle, and, in the absence of the real, poses as the real. Finally, we can no longer talk of reality, but of an empty simulacrum devoid of substance; this introduces the concept of hyperreality. Baudrillard explains that hyperreality is the condition where "the question of signs, of their rational destination, their real or imaginary, their repression, their deviation, the illusion they create or that which they conceal, or their parallel meanings —all of that is erased" (1983: 104). The value of the sign is highly problematized here. In this context, originality is lost; it is no longer a case of differentiation between the original and its copy, but of reproduction without an original. Reality as such stops being identifiable; the original self ceases to exist in the simulacra, and the real becomes not "only what can be reproduced, but *that which is always already reproduced*. The hyperreal" (1983: 146). Thus, contemporary society is a series of reproductions, not unlike the empty simulations that Kerouac's characters construct in *On the Road*. My article will look at formations of identity and conceptions of race and gender in this context. I will question what often seems to be an articulation of racial and gendered discourse, and I will investigate the subtle ways in which Kerouac's narrative technique introduces a criticism of racially biased and chauvinist attitudes of the fifties. My discussion will focus on the representation of Fellaheen identities in *On the Road*, addressing the numerous thematic, ideological and narrative complexities they give rise to in the context of the changing yet still considerably conservative Cold War America.

The Fellaheen

The term Fellaheen occurs repeatedly in *On the Road*.[6] It is the plural form of "fellah", which denotes "a peasant or agricultural laborer in an Arab country (as Egypt)" (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). The Fellaheen inspired German historian Oswald Spengler, who reappropriated the term to accommodate his theory of historical progression, which, in turn, exerted a major influence on Kerouac and the Beats.[7] Whilst the Beats saw the Spenglerian conceptualization of the downfall of the West as comparable to the spiritual decline of consumerist, materialistic America at the time, Spengler's predictions of downfall and subsequent rebirth also fuelled their optimism about the possibility of change. However, the Spenglerian notion of the Fellaheen differs significantly from Sal Paradise's interpretation of the term in *On the Road*:

> driving across the world and into the places where we would finally learn ourselves among the Fellahin Indians of the world, the essential strain of the basic primitive, wailing humanity that stretches in a belt around the equatorial belly of the world from Malaya (the long fingernail of China) to India the great subcontinent to Arabia to Morocco to the selfsame deserts and jungles of Mexico and over the waves to Polynesia to mystic Siam of the Yellow Robe and on around, so that you hear the same mournful wail by the rotted walls of Cádiz, Spain, that you hear 12,000 miles around in the depths of Benares the Capital of the World. These people were unmistakably Indians […] they had high cheekbones, and slanted eyes, and soft ways […] they were the source of mankind and the fathers of it […] the earth is an Indian thing. (2000: 255-6)

John Lardas argues that the depiction of the Fellaheen in the novel serves to project the "search for authenticity onto a racial other" (2001: 185). Such a claim is not without complications, however, as in spite of Sal's conception of the Fellaheen in terms of race in *On the Road*, there is a poignant failure to acknowledge the distinct qualities of each race and individual, and the term "Fellahin Indians" is used indiscriminately to refer to people of different ethnic groups whether Asian, African, South-American or other. Tearing them away from their historical and social context, Sal places his Fellaheen "in the desert of 'history'" (256). They seem to be in a perpetual primitive present and are endowed with a primordial quality, reaching back to "where Adam was suckled" (256). The Fellaheen are thus associated with the concept of origins, and they are portrayed as the source of human life, reaching back to the primal man, Adam. As ancient as the earth itself, the Fellaheen are endowed with a primeval quality; of a kind and peaceful disposition, with "soft ways", they stand as reminders of an earlier age of bliss and happiness. Sal constructs simulated images

of the Fellaheen so as to satisfy his need for a rooted existence. He wants to partake in "the world beat", that is "the conga beat from Congo, the river of Africa and the world" (262) and projects a Fellaheen image that is closely associated with connotations of origins. The permanence that is suggested by the Fellaheen image is intended to compensate for Sal's destitution, something which is implied when he talks about "the eastward view toward Kansas that led all the way back to my home in Atlantis" (243). The displacement of the concept of origins is striking: associating his home with the mythical land of Atlantis, the legendary island that Plato first mentioned, Kerouac transposes it as an imaginary and illusory locus, thus further emphasizing Sal's experience of dislocation. Sal's difficulty in attaining an *estia*[8] brings out the complications inherent in his perception of "the origin", and problematizes his association of the Fellaheen with this concept, illustrating the tension between the alleged "authenticity" of the Fellaheen and the empty simulacra Sal constructs.

"Wishing I Were a Negro"

Phrases like "the happy, true-hearted, ecstatic Negroes of America" (164) reveal the extent of Sal's tendency to romanticize his Fellaheen; the image of the carefree African-American is emphatically projected throughout the novel. Mr. Snow, Remi Boncoeur's African-American neighbour is described as having "positively and finally the one greatest laugh in all this world" (55), and Sal continues to associate African-American culture with a lack of worries: "Don't worry 'bout *nothing*!" (127). It seems that Sal's African-Americans lead a "really joyous life that knows nothing of disappointment and 'white sorrows' and all that" (165).

The extreme naïveté of Sal's descriptions is challenging and invites serious reflection; one cannot help but wonder whether this is deliberate on Kerouac's part. At the time *On the Road* was published, African-American writers were protesting strongly about their people's rights, and it would be surprising if Kerouac did not take heed of these protests; some came from people closely related to the Beat Generation movement, such as LeRoi Jones. Richardson argues that "White Americans reduce Mexican-American and Black farm workers to poverty only to flatter them with suggestions that their lives are idyllic and charmed, free of White worry, White responsibility, White inhibitions - in a word, with suggestions that they are 'natural'" (2001: 225). However, rather than hastily subscribing to such a reading, a closer look at the text soon reveals the irony implied in Kerouac's decision to deprive his narrator not only of a sharp critical ability but of a basic cultural awareness as well.

The apparent problems inherent in Sal's construction of the African-American image are forcefully projected: "There was an old Negro couple in the field with us. They picked cotton with the same God-blessed patience their grandfathers had practiced in ante-bellum Alabama; they moved right along their rows, bent and blue, and their bags increased" (Kerouac 2000: 87). Sal speaks from a privileged point of view that allows him to appropriate history at will. Although the African-American situation had improved at the time Kerouac was writing, African-Americans remained among the underprivileged population of America, and segregation continued to be rife. Lisle Rose remarks that at a time when "nearly every family owned an automobile, a radio, and a telephone [...] probably a majority of the black population lived badly and had few prospects for advancement" (1999: 10). Historical considerations notwithstanding, Sal's tendency to romanticize becomes all the more forceful through the particular register employed to describe the African-American couple. The Fellaheen seem to be highly problematic nostalgic simulations of an earlier era producing an image that is historically inaccurate; it does not correspond to an actual situation of the past, and it is also discordant with the concrete conditions of African-American people's lives in Sal's present. This is blatant distortion of history on Sal's part as he romanticizes an era of slavery. The African-Americans are not viewed objectively as poor, oppressed and exploited people. Rather, they are modelled upon a misconceived image of a past situation and are invested with an unlikely meekness and placidity.

The constructedness of Sal's African-American Fellaheen image has given rise to much critical discussion; Hebdige, for instance, has noted that Kerouac "carried the idealization of Negro culture to almost ludicrous extremes" (1979: 48), and Holton has similarly discussed Sal's "romantic pastoralism" (1999: 62). Divesting the African-Americans of their actual historical and social contexts, Sal portrays them as one-dimensional, not fully developed characters. He subsequently goes on to contextualize them anew in the African-American image that was largely shaped by minstrel shows and mid-century Hollywood films and their (mostly derogatory) portrayal of African-Americans. Having his narrator reproduce such cultural trends, Kerouac thus exposes the racially biased ideas that were shared even by members of the counterculture; Sal constructs his Fellaheen so as to fit into simulated images which conform to a dominant white ideology that wants the racial other subordinated and controlled.

The credibility of the simulation here is so weak however that Kerouac redresses the negative impact of Sal's comments and soon has him praying for a better future for these people (2000: 87). Thus, although Sal gladly participates in the

act of cotton-picking despite the fact that his fingertips bleed because of it, and shortly after muses "I thought I had found my life's work", he ultimately expresses doubts over the "blessed patience" (87) that cotton-picking involves. Sal's contradictory views are articulated within the limited space of one page and create significant textual tension. His conflicting perspectives eventually challenge the validity of his comments, justifying Swartz's argument that such descriptions of African-Americans constitute a symbolic slap in the face of traditional America and represent a form of 'resistance' (1999: 86-87). Kerouac undercuts Sal's romanticized perceptions with a sharp edge of irony, laying bare Sal's confusion, and it transpires that Sal's ethnic simulacra are finally only vacuous images.

The simulated nature of Sal's conceptualizations of race is further exemplified in his professed ability to move in and out of the African-American persona easily and swiftly, as is suggested not only by his enactment of the cotton-picker's role but also, and more strikingly, in his musing: "wishing I were a Negro, feeling that the best the white world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night" (163). Having made a case for the "original" quality of the Fellaheen, Sal then articulates a desire to become like them; unhappy with his own identity, he expresses a wish to appropriate the African-American one. Leland notes that "in order to be his own man […] Sal must become his own invention" (2007: 83). In thus doing, however, Sal merely provides an image of what he thinks an African-American should be like, and then tries to cast himself in the same, conveniently happy and exciting simulacrum. Hill exposes the limitations of the narrator's adopted practice of blackface: "one can put on the mask and pretend to be the other but never truly exchange worlds and take up residence in the other's space" (2005: 146); Sal can only stretch his identification to the occasional performance of negritude: "*like* an old African-American cotton-picker" (Kerouac 2000: 88; my italics) or *the expression of the desire* to reach towards African-American identity. Obviously, Sal cannot resemble an old African-American worker; the simulation implied in his conception of the African-American image, his more privileged social condition, and, on a physical level, the mere colour of his skin, act as firmly constraining barriers. Although the narrator expresses a yearning for identification with the African-American Fellaheen, he tries to construct them according to his social training in the ways of the western world, and his subsequent performance of African-American identity is similarly enacted within the framework of dominant white discourse. Sal constantly misses the fact that what he wants to identify with is simulated images, which are, moreover, based upon white culture's more hegemonic nuances. It is this tension that he is not able to fathom, let alone master. And it is in this sense that all conceptions of African-Americans as 'the real' people not only lose validity

but ultimately serve to parody Sal's efforts to identify with the 'original' quality of the Fellaheen, as his identity dissolves amidst layers of simulation. Through the reproduction of the mainstream ideology of Cold War America, Kerouac lays bare its inadequacies. The construction of exaggerated African-American images reveals the absurdity of the social structures that nurture them, and the tension created by the reproduction of such ideologies often produces a parodic effect that ultimately undermines and subverts them. A similar narrative pattern can be detected when the focus shifts to the other major ethnic group in the novel, as the Mexican Fellaheen image is shaped by the same social discourses that condition the representation of African-Americans.

"We Mexicans"

The significance of the Mexican Fellaheen in the novel becomes apparent from early on; whether in Sabinal in North America, or actually in Mexico, Sal Paradise is enthusiastically drawn to the Mexican Fellaheen lifestyle, but it is not before long that the particularity of his perceptions is exposed. The narrator's idealization of the Mexican Fellaheen is vividly manifested in his remarkable disregard for their actual way of life. In Sabinal he is unable to see the tragedy of the fact that his friend Ponzo has to sleep in his truck, because he no longer has a home. Sal has already made up his mind that he would enjoy "living in a tent and picking grapes in the cool California mornings" (81), refusing to consider the actual hardships of such a life. His idealizing tendency is obvious even on the level of language, when he interprets *mañana* as "a lovely word and one that probably means heaven" (85). The narrator claims that he understands the meaning of *mañana*, but he interprets the word wrongly. *Mañana* translates as "tomorrow", "future" and "morning", but there is no indication in the novel that the Fellaheen future will improve; therefore, the positive connotations of *mañana* only hold for Sal himself. It is this idealized image that Sal Paradise wishes to believe in, sanctioning the simulacrum of a carefree Fellaheen existence, when, as we shall see, his mere depiction of the Fellaheen living conditions indicates otherwise.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin see the insertion of untranslated words as a "device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness" (1989: 64). Sal appropriates the word *mañana* in order to lessen the (at least linguistic) distance between him and his Fellaheen; however, by providing the wrong translation, he fails. His erroneous translation exposes Sal as a colonizer of the Fellaheen language, albeit a deficient one. Considerable irony is implied here, as Sal's deliberate attempts to approach a more 'original' Fellaheen mode of existence are simultaneously undercut by his

misinterpretation of their language. Sal's particular use of *mañana* indicates that he is not free from the Cold War conditions that made possible his creation as a fictional character, as he adopts a linguistic practice that is highly compatible with the era. Ann Douglas remarks that "Cold war-speak, like cold war military activity, was a form of extreme displacement, language split off from visible reality" (1998: 81). The narrator unwittingly reproduces Cold War mentality: with the same ease that language was manipulated in Kerouac's times to suit a policy of containment, Sal displaces the actual meaning of *mañana* to stand for "Heaven". In order to create his ideal "Paradise", Sal Paradise twists language and transfers meanings, in the same way that Kerouac's contemporaries did.

When not trying to actively express himself in Spanish, the narrator tries to reproduce the Mexican dialect: "Thassall! [...] Welcome Mehico. Have good time. Watch you money [...] Everything fine. Is not hard enjoin yourself in Mehico" (250). However, Sal Paradise is not a Mexican; hence, he cannot possibly offer an exact reproduction of this dialect, and merely manages a simulation. Interestingly, the Fellaheen dialect deviates from Standard English grammatically and lexically. Whereas this divergence from white language can be taken as an affirmation of the power of the Fellaheen to adjust the use of mainstream English according to their own needs, Sal's particular appropriation of it nonetheless bears witness to a colonizing mentality, one of the main features of which "is control over language" (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 7). Cleverly, Kerouac does not allow Sal a 'white' rendition of Fellaheen language; rather, Sal attempts to reproduce the dialect as he perceives it. Filtering it through his own conception of what it should be like, Sal wants to appropriate, and then master, Fellaheen speech. Language thus becomes another tool for the textual construction of simulacra, which not only behave according to Sal's standardized image of them, but now speak in the same manner as well. When Sal encounters the Fellaheen in their own land, he realizes: "It was hard to come around without a common language" (259). Indeed, there are evident misunderstandings in their communication: "What do you *talk* about?"/ "Talk? Yes, we talk" (259). This is a most interesting instance of Sal's confronting his simulacra. In addition to the obvious level of a difference in language, as the Fellaheen speak in Spanish and the narrator in English, there is a deeper level of signification here. Sal and Dean's position of superiority is subject to questioning. It appears that the simulacra now resist interpretation; simulation becomes overwhelming and causes complications that expose Sal and Dean's inadequacy to live up to their simulated constructions.

The problems associated with Sal and Dean's Fellaheen are further revealed as the over-romanticizing extravaganza persists. When Sal and Terry move into a tent, it

is described as having "a bed, a stove, and a cracked mirror hanging from a pole". The narrator patronizingly adds: "it was delightful" (85). Further on, the description of Terry's house is dismal: "Flies flew over the sink" (90). That Sal perceives this as a standard "California home" is disturbing (91). The narrator here is so impressed by the exoticism of the Fellaheen that his perception is affected. Such utterances ultimately bring up the problematic nature of Sal's identification with the Mexican Fellaheen in his bold assertion: "we Mexicans" (88), and serve to highlight Sal's enjoyment in performance. Nonetheless, the degree to which Sal can keep up with the performance of the identity of the racial other is questionable. Whilst he emphasizes his conception of himself as a Mexican: "they thought I was a Mexican, of course; and in a way I am" (88),[9] and also refers to Terry's child as his "baby boy" (85), the assumption of this role of surrogate father to the Fellaheen child is only passing. Before long Sal has no qualms about abandoning his adopted son, thus exposing the uneven terms on which the identification is made. The racial cross-dressing that is at work here reveals Sal's power to choose the persona he prefers at will. Sal's identification with the Mexicans can indeed be viewed as a passing whim and suggests a certain playfulness on his part, as it lasts for only fifteen days. The narrator delights in performing a Mexican identity which he can easily discard whenever he so wishes. After his flirtations with the African-American image, he now goes on to cast himself in a Mexican image, turning himself into a simulacrum that fits into the racialized projections that Cold War culture has established. There is a significant degree of manipulation involved in Sal's approach to the Fellaheen, which further underscores the problems implicit in his desire to reach towards an 'original' quality through the assumption of a Mexican identity.

Sal's affinities with the Fellaheen are not exhausted in his attempts to identify with Mexicans and African-Americans, but expand to include other ethnicities. In fact, the ease with which Sal is willing to perform various racial identities is striking: "I wished I were a Denver Mexican, or even a poor overworked Jap, anything but what I was so drearily, a 'white man' disillusioned" (163-164). Leaving aside the critical trend that is "so concerned with denouncing or defending his [Kerouac's] patronizing representations in this passage", Saldaña-Portillo detects here "a genuine ambivalence about the ideal of white freedom" (2002: 96). The use of inverted commas around 'white man' validates her viewpoint, as it acts as a marker of the author's awareness of the constructedness of 'white male' identity. It is white social structures that dictate the fabrication of Fellaheen images, and although the narrator expresses the desire to discard his white persona in favor of an exotic Fellaheen one, the interchangeability of this racial pell-mell suggests that his understanding is considerably limited. Sal's blindness to racial differences is striking; he filters his perceptions through white culture's frames of reference, and

subsequently applies this processed image to his Fellaheen. Sal's Fellaheen are quasi-identical simulacra that spring from Kerouac's cultural repository of available images and are subsequently adjusted to fit the needs of the narrative. Although Sal light-heartedly unites all his Fellaheen under the rubric of racial otherness, and is particularly concerned with safeguarding his status as a member of the dominant white masculine order, one should not overlook the poignant differences between such diverse ethnicities. Sal's tendency to construct ethnic simulacra perpetuates throughout the novel, and further complications arise when the focus shifts to the gendered manifestations of the racial other.

"Teresa, or Terry"

The narrator's girlfriend in the first part of the novel, Terry, is Mexican. When Sal sees her for the first time, he suspects that she is "a common little hustler" (75); this image of Terry as prostitute alone serves to unsettle the narrator's idealizations of the Fellaheen. Although Sal admits that his suspicions were "paranoiac" and "a fit of sickness" (75), it transpires that he is nonetheless still not free from the burden of Cold War America's ideological baggage of white assertion.

The compatibility between Sal's views and established social norms is illustrated by the fact that "in *Life*, this [the Mexican girl] episode becomes a soft-porn celebration of 'the delights of drinking with cheap Mexican tarts'" (Ehrenreich 1983: 63). The novelty in the romantic affair with Terry is that she is a Mexican woman, and hence qualifies as the exotic other. Terry's racial alterity exercises a particular sexual appeal for Sal, who thinks that Fellaheen women are endowed with an original and primordial quality; thus, through his involvement with them he hopes to achieve a return to origins. Homi Bhabha explicitly talks about "the fantasy that dramatizes the impossible desire for a pure, undifferentiated origin" (1994: 81). Terry is for Sal the image upon which he can project his colonizer's fantasy of reaching and conquering that origin. However, it should not be overlooked that the Fellaheen woman's association with such concepts is the outcome of Sal's own colonial reasoning. Sal transposes his need for an origin upon the exotic female; she thus becomes a simulacrum, an *image* rather than a person. In Terry's case, Sal fabricates a simulacrum which satisfies both his desire for a rooted existence and the affirmation of his masculinity. Instead of being approached on its own terms, the Fellaheen female body becomes the locus upon which colonial male desire is projected. Sal describes "her tiny body […] her legs were like little sticks. She was only four foot ten" (76). Such imagery suggests that she is perceived more as an accommodating doll than a fully developed character.

When Sal is cotton-picking, Terry takes her son and goes to help him (87), and later she offers to support him, while he would "have nothing to do but sit in the grass all day and eat grapes" (89-90). Therefore Terry is portrayed as delicate, readily available, submissive, passive and servile. Wishing to leave no space for disappointment, Sal constructs Terry's image in a way that satisfies his urge to dominate.

Even when he decides to abandon her, Terry seems passively resigned to the situation (91). In a cruel gesture that refuses to grant any complexity to her already flat portrayal, Sal guiltlessly departs: "I could feel the pull of my own life calling me back. I shot my aunt a penny postcard across the land and asked for another fifty" (89). Sal refuses to introduce the Fellaheen into the mainstream as he is highly aware of the challenge that this would pose to his society, and unable to keep his white identity on hold for longer, he resorts to his middle-class background for assistance. Huggan has defined the exotic as a description of "a particular mode of aesthetic perception —one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them, and which effectively manufactures otherness even as it claims to surrender to its immanent mystery" (2001: 13). It is exactly this perception of exoticism that may account for Sal's behaviour. By temporarily living their life, and getting romantically involved with a Fellaheen woman, Sal comes as close as he can to the domestication of his Fellaheen. However, the apparent distance between them is never overcome. To a large extent this is due to the fact that Sal does not ultimately wish to bridge this distance, despite his claims to the contrary. Sal needs to keep contained the potential threat that the margins pose to his "white ambitions", and therefore chooses to abandon "a good woman like Terry in the San Joaquin Valley" (164), not managing to finally fully transgress the established social constraints of his times.[10] The Fellaheen woman ceases to be interesting to the white male once she has been conquered. The affair with Terry was only an escapade for the narrator, who admits that he was merely "adventuring in the crazy American night" (91) ; his masculinity affirmed in his knowledge that he has colonized Terry, he is subsequently anxious "to get home" (94), back to his old life.

"For She Was the Queen"

Colonization operates on a twofold axis for Fellaheen women, who are doubly affected due to their race and their gender. Their situation is further exemplified by the Mexican brothel scene. Sal and Dean are yearning to affirm themselves through the Fellaheen women; this will not only validate their superiority but their masculinity as well. When he finds himself in his familiar American

surroundings, Sal is attracted to the exoticism of the Fellaheen, as it presents an escape from the boredom of his everyday life. Interestingly, while in the United States, Sal is happy to apply this exercise of submission to only one female, who is at this stage singled out from the Fellaheen mass and is given a proper name, albeit an Anglicized one: "Teresa, or Terry" (75). Sal's hegemonic attitude is displayed along relatively subtle lines in his desire to financially support Terry and her son: "What kind of old man was I that couldn't support his own ass, let alone theirs?" (87). He appears to be protective of his Fellaheen, albeit in a patronizing way. He feels he has to provide for them because they rely on him, and although he advances a relationship of dependence, this is veiled under his seemingly good intentions.

However, in exotic Mexico the situation is different; such pretences and social conventions are discarded, and Sal straightforwardly asserts that he wants to "buy señorita" (256). Although it could be argued that this utterance is half-English and half-Spanish because Sal's knowledge of Spanish is limited, the fact that he decides to perform the language switch to Spanish is suggestive of an arrogant assumption of superiority, and there is obvious tension in the juxtaposition of the two languages. Sal, the imperious Westerner, invested with the privileges that his money grants him, wants to "buy".[11] The powerful western verb is placed before the Spanish noun: not only is *señorita* female and thus, along the lines of Sal's reasoning, belongs to the 'weaker sex', but the use of the Spanish language here also positions her among the Fellaheen that Sal wishes to subordinate. There is no indication in *On the Road* that Sal desires to "buy lady" while in America; he does not subject the white woman to the same debasement as the Fellaheen woman (unsurprisingly, the woman he settles down with in the end is white). The Spanish word *señorita* further emphasizes the cultural differences that are at play, and it is these differences that Sal uses and manipulates in an exercise of his authoritarian behaviour. As in the case of Terry, it appears that once again "Sal fetishises impoverished racialised subjects as the condition of possibility for his white freedom" (Saldaña-Portillo 2002: 99). Sal chooses to "buy señorita" because he cannot risk having his masculinity placed under threat in the unknown land. In this exotic setting, one woman cannot provide enough confirmation for Sal, and the narrator goes to the place where the threat of rejection is minimized: the brothel. The strange Fellaheen land, lacking the security that his familiar America offers him, is the one place where he can be certain that his white masculine identity is safe. Sal ultimately buys his women in order to safeguard his manliness. His attitude can be seen to bear wider political implications, as manhood and individuality are now associated with expansion and colonization largely made possible by the possession of capital.[12]

The white men see the Fellaheen women in the brothel as largely interchangeable: "Dean and Stan switched the girls they'd had before" (264). The only girl that the narrator specifically mentions is referred to as "Venezuela" (265). This woman is denied a proper name, and Sal merely remarks that she "came from Venezuela" (262). As Huggan argues, "difference is appreciated, but only in the terms of the beholder; diversity is translated and given a reassuringly familiar aesthetic cast" (2001: 27). The Fellaheen prostitutes are deemed to be a collective entity existing to give satisfaction to Sal and his friends; the only distinctive features they are permitted are determined by geographical space. Fellaheen women are defined by the Fellaheen land, and it would appear that by buying their services, Sal and his friends are trying to lay claim to the prostitutes' countries.[13] The simulated image that Sal imposes on the prostitutes allows them an exceptionally limited identity.

However, "in this welter of madness" (263), there was one girl who "glanced coolly and imperiously […] for she was the queen" (264). Whereas Sal's limitations as a character do not allow him to realize the full impact of his utterance, the inclusion of this comment is indicative of Kerouac's own perspective on the brothel scene. Bhabha has argued that "if the outward show —the simulated *performance*— of obedience is seen as containing the traces of its own resistance, it then becomes possible to envision colonial subjects as tacitly resisting subordination by appearing to embrace it" (in Huggan 2001: 88). Bhabha's statement sheds light on the prostitutes' practice of turning over glasses so as to make the whites pay more for drinks (Kerouac 2000: 262). In the end, the whites are charged with a bill of "over three hundred pesos, or thirty-six American dollars, which is a lot of money in any whorehouse" (264). It would appear that in the Mexican brothel the women have taken on a will of their own, putting on a simulated performance to outsmart their colonizers. Further clarification is in order here: Sal sees that "Mexicans are poor" (264), but as soon as he pronounces this he turns a blind eye to it and indulges in images of exoticism, sensuality and licentiousness. However, the ethnic subjects fight back, and put on a simulated performance of their own; although seemingly accommodating and fitting into the images projected upon them, they are, in fact, opposed to them. The mechanisms that are at play in the text here reveal the depth of Sal and Dean's fallacy and inadequacy, as the Fellaheen women challenge the dynamics of white male power and authority in the novel.

There are multiple layers operating in the simulation that is the brothel scene, of which the novel's main characters remain largely unaware. Sal and Dean force their colonial gaze upon ethnic women, taking no heed of the fact that they are reproducing simulated images dictated by the social exigencies of white masculine

assertion. Nevertheless, the female subjects resist, as they do not conform to their assigned images. In this context of controlled sensuality, any prospect of substantial romance strikes an ironic chord; the possibility of a fulfilling relationship with the Fellaheen woman is negated, as Sal's interaction with the Fellaheen is considerably biased and shaped according to mainstream Cold War America's expectations.

Conclusion

Eventually Sal and his friends leave the brothel in the same way they entered it: like colonizers, using the power of money to dominate. As with Terry before, Sal again now departs once his desires are satisfied. "It was all over", Sal declares, distancing himself yet another time (265). However, "nothing ever ended" (275) for the Fellaheen prostitutes. Refusing to give this fact appropriate recognition, Sal declares: "So much ahead of us, man, it won't make any difference" (265). The Fellaheen land is projected as a locus of pleasure, and the images of the Fellaheen are formed in such a way as to accommodate a predominantly white male discourse that sees them, at best, as entertaining diversions.

Sal and Dean's hegemonic attitude is also suggested by the transience of their journey. When they are satisfied that they have fathomed and subjugated the exotic, it is no longer interesting, and Sal and Dean eventually opt out. Having taken what they wanted, they ride their car and rapidly exit the Fellaheen landscape. However, the series of textual tensions, ironies and parodies that their attitude gives rise to serves to question the validity of their practices, illuminating heretofore neglected aspects of the novel. Baudrillard's theory of simulation sheds new light on Kerouac's negotiations of identity and race. Foregrounding the context of flux and uncertainty against which the characters' travels take place, Kerouac demonstrates that authenticity is an elusive concept. The tensions that ensue expose the problematic nature of the prevalent racial and gender stereotypes that Kerouac's characters reproduce, forming a forceful criticism on Cold War America's racially biased and gendered discourses. The introduction of acts of resistance in the narrative calls for the need to reassess mainstream ideologies, exposing their absurdity. Positioning his narrative in the sociohistorical context of the rapidly changing mid-century America, Kerouac reveals the inadequacy and meaninglessness of established prejudices. Parodying the legitimacy of the mass media's reproduction of racialized images and the subsequent misperceptions and (mal)formations of identity arising thereof, Kerouac ultimately exposes their vacuity.

Notes

[1]. Unless otherwise stated, the version of *On the Road* that I refer to is the one originally published in 1957.

[2]. Both Cunnell (2007: 6) and Gewirtz (2008: 75) refer to the "*Ray Smith Novel of Fall 1948*", of which Ray Smith is the narrator-protagonist. In his notes dated March 1949 Kerouac declares: "no more Ray Smith except in the person of a narrator." The characters of Ray Moultrie, Vern Pomeroy, and Bruce Moultrie are also introduced (D. Brinkley 2004: 409-410). Gewirtz (2008: 83-4, 90) and Cunnell (2007: 17) mention further additions and changes to the character list. The novel's title underwent a similar process, as Kerouac "considered almost one hundred titles for *On the Road*" (Gewirtz 2008: 100). Cunnell (2007: 10, 13, 18, 20, 27, 40, 43) and Gewirtz (2008: 94, 98, 99, 102) provide extensive lists.

[3]. R.J. Ellis examines the novel in the historical context of the late 1940s, remarking that "the cultural matrix that *On the Road* could have been enmeshed in had it been published in 1952 [...] would have been quite different from the one into which it was launched in 1957" (2006: 102).

[4]. Baudrillard explains his conception of the "symbolic order" as follows: "If we are starting to dream again, today especially, of a world of sure signs, of a strong 'symbolic order,' make no mistake about it: this order has existed and it was that of a ferocious hierarchy, since transparency and cruelty for signs go together […] The signs therefore are anything but arbitrary" (1983: 84).

[5]. In his study *Jean Baudrillard: In Radical Uncertainty*, Mike Gane describes the fourth order of simulacra as stage in which "the dominant form is where things are simply and indifferently proliferated and dispersed into the void" (2000: 16).

[6]. Kerouac himself seems to be unsure as to the spelling of the word. Whereas in the 1957 text of *On the Road* it is spelt "Fellahin" (2000: 89, 255), in the Scroll version he opts for "Fellaheen" (2007: 199, 381), a spelling he prefers also in *Selected Letters 1940-1956* (1995: 347), and throughout the *Book of Sketches*. This spelling is also the one preferred in *Dr. Sax* (2001: 42, 63, 87).

[7]. In his work *The Decline of the West*, Spengler conceives of Cultures as living organisms that go through the stages of birth, growth and death. When a Culture begins to decay, it passes on to the stage of Civilization. It is at this stage that the Fellaheen make their appearance. The Fellaheen experience life as "a planless happening without goal or cadenced march in time, wherein occurrences are many, but, in the last analysis, devoid of significance" (1980: 2: 170-171). The Fellaheen are the life forms that survive the downfall of a Culture, and are conceived of as the leftovers of a Civilization.

[8]. The term *estia* is here used to denote "home", "house", "one's dwelling place".

[9]. This identification is stronger in the Scroll version, which reads: "They thought I was a Mexican, of course; and I am" (2007: 198).

[10]. Ehrenreich notes that even among white individuals there were strict norms to be observed: "the possibility of walking out, without money or guilt, and without ambition other than to see and do everything, was not even immanent in the middle-class culture of the early fifties [...] there was no real way out of the interlocking demands of job and marriage" (1983: 55). The Beats soon articulated their defiance of what they perceived as emasculating conformity, "yet their adventure did not include women, except, perhaps as 'experiences' that men might have" (1983: 171). Kerouac's major characters are thus to a large extent modelled upon patterns of assertive masculinity; in this context, ethnic

women are liable to receive even worse treatment on account of their race.

[11]. This attitude is probably motivated by the greater financial prosperity of America at the time. Speaking of the "expansion of the American economy in the post-war years", Alan Brinkley talks about "the greatest and most dramatic capitalist expansion in American history" (2001: 63) and, although in their own land Sal and Dean are not wealthy, in the Fellaheen land they can flaunt their financial superiority.

[12]. American politics during the Korean War also come to mind here.

[13]. Colonizing the prostitute who comes from Venezuela can be seen as a metaphor for colonizing Venezuela itself.

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LAS METÁFORAS PROVISIONALES DE LA POSTMODERNIDAD: LA OBRA DE WILLIAM GASS

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I. La Metáfora en el Siglo Veinte

El estudio de la metáfora como recurso expresivo despertaba ya el interés de filósofos de la talla de Platón y Aristóteles hace más de veinte siglos. Los diferentes enfoques con que este asunto se ha abordado desde entonces han estado siempre condicionados por una determinada teoría del conocimiento y por el consiguiente modo de entender la relación entre el lenguaje y la realidad. El hecho de que en el mundo clásico se entendiera la verdad como algo preconcebido, como un valor inmanente derivado de la sabiduría convencional y transferido de generación en generación, convertía al lenguaje en un vehículo pasivo de transmisión, y a la retórica en un mero arte ornamental del discurso. Aunque en esta época se discutía ya acerca de la naturaleza cognitiva de la metáfora, se entiende que su potencial expresivo quedaba siempre delimitado por aquella realidad a la que en última instancia se debía.

Pero desde los clásicos hasta la actualidad el modo de entender el lenguaje y su vínculo con la realidad ha cambiado radicalmente. Lo ha hecho hasta tal punto que, a raíz de los postulados de la lingüística post-estructuralista, generalmente se admite que el medio verbal no solo no está al servicio de la realidad, sino que, contrariamente, es el que determina en gran medida lo que la realidad significa para el individuo, así como las relaciones que este establece con ella y con los otros

sujetos hablantes. La concepción del lenguaje como una estructura cultural que preexiste y condiciona al ser humano, fundamentalmente como sujeto, ha tenido importantes repercusiones tanto en la filosofía como en el arte en general y en la literatura en particular.

Por lo que respecta a la filosofía, el lenguaje ha pasado de entenderse como algo meramente instrumental a ser considerado una herramienta clave en los procesos del conocimiento. Algunas de las contribuciones más destacadas al respecto proceden de la filosofía analítica, que constituye la corriente dominante en la tradición anglo-norteamericana del siglo veinte, con representantes tan destacados como Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege, W.V.O. Quine, Gilbert Ryle, J.L. Austin o Ludwig Wittgenstein —este último era austriaco, pero desarrolló su obra filosófica en Cambridge. Quizá la característica más sobresaliente de la filosofía analítica sea su convicción de que el lenguaje juega un papel decisivo en la creación y resolución de los problemas filosóficos; estos problemas, afirman, proceden del uso inapropiado del lenguaje cotidiano y de las excesivas simplificaciones y generalizaciones, lo que equivale a considerar que los dilemas filosóficos son en gran medida lingüísticos. Así lo entendió Wittgenstein cuando afirmó que la filosofía era una batalla contra el hechizo verbal a que está sometida la inteligencia (Wittgenstein 1958: 47).

Por otro lado, las diferentes manifestaciones artísticas del siglo veinte se han caracterizado por reaccionar contra los principales planteamientos estéticos anteriores, tanto contra la idea clásica del arte como vehículo de la verdad, del conocimiento o de la superación social o moral, como contra el arte concebido como imitación o representación, y también contra las teorías —evolución de las anteriores— que mantienen que el arte es en realidad un reflejo del estado interior del artista. Esta crítica se ha ido canalizando hacia la postura formalista, una tendencia dominante en el siglo XX. Los artistas que han trabajado en esta línea se han preocupado de llamar la atención sobre las características expresivas del propio medio, convirtiéndolo en el fin de sus creaciones, en lugar de tratarlo como un mero instrumento al servicio de unos intereses divulgativos o miméticos. Los formalismos coinciden en reivindicar conceptos como el de la autosuficiencia formal y el del orden y la estructura interna de la obra; el proceso creativo y los materiales de trabajo cobran un protagonismo hasta aquí desconocido en el mundo del arte.

En cuanto a la literatura, esta tendencia 'auto-referencial', característica en gran medida de las artes del siglo veinte, ha logrado que el medio verbal y todos sus procesos se hayan convertido en el objeto de interés primordial de un gran número de escritores y filósofos, transformando, sin duda, la percepción del mismo, así como el carácter de la propia literatura. El estudio del lenguaje simbólico y, en

particular, del metafórico no solo no ha perdido fuerza, sino que, especialmente en la segunda mitad del siglo pasado, se ha convertido en el campo cuyos debates han sido los más productivos e interesantes en los círculos académicos e intelectuales en general.

Desde Hobbes y Locke, muchos filósofos y teóricos de la lengua se han negado a concederle a la metáfora un estatus respetable en el plano intelectual; aún a lo largo del siglo veinte se ha escuchado a menudo que las metáforas son frívolas e insubstanciales, cuando no peligrosas, al ser incapaces de transmitir conocimiento o algún tipo de significado genuino. En general, hoy en día, esta opinión se ha abandonado. El texto clave para dicha conversión es el ensayo "Metaphor"de Max Black en su libro *Models and Metaphors* (1962). Black —que se inspiró en ciertos planteamientos y presupuestos de I. A. Richards y otros autores del *New Criticism*— apeló con osadía al poder creativo de la metáfora, destacando en ella una función distinta a la que en tiempos de Aristóteles se le atribuía, al entender que la metáfora no encuentra o reproduce una semejanza ya existente, sino que la crea, inaugurando un modo más íntegro y autosuficiente de cognición. Este filósofo considera que la estrategia metafórica es un modo de establecer una relación de semejanza, exista o no en la vida real; gracias a la fórmula *de interacción*, que se estudiará en el siguiente apartado, la metáfora es para Black un mecanismo equilibrado y semánticamente consistente.

El ensayo de Black se convirtió en un importante estímulo para teorías metafóricas posteriores, entre las que destaca la que desarrolla Nelson Goodman en *Languages of Art*. Aunque Goodman no atribuye significado a las metáforas y Black no las trata como portadoras de valores de verdad, el trabajo de ambos ha creado un determinado clima, incluso en los círculos más radicalmente analíticos, que ha llevado a considerar las metáforas como estrategias completamente descriptivas, vehículos potenciales de conocimiento y poseedoras de un significado especial distinto del que ofrece su lectura literal, dado que desvelan nuevas relaciones semánticas que las hacen 'despegar' del mundo de la referencia convencional del lenguaje.

Hasta la publicación del trabajo de Black, la metáfora se había estudiado siempre dentro del marco de una teoría mimética del lenguaje y de la realidad —de hecho, muchos autores continúan haciéndolo así—; y es que las metáforas parecen deberse a la realidad, constituyen un modo trastocado de nombrar que invita a su interpretación o sustitución por una forma más 'adecuada' o habitual de discurso —el proceso figurativo se considera a menudo una operación mental consistente en la construcción de una lógica de categorías y analogías dirigida a la interpretación de figuras (ver Lentricchia y McLaughlin 1995: 83-84). Este efecto interpretativo de la metáfora es el que la pone en comunicación con otra dimensión que la

destruye como acto verbal autosuficiente. Con la noción de metáfora *interactiva* Black propone un recurso expresivo fundado en una fórmula de suspensión semántica y de resistencia a las operaciones de sustitución y a los modos de significación convencionales.

Esta resistencia es la esencia de la búsqueda incansable que subyace al proyecto modernista y postmodernista, pues dentro del eclecticismo que caracteriza a las metáforas como manifestaciones artísticas, sus planteamientos formales consisten a menudo en eludir los códigos adquiridos y la semántica colectiva. Sus objetivos apuntan en muchas ocasiones a obras con una coherencia interna y una estética abstrusa que suelen requerir grandes dosis de imaginación para ser asimiladas.

Este artículo defiende que, habitualmente, el uso que se hace de la metáfora en el modernismo y en el postmodernismo se corresponde con el enfoque *interactivo* arriba esbozado, y que, por incidir en conceptos como los de integridad estética y resistencia epistemológica a los mecanismos de interpretación convencional, los postulados de Black se perfilan como una herramienta teórica idónea para comprender muchas de las manifestaciones artísticas del siglo veinte. Este artículo tratará de demostrar que son estos atributos propios de la metáfora *de interacción* los que determinan que algunos autores generalmente etiquetados como postmodernistas se acerquen a planteamientos más propios del modernismo. A tal fin se estudia en concreto el caso de William Gass, que fue discípulo del propio Max Black y que concibe la metáfora como la esencia de su proyecto estético, una metáfora de significado intrincado que desvela la insoslayable influencia del maestro.

La obra de Gass es en cierta medida asimilable al modernismo clásico, pues revela la creencia en nociones como la exclusividad y la integridad estética de la obra de arte, y también al postmodernismo más escéptico, al transmitir la convicción de que la realidad resiste todo intento de interpretación por parte del sujeto poético, y que la autonomía del arte es una utopía en el contexto del mundo moderno. El nexo con el que mejor llega a entenderse a Gass lo constituyen W.C. Williams y Wallace Stevens; puede afirmarse que Gass es el heredero postmoderno de estos dos grandes poetas y teóricos del modernismo, pues, al igual que las de ellos, sus obras son marcadamente autorreferenciales, desvelando una preocupación casi obsesiva por el papel del artista como mediador entre el caos de la realidad que le rodea y en la que se inspira, y el orden y la armonía que su visión creadora impone en ella. Sin embargo, el resultado en Gass es siempre paródico, y muchos de sus personajes, contumaces observadores en su mundo de ficción y concebidos como álter ego del poeta, ven con frustración cómo lo observado adquiere una dinámica propia que escapa a su control. Gass denuncia así la falacia modernista de que la visión del poeta determina la percepción del mundo.

Aceptando que este rechazo es uno de los fundamentos de toda su poética, Gass no renuncia a concebir un principio integrador para cada una de sus obras con el que conferirles, a pesar de su semántica abstracta y difusa, un carácter sensual y una armonía estética. Y esto lo logra gracias a la metáfora, garante de la oherencia interna —nieve, hielo, una casa, una colección de insectos, un cuerpo femenino, un túnel, etc.— y del que todo el texto participa; este principio es proyectado al plano metaficcional que subyace a todas las obras de este autor y que el lector tiene que abordar necesariamente para realizar una lectura completa, y allí entra en *interacción* —manteniendo la terminología de Black— con formulaciones conceptuales acerca del lenguaje poético. Comparte también la metáfora de Gass con la de Black la resistencia epistemológica, pues los tropos de Gass difícilmente pueden parafrasearse o interpretarse, aunque sí pueden asimilarse en el modo intuitivo de la metaficción, lo que permite afirmar que sus relatos se construyen como grandes metáforas, verdaderas alegorías de la escritura con las que Gass 'habla' de un modo icónico del lenguaje y de la función poética.

La suspensión semántica que conlleva la formulación tropológica de la metaficción se puede entender como una variedad más de las inconsistencias epistemológicas que están en la propia esencia del proyecto postmodernista que, como afirma David Lodge en *The Modes of Modern Writing*, en su búsqueda infatigable de nuevas relaciones entre la obra, el autor y el lector, asume grandes riesgos, riesgos que pueden llegar incluso a la cancelación de uno mismo en el silencio y a la incoherencia al destruir las propias normas contra las que percibimos sus desviaciones (Lodge 1977: 245). Sin embargo, la metáfora, concebida en este contexto como mecanismo vertebrador y garante del orden y de la coherencia creativa, consigue conectar las teorías sobre las que se asienta la crítica postestructuralista y la estética irónica y lúdica del postmodernismo con los elevados planteamientos del modernismo más eminente.

II. La Metáfora Gassiana

"Amo las metáforas igual que algunas personas aman la comida basura. Pienso metafóricamente, siento metafóricamente y, si hay algo en la escritura que surge espontáneamente, sin buscarlo, y a menudo sin desearlo, es la metáfora".[1] Esto opina Gass de la metáfora, que es para él su modo de expresión natural. El autor se lamenta a menudo del uso tan limitado que de ella se hace habitualmente, pues, tal y como él la concibe, la metáfora es mucho más que un simple ornamento discursivo o una estrategia retórica: es un principio estructural esencial, no solo en la elaboración de sus obras, sino en la constitución misma del sujeto.

Gass siempre ha considerado la metáfora como una estrategia formal cuyas cualidades expresivas y estructurales son difícilmente comparables con las de ninguna otra fórmula retórica; para él, la metáfora "argumenta" y "enseña" a la vez, ya que su mayor virtud no está tanto en "explicar" como en "mostrar" de un modo eficaz (Gass 1979 a: 63-5). Para Paul Ricoeur, Aristóteles ya anticipó esta cuestión al anunciar que la metáfora "hace imagen" —literalmente, "coloca bajo los ojos", explica Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1977: 57). Es decir, la metáfora tiene la capacidad de mostrar o hacer visible, de pintar lo abstracto bajo los rasgos de lo concreto; es el carácter procesual de la metáfora el que queda, pues, subrayado. Según Ricoeur, la metáfora "puede así comportar el momento lógico de la proporcionalidad y el momento sensible de la figurabilidad" (57), principio muy afín a los postulados de Gass, cuyo objetivo es combinar las nociones de estructura, orden y proporción interna del texto con una capacidad expresiva eficaz y atractiva que convierte a la pieza en un 'hecho' de significación renovada.

Esta última cuestión de la significación renovada apunta necesariamente a William James. Para James, —y también para sus discípulos Stein, Santayana y Stevens— el lenguaje, si bien tiene la virtud de "traducir" y "fijar el flujo" caótico de la experiencia —se reproducen con las comillas los términos originales—, también tiene el riesgo de la rigidez, pues se convierte en una especie de 'velo' que separa al que percibe de lo percibido.[2] El hecho de "pensar en símbolos", asegura James, nos aleja de la experiencia inmediata y nos impide asimilar "experiencias frescas" (en Burkhardt 1981: 754). Tanto el *genio* de James como el poeta de George Santayana ha de regresar a la confusión natural de la vida para disolver la rigidez propia del lenguaje y eliminar el "velo de la convención" en un acto de renovación que deja vía libre a las sensaciones nuevas e inmediatas.[3]

Pero Santayana diverge de su maestro en que mientras James detiene ahí el proceso, él propone que el despertar de los sentidos es inútil si no se convierte en la base para un momento posterior de "visión total" (Santayana 1900: 168) que produzca nuevas etiquetas para el mundo. En Santayana el *descenso* al mundo caótico de las sensaciones no mediadas por el lenguaje solo tiene sentido cuando le sigue un *ascenso* en el que se construyen nuevas estructuras semióticas más acordes con las tendencias perceptivas de nuestra naturaleza (270); para Santayana todo arte aspira a construir algo (269), lo que podría ser perfectamente suscrito por el propio Gass.

El concepto de metáfora en Gass procede sin duda del de su maestro Max Black, aunque el discípulo no lo adopta sin reservas. El aspecto de la teoría metafórica de Black que más ha contribuido a su popularidad es lo que él denominó el enfoque *interactivo* de la metáfora, según el cual los pensamientos generados por la misma están en 'actividad simultánea', y mediante su 'interacción' dan lugar a un significado resultante de esta. Tras explicar con el ejemplo del hombre y el lobo que la metáfora

actúa como un filtro o pantalla mediante el cual se suprimen ciertos detalles y se acentúan otros de los dos términos que intervienen en la expresión, Black concluye que la metáfora *organiza* la percepción (Black 1962: 51).

Gass suscribe esta noción *interactiva* de la metáfora, en la que los significados se modelan entre sí, siendo la misión del poeta la de equilibrar el resultado (Gass 1979 b: 275). Esto es fundamental en la elaboración de los modelos científicos o matemáticos, en los que el sistema resultante es para Gass como una lente a través de la cual el mundo se mira y se piensa (Gass 1979a: 66). Pero Gass discrepa de su maestro al considerar que la literatura no puede llegar nunca a 'explicar' el mundo o a organizar la percepción del mismo, además las metáforas rara vez son capaces del grado de formalización y abstracción que caracteriza a los métodos científicos (66).

Lo verdaderamente relevante de la cualidad *interactiva* de la metáfora es que el significado se origina 'desde dentro', constituye un sistema semántico autosuficiente que no necesita ser interpretado, pero sí contrastado con la realidad; al igual que Black, Gass también destaca de la metáfora su condición estructural: "Las metáforas profundamente comprometidas con su significado son sistemáticas —toda la red de relaciones establecidas entre ellas cuenta—. Pero el momento en que la mente se mueve por el sistema afirmando ciertos puntos de comparación y rechazando otros, el sistema es sustituido por su interpretación".[4] Se trata, pues, según Gass, de una cuestión de relación y no de interpretación, como la propia dinámica de la imaginación.

Estudios recientes sobre la metáfora ratifican la validez de la fórmula interactiva desarrollada por Black, y coinciden en destacar su poder de evocación y sus propiedades para organizar y unificar el texto. Esta opinión la comparte Carmen Bobes, para quien "Comprendida así, la metáfora resulta ser uno de los recursos de ambigüedad y polivalencia del lenguaje literario que permiten al autor sugerir, sin limitar y sin imponer un sentido cerrado, y permite al lector dejarse llevar por la imaginación literaria no sólo para explicar sino también para comprender el texto en su unidad y en su globalidad". (Boves 2004: 109).

La metáfora, como concepción *interactiva*, con la presentación potente y creativa que constituye en su obra, posee, para Gass, unas virtudes estéticas inigualables y su carácter insustituible e intraducible la convierte en una manifestación única. La condición de intraducible de la metáfora de Black sirve para entender algunos de los más ambiciosos proyectos del modernismo cumbre, pues la asimilación conceptual de las imágenes en la poesía de los *Imagistes* Pound o HD, los 'objetos' cubistas de Gertrude Stein o el *Objective Correlative* de T.S. Eliot, entre otros, no son sino variedades de la metáfora *de interacción* de Black, distintas fórmulas de resistencia epistemológica que tuvieron en su momento un efecto perturbador en unas audiencias sometidas a los dictados de la convención verbal.

Estos proyectos de los modernistas más eminentes se perciben hoy en día dentro de lo que podría definirse como una poética de lo imposible, o, como lo etiqueta Jameson, "an aesthetics of failure" (ver Jameson 2007, capítulo 1 "The Poetics of Totality") por tratar muchos de ellos de encontrar desesperadamente un modo de expresión mucho más inmediato, efectivo e impersonal que la escritura habitual, pero sin sacrificar un estilo propio, lo que de un modo u otro termina desmantelando el necesario equilibrio entre forma y contenido. Jameson afirma que la conclusión paradójica de esta estética del fracaso es que los escritores en cuestión no solo intentan lograr construcciones artísticas genuinas en circunstancias de modernidad, sino que además creen en las posibilidades de su éxito; esto pone de manifiesto su incapacidad para discernir las condiciones que hacen del arte moderno una imposibilidad (Jameson 2007: 4).

Las imposibilidades del modernismo se canalizan hacia el postmodernismo, donde la búsqueda se tiñe de un escepticismo severo. Así, Gass propone la metáfora como fundamento metodológico, y la convierte en el eje de su poética; la metáfora de naturaleza *interactiva* constituye para él la fórmula ideal para relacionar el lenguaje literario con la realidad. La suspensión semántica que la metáfora comporta está en la esencia misma del arte moderno, y es que el proyecto de Gass se impregna del espíritu exuberante e innovador del modernismo cuando el autor afirma reiteradamente en sus ensayos haber descubierto que la relación entre el arte y la vida debe ser idealmente semejante a la correspondencia existente entre el sujeto y el predicado de una gran metáfora, que es lo que él aspira a conseguir con cada una de sus obras. Este optimismo es sofocado, sin embargo, por el perfil más postmoderno de sus obras, en las que la ilusión de la ficción se boicotea continuamente y el texto se convierte en una estructura semánticamente impredecible y laberíntica. La ironía nihilista de la que es fruto la metaficción es un impulso que denuncia la rigidez y la esterilidad de todos los códigos verbales, incluidos los que sustentan el arte, lo que contrasta con el proyecto ambicioso e intuitivo con el que Gass articula su propia obra, y que se detalla a continuación.

III. Los Modelos Metafóricos

William Gass entiende que el resultado del esfuerzo creativo de todo novelista ha de apuntar hacia la elaboración de un modelo metafórico ficcional (Gass 1979a: 60). El modelo puede ser más o menos semejante al original, pero lo que lo va a caracterizar es que siempre constituirá un sistema verbal generado en torno a unos principios organizativos propios, lo que lo convierte en una realidad paralela. Los conceptos de modelo y metáfora suelen utilizarse como sinónimos —y así se va a

hacer a menudo en este apartado—, aunque esto no es absolutamente cierto: el modelo es siempre de naturaleza metafórica, como reconoce Black (219), pero una metáfora no pasa necesariamente por el proceso de elaboración que requiere un modelo, un proceso mucho más complicado.

La diferencia esencial entre ambos conceptos está en que, según Black, una metáfora opera básicamente a través de implicaciones comunes, es decir, solo se necesita un conocimiento proverbial para interpretarla, mientras que el modelo requiere una teoría estética o científica que lo sustente (239). Aunque la primera parte de la afirmación anterior de Black podría ser fácilmente rebatida, es cierto que el uso de los modelos se suele vincular con el planteamiento teórico y la formulación de los fenómenos científicos, ámbito en el que, injustificadamente, se les suele considerar procesos analógicos en lugar de metafóricos —este último término parece ser más propio de contextos literarios—, dado que el modelo suele tener habitualmente una utilidad didáctica. Como se desprende de los razonamientos de Black, por modelo puede entenderse tanto el término figurado de una metáfora sistemática y formal como la propia metáfora.

Sin duda Gass ya pensaba en la estética de los modelos cuando afirmaba en su tesis doctoral, dirigida por el propio Black, que las metáforas siempre *presentan* un proceso de abstracción, nunca lo representan (Gass 1954: xvii). Presentar es la palabra clave en la retórica de este autor, pues con ella reclama Gass para los procesos metafóricos la virtud de la integridad estructural, un carácter ontológico exclusivo propio de lo que él considera una nueva manera de mirar o de enfrentarse a la realidad con un "ojo" analítico. Al igual que William Gass, Paul Ricoeur también concede una función ontológica a las estructuras metafóricas, y asegura que el lenguaje del poeta no lo es menos acerca de la realidad que cualquier otro uso del lenguaje, pero aquel se debe referir a ella mediante una compleja estrategia que implica, como componente esencial, una suspensión de la referencia ordinaria adscrita al lenguaje descriptivo.[5]

Como asegura Black, se trata de sugerir nuevas relaciones semánticas, pues la metáfora y la elaboración de modelos metafóricos revelan nuevas afinidades (Black 1962: 238-239); así es también el proceso de la metáfora y de los modelos para Gass, y su efecto final resulta ser de una gran inmediatez y eficacia expresiva:

> La metáfora es una manera de hacer inferencias, una manera de decir del modo más directo, breve y simple posible lo necesario para llegar a la inferencia deseada, aunque la conclusión pueda depender de premisas que no son breves ni sencillas y que no parecen directas, pues la inmediatez, tanto en el arte como en la metáfora, es a menudo mediatez en cualquier otro contexto; se trata allí de buscar el camino rigurosamente recto, como en la ciencia y en las matemáticas se trata de buscar lo mismo.[6]

Concebir un modelo consiste en elaborar un paradigma tropológico imaginativo en torno al cual Gass construye todo un mundo de ficción cuya misión última es dramatizar, mediante su *interacción* —en el sentido blackiano— con ella, la problemática ontología del discurso poético; Gass se vale de elementos como la nieve en "The Pedersen Kid", el hielo en "Icicles" —ambos de su colección de relatos *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country*—, un túnel en *The Tunnel*, casas en "Mrs Mean" —también en *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country*— y en "Bed and Breakfast" —este último perteneciente a *Cartesian Sonata and Other Novellas*—, un cuerpo femenino en *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife*, etc., convirtiéndolos sorprendentemente en protagonistas de un relato o una novela —funcionan como *centros simbólicos* afirma Gass (LeClair 1982: 169)—. El modelo escenifica las semejanzas existentes entre determinadas características y comportamientos de estos elementos y las relaciones que se establecen entre el poeta, su realidad y el fruto de su interacción creativa con ella, la obra. Se desarrollan, pues, los modelos gassianos en el ámbito de la metanarración, lo que obliga a esa lectura intuitiva sin la que la obra de este autor no puede llegar a comprenderse.

El interés primordial de Gass por los modelos radica precisamente en su potencial de abstracción, en su capacidad para hacer visibles propiedades de la realidad empírica que son difícilmente representables. Con respecto a la ciencia, a la que también hace Gass referencia arriba, los modelos científicos son metodológicamente semejantes a los ficcionales pues, como él mismo afirma, son como "lentes conceptuales" (Gass 1979a: 62). La diferencia radica en los objetivos de ambos, pues el científico pretende explicar el mundo y sus procesos, mientras que el artista se debe en última instancia al entramado coherente y sensual en que aspira a convertir su obra.

Como ejemplo de modelo científico resulta ilustrativo el que Black elige como de tipo *teórico*: la representación del campo eléctrico propuesta por Maxwell, que trató de explicarlo como si de un fluido incompresible e imaginario se tratara. La utilidad del modelo no consiste en concebir el campo eléctrico lleno de dicho éter, sino en pensar en él 'como si' lo estuviera. lo que depende de un factor ineludiblemente intuitivo; describiendo la peculiar sustancia se da una visión aproximada de la dinámica del campo eléctrico, de otro modo informulable.[7]

Black compara la noción de la autonomía semántica que conlleva la utilización de los modelos con la de la 'intraducibilidad' de las metáforas, pues el filósofo entiende que la metáfora *interactiva* no se puede traducir o no se puede sustituir sin que se produzca una pérdida de su contenido cognoscitivo (Black 1962: 236). En las metáforas sistemáticas que se generan a partir de un modelo, el factor de la no-traducibilidad se transforma en una cuestión de equilibrio formal, al no poder

interpretarse las metáforas en función de una realidad exterior a la que se vinculan sus dos términos. De este modo, la imagen de la realidad representada por el modelo se funde con la realidad paralela de la composición textual, y surge una nueva integridad semántica. Como afirma Black, Peirce ya apreció que un modelo metafórico es un tipo de *icono* por incorporar los rasgos del original y usarlo como signo suyo (Black 1962: 221).

Este aspecto es el que lleva a Paul Ricoeur a señalar a la metáfora de interacción como un inigualable instrumento pedagógico e informativo: "[la metáfora de interacción] siendo intraducible, es portadora de información; en resumen, enseña" (Ricoeur 1977: 135). Es decir, este tipo de metáfora descubre nuevas relaciones semánticas, relaciones que pueden no existir a simple vista en la vida real y que pueden intuirse a partir de la formulación del tropo. Por lo tanto, según Ricoeur, el acercamiento entre modelo y metáfora propuesto por Black en su ensayo "Models and Archetypes", dentro de su libro *Models and Metaphors*, revela de una manera decisiva la contribución de la metáfora a una lógica de la invención (Black 1962: 136) pues, al no ser parafraseable, transmite algo que no se puede decir de ningún otro modo, por lo que tiene un valor semántico exclusivo.

El carácter irreductible de la metáfora sigue despertando el interés de los estudiosos de distintas áreas, que han encontrado incluso una dimensión psicológica en ella, señalándola como la verdadera sustancia de los sueños. Tal es el caso de David Punter, para quien la metáfora, al igual que los sueños, resiste todo intento de interpretación:

> Tratamos de entender la metáfora, es parte de nuestra labor como lectores, como estudiantes de literatura, como seres humanos en suma, porque sin ese intento de comprensión nos perderíamos en lo psicótico; pero nunca podemos llegar a una resolución, porque las metáforas tienen algo en común, por ejemplo, con los cuadros de M.C. Escher o con el borrón Rorschach, ambos popularmente indescifrables, o cuanto menos irreducibles a una única interpretación: estos nunca pueden revelar completamente sus significados, porque se encuentran permanentemente a punto de convertirse en su propio otro.[8]

Es en esta cualidad autotélica de la metáfora que tan bien describe Punter en la que Gass fundamenta su poética, y es esta propiedad irreducible o de resistencia epistemológica de la misma la que acerca la poética de Gass a los planteamientos clave del modernismo más influyente.

Como Gass le confiesa a LeClair, su objetivo es probar que el vínculo entre la literatura y el mundo puede y debe ser metafórico, entendiendo esta estrategia como una cuestión de relación y no de interpretación (LeClair 1982: 172). Su proyecto se diluye, sin embargo, en el jeroglífico de la metaficción y, por tanto, en las imposibilidades del postmodernismo. La dificultad de la propuesta de Gass es,

una vez más, que el vínculo metafórico esencial en el arte solo puede concebirse de un modo intuitivo, por lo que su proyecto depende necesariamente de un proceso individual de abstracción. Solo mediante estos procesos de abstracción podrá entenderse que la nieve en su relato "The Pedersen Kid" se conciba como modelo del lenguaje convencional, un elemento 'opaco' que, lejos de revelar realidades, oculta el mundo a los ojos del viajero-poeta que deambula perdido por el blanco paraje, o que el cuerpo de la sensual pero incomprendida Babs en *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* es un modelo del texto sugerente y transgresor al que aspira el propio Gass.

De lo anterior se desprende que los entes verbales que concibe Gass no son puramente autotélicos, pues Gass propone la metáfora, el tipo sistemático de metáfora *de interacción* blackiana en que se basa la elaboración de modelos, como una forma compleja de comunicación entre el arte y el mundo; por medio de ella aspira a lograr que la obra se convierta en una verdadera alegoría verbal construida a imagen de la realidad. La obra de este autor constituye, pues, un modo hedonista e icónico de discurso, un proceso de semántica experimental con un marcado carácter introspectivo, intuitivo y lúdico, que anhela un alejamiento de los modos de significación colectiva y de las estrategias narrativas clásicas, lo que le pone a Gass en comunicación con las aspiraciones de algunos de los grandes autores de las primeras décadas del siglo veinte. Sin embargo, este modo de despliegue retórico siempre deriva en el postmodernismo en una visión escéptica de la literatura y del arte que lleva a autores con intereses semejantes a desmantelar estas mismas estructuras de significado que ellos plantean como baluarte del significado genuino, lo que constituye una aceptación resignada de la impracticabilidad del arte moderno.

IV. Metáforas Provisionales

Una vez asimiladas de un modo intuitivo las fórmulas o principios organizativos que determinan el tipo de modelo metafórico empleado, Gass asegura que la obra "brilla" en el esplendor de su totalidad ante el lector, se manifiesta ante él como un objeto para la contemplación.[9] Este es el tipo de *objeto celebracional* descrito por Rilke y al que Gass a menudo afirma aspirar, pero que, como se fundamenta en los procesos de la metaficción, es de una entidad provisional e inconsistente, por lo que resulta ontológicamente devaluado en el propio acto de su concepción. La utopía estética de sesgo modernista termina así cortocircuitada por las contradicciones e inconsistencias del postmodernismo, y es que la poética de Gass no gira tanto en torno a lo que son sus obras, sino a lo que él quiere que sean; la integridad y la visualidad que el autor concibe para las mismas no son aspectos que

estén realmente presentes en el texto, y se puede afirmar que toda la producción de Gass es en realidad una metáfora de dicho acontecimiento estético.

Aquí radica el escepticismo del postmodernismo que, a diferencia de posturas anteriores, parece ser consciente de la impracticabilidad del arte en el mundo moderno. La que Jameson definía como la estética del fracaso, y que se citaba en el segundo apartado de este ensayo, parece quedar instalada definitivamente en el subconsciente de los artistas de las últimas décadas del siglo veinte, quienes a menudo juegan a recrearse en principios formales que parecen obsoletos, pero que en última instancia conciben y añoran para sus obras —como le sucede a Gass con la metáfora y los modelos—, para terminar desmantelándolos en un gesto de honestidad y de sometimiento resignado a los códigos convencionales de los sistemas de significado.

Así sucede cuando el propio Gass ofrece en varias de sus reseñas algunos ejemplos interesantes de modelos cuya plenitud e integridad el autor encuentra admirables. Para ello se ve obligado, en pos de su explicación, a traducir o interpretar la metáfora a la que dan vida, lo que sin duda va en contra del principio *de interacción* que rige el proceso metafórico creativo por el que el autor aboga; estos modelos propuestos por Gass son, según él, los verdaderos principios estructurales de las obras que sobre ellos se asientan, convirtiéndolas en realidades intangiblemente "formadas", prototipos intuitivos de estructura y proporción cuya suficiencia ontológica queda, sin embargo, desvirtuada al requerir de una explicación que facilite su recepción.

Uno de sus ejemplos es la cantina del libro de Malcom Lowry *Under the Volcano,* que según Gass es un modelo de cabeza (Gass 1979b: 19). O, de un modo más ambicioso, —o lo que es igual, metatextualmente más comprometido, como también lo son *The Tunnel* y *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* del propio Gass— está el ejemplo del párrafo, también de Lowry, que Gass interpreta como modelo del fuselaje del avión que el propio párrafo describe (30); o cuando afirma que los "cubos" textuales de Gertrude Stein llegan, en sus tres dimensiones metafóricas, a "rodear" de un modo intuitivo al lector (78); o, un ejemplo más, cuando Gass asegura que las novelas de Nabokov son como relojes, cada uno marcando sus propios tiempos (206).

Entre los escritores postmodernos que, al igual que Gass, producen este tipo de metáforas que McHale define como "alegorías de la escritura" (ver en *Postmodernist Fiction* el capítulo 9, "Tropological Worlds"), cabe mencionar a Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Robert Coover, Jerzy Kosinski, Ishmael Reed e incluso al propio William Burroughs entre otros. McHale destaca el marcado carácter figurativo en la constitución de muchas obras postmodernistas, entre las que se encuentran las de Gass. El ejemplo que McHale desarrolla en su libro es el del relato "The Balloon" de Barthelme (en *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts*), pero podrían señalarse muchos otros que ilustran la semejanza entre el proyecto de alguno de estos escritores y el de Gass.

Este es el caso de "The Indian Uprising", también en la misma colección de relatos de Barthelme, que tiene como marco narrativo una escena bélica con barricadas erigidas para controlar la insurrección de un misterioso grupo de indios. Paralelamente, el relato se configura como un verdadero 'motín' verbal de frases que se rebelan contra las estructuras gramaticales y sintácticas convencionales, y que intenta ser contenido mediante las barricadas metafóricas que constituyen las listas de palabras, a las que Miss R. denomina *litanies*. Otro ejemplo interesante y metaficcionalmente eficaz es el relato de Coover "The Elevator" (en *Pricksongs and Descants*), que presenta, por un lado, una estructura con divisiones que busca evocar las plantas o pisos del edificio de oficinas en el que discurre la narración y, por otro, ofrece una acción de subidas y bajadas alternas y reiteradas que convierte al texto en expresión simultánea del propio ascensor de la ficción. También Walter Abish produce piezas con esta doble naturaleza estructural, como puede ser su *Alphabetical Africa*, relato construido en paralelo a la geografía africana, a la que el autor aplica ciertas reglas y restricciones verbales que dan lugar a un nuevo continente africano en el ámbito metatextual. Tampoco hay que olvidar a Richard Brautigan, cuyo *Trout Fishing in America* sintetiza todo lo que la estética metafórica puede hacer por la renovación de la narrativa.

Aunque ninguno de estos autores se posiciona estéticamente de un modo tan explícito y vehemente como lo hace Gass, se puede afirmar que trabajan en su misma línea intuitivo-metafórica; ellos también parecen entender que la escritura de un relato o novela pasa idealmente por la elaboración de una gran estructura que confiera orden y unidad a la obra. Los escritores arriba mencionados podrían asumir fácilmente la noción de metáfora *de interacción* como soporte teórico de una manifestación literaria sensual y creativa, y desde luego suscribirían el potencial ontológico de la misma como hace Gass. A los ejemplos propuestos arriba por Gass —el texto-cabeza en Lowry, el párrafo-fuselaje también de este autor o los cubos de Stein y los relojes de Nabokov— se añaden ahora los sugeridos en el párrafo anterior, una muestra del tipo de significación icónica y transitoria en que se deleita la postmodernidad habitualmente.

De los planteamientos estéticos formulados hasta aquí se desprende que William Gass y un grupo de escritores etiquetados habitualmente como postmodernistas asimilan algunos objetivos estéticos del modernismo más militante, fundamentalmente los de autonomía e integridad estética, que logran canalizar a través de estructuras metafóricas cuya viabilidad es provisional y, desde luego, siempre intuitiva, dentro del ámbito de la metaficción. Los textos así concebidos alcanzan una nueva dimensión ubicada más allá del relato que, a pesar de todo, logran contar al convertirse en expresión virtual de sí mismos.

La suspensión semántica que implica la formulación tropológica de la metaficción se puede entender como una variedad más de las inconsistencias epistemológicas que definen el proyecto postmodernista, pero la metáfora de naturaleza *interactiva* sobre la que este se sustenta ha de entenderse como un mecanismo vertebrador y como una fuente de orden y coherencia creativa que consigue poner en comunicación la estética provisional y escéptica del postmodernismo con los más ambiciosos planteamientos del modernismo clásico.

Notas

[1]. Original: "I love metaphor the way some people love junk food. I think metaphorically, feel metaphorically, see metaphorically. And if anything in writing comes easily, comes unbidded, often unwanted, it is metaphor" (LeClair 1982: 172). Trad. de la A.

[2]. En Burkhardt, Frederick (ed.) *The Principles of Psychology: Works of William James*, 727.

[3]. Santayana, George, "The Elements and Function of Poetry" en *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 266.

[4]. Original: "Metaphors which are deeply committed, which really mean what they say, are systematic —the whole net of relationships matters. But the moment the mind moves through the system establishing certain points of comparison and denying others, then the system is replaced by its interpretation" (Gass 1979a: 66, 67). Trad. de la A.

[5]. Ricoeur, Paul. "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling" en Sacks, Sheldon (ed.) 1979: 151.

[6]. Original: "Metaphor is a manner of inferring; a manner of setting down as directly and briefly and simply as possible whatever is necessary for the inference desired, although the conclusion may require premises that are neither brief nor plain and do not seem direct, since direction, in both art and metaphor, is often indirection elsewhere; for it is as much a matter of concern there to seek the severe straight way as it is in science and mathematics to seek the same" (Gass 1979 a: 63). Trad. de la A.

[7]. El filósofo W.V. Quine señala como otros ejemplos de modelos científicos —a los que, por cierto, él denomina directamente metáforas— la teoría molecular de los gases o el principio de las ondas luminosas (W.V. Quine. "A Postscript on Metaphor" en Sacks, Sheldon (ed.) 1979: 159).

[8]. "We strive to understand metaphor; that is part of our task as readers, as students of literature, indeed as human beings, because without that attempt at understanding we would be lost in the psychotic; but we can never fully arrive at a resolution, because, metaphors have something in common with, for example, the paintings of M.C. Escher, or with the Rorschach blot, both of which are famously indecipherable or, at least, irreducible to a single interpretation: they can never fully reveal their own meanings because they are perennially on the point of turning into their own other" (Punter 2007: 82-3). Trad. de la A.

[9]. Este tipo de razonamientos justifican afirmaciones como la del crítico Jerry Varsava, quien opina que la narrativa postmoderna no trata de la vida, sino de algo más, como son el genio imaginativo o incluso transcendencia estética (Varsava 1990:1).

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ONCE WERE WARRIORS, BUT HOW ABOUT MAORITANGA NOW? NOVEL AND FILM AS A DIALOGIC THIRD SPACE

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1. A Slum Story Told and Retold

Alan Duff's novel *Once Were Warriors* (1990) became an instant bestseller in his home country, New Zealand, and immediately established his reputation as a powerful writer. The reasons for this are to be sought in the highly personal style of prose employed, the gripping story told and, foremost, the uninhibited treatment of controversial subject matter, perceived as "a kick in the guts to New Zealand's much vaunted pride in its Maori-Pakeha [non-Maori] race relations" (Witi Ihimaera in Thompson 1999: 166). Dealing with contemporary Maori alienation in New Zealand's urban areas from a harsh self-critical perspective that other renowned indigenous authors such as Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace and Keri Hulme had never employed, it propounds a shifting of the responsibility and solution for the indigenous predicament from white mainstream society to the Maori themselves. This notion the mixed-descent author develops into a neo-liberal notion of individual responsibility, self-sacrifice and hard work (cf. Harding 1992: 144) in his polemical volume of essays, *Maori: The crisis and the Challenge* (1993), which has fed back into the reception of his novel. Generally, the recasting of the politics of guilt and blame the novel projects has not readily met with acceptance from progressive readership. One such voice has it that "Duff's book is a work of great skill. However, I can't get rid of the nagging feeling that the

present New Zealand government[1] would like his message: what's the point of trying to do anything for Maoris when 'they' are hopeless and have only themselves to blame" (Riedlinger 1995).

Murray Waldren (1996) believes Duff to have infringed upon a taboo area "in rejecting the stereotype of Maori as colonial casualty, and by not ignoring the unflattering face of Maori society, [to have] rewritten the political agenda". On account of exaltation of western individualism —Duff is proud of his battler[2] mentality (Oder 1996: 138)— and exposure of the rigidities of the tribal caste system and male-dominated gender division in traditional Maori society, Duff has often been identified as collaborating with an assimilative European mainstream agenda (Harding 192: 145; Thomas 1993: 58). Christina Thompson (1995: 113) claims that Duff's stubborn "recalcitran[ce]" represents an:

> […] overall shift to the right, away from more 'progressive' ideas about the recuperation of traditional knowledge and practices, [which] stems from an unwillingness to be co-opted by the liberal Pakeha establishment, […] inclined to sentimentalize Maori 'traditions' and which Duff himself, as an upwardly mobile member of the working class, simultaneously resents and romanticizes.

Thus, in debunking the soft primitivism of rural Maoridom with an unappealing hard-primitivist depiction of Maori slum reality (Harding 1992: 142) which exchanges the Noble Savage for the "Maori male [as] a naturally violent animal" (Simmons 1998: 335), Duff has also earned plenty of criticism from Maori spokesmen for *Once Were Warriors* (Hereniko 1999: 121).

In contrast, part-Maori director Lee Tamahori, who turned this novel "that supposedly puts the boot in the face of the Maori" (Hereniko 1999: 119) into the widely-acclaimed homonymous film, has a more balanced view of the Duff case. He states it was the first time someone had made an authorized attempt to write about the harsh living conditions of the disenfranchised Maori urban underclass. Duff was born to a well-educated Pakeha father and an "uneducated" and "volatile" Maori mother (Thompson 1995: 6), had grown up in the slums, and was therefore able to give an inside view which "bred a lot of controversy, certainly amongst the intelligentsia and a radical element who are interested in a revisionist history of Maori whereby only positive images are presented rather than ever showing the downside" (1995).

Here, we may find Tamahori defending Duff's agenda, but when he, the Maori playwright Riwia Brown, producer Robin Scholes wrote the film script, they refocused the plot in what Geoff Mayer (1995: 100) calls "a drasting reworking" of the novel. Duff wrote an original screenplay that Tamahori rejected because he considered Duff too personally involved "to make the changes to keep people in

their seats". Thus, Laurence Simmons (1998: 334) points out that Tamahori's cinematic transfer of Duff's semi-autobiography highlights the "complexity and [...] ambivalence of the relationship between the political and the commercial", giving rise to what Robert Sklar (1995: 25) calls "a sensational urban melodrama". Given these controversies, this essay will analyse what postcolonial 'third' spaces of *Maoritanga* (Maoriness) the written and filmed version of *Once Were Warriors* negotiate within New Zealand neocoloniality from a Bakhtinian perspective of identity formation.

2. Duff's Novel, a 'Heteroglossic' Negotiation of Maoriness

Duff's novel bears "a title [which] is, in a sense, the whole book" (Thomas 1993: 59) since it questions the neo-colonial class, gender and race divisions that fix New Zealand's Maori population in disempowering urban fringe locations —the futile nature of their search for the 'Big Three' of work, money and entertainment after colonisation and dispossession (Taonui 2009). To this end the novel addresses the trials and tribulations of a dysfunctional Maori family in which the negligent unemployed Maori husband and his meek wife waste their lives drinking and partying while their children go from bad to worse in the slum. Their oldest son dies in gang warfare, another is a petty thief made ward of state, and their adolescent daughter commits suicide after structural sexual abuse at the homestead. Whereas the father, a self-centred violent bully, is (wrongly) accused of the rape and rejected by the locals, the mother starts up an educational project for the ghetto dwellers to analyse their dire situation and regain agency over their lives. Jake's disempowering and Beth's empowering performance of Maoriness form part of a discursive engagement with language, history and community that begs a *dialogic* interpretation of the novel's narrative framework and content.

Mikhael Bakhtin's critical theory of knowledge called *dialogism* is an "epistemology [which] exploits the nature of language as a modelling system for the nature of existence", both considered relational and relative rather than independent and absolute. Thus, dialogism understands identity as a process in which the meanings of self and other are contextually produced. Identity's dynamic relation with the world generates "social and ethical values as the means by which the I/other split articulates itself in specific situations", both in time and across space (Holquist 1990: 33). Bakhtin considers the genre of the novel a privileged discursive space in which the self can be narrated/authored. Thereto the novel may use stylistic devices such as *polyphony* —a range of protagonists boosting "a plurality of

independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses [...] with equal rights and each with its own world, [which] combine but are not merged in the unity of the [communicative] event" (Bakhtin 1984: 6). Polyphony is structurally embedded in *heteroglossia*, a multi-discursive network that "governs the operation of meaning in the [...] literary text" and generates "loc[i] where the great centripetal and centrifugal forces that shape discourse can meaningfully come together" in the individual (Holquist 1990: 69-70). Heteroglossia situates the constitutive tension between one's self-construction and existential position in the world at the intersection point where different discourses meet in the construction of the embodied self. Since we all necessarily go through a formative phase in which "someone else's discourse is internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us", Bakhtin (1981: 345) asserts that individual "consciousness awakens by independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourse surrounding it [...] from which it cannot initially separate itself".

These relational discursive dynamics imply that a sense of self cannot be retrieved as discrete essence or "self-sufficient construct", because the self only exists in the constant dialogue with the world-as-otherness. In Bakhtin's thought, self and other(ness) are not separate entities based on absolute difference but represent "the differential relationship between a center and all that is not that center" (Holquist 1990: 18-19). This shifts any understanding of self away from immanent essence to fundamental ambivalence: the meaning of self develops as a variable vantage point from which discursive events are observed as otherness. Thus, the dialogic constitution of self is performed in "site[s] of knowledge [that are] never unitary" (Holquist 1990: 15-18). The structural lack of epistemological centre opens identity up to de- and reconstruction through *addressivity*, the discursive agency of people to assume "responsib[ility] for the activity of meaning in [their] local environment" (Holquist 1990: 84) and for their performance of self. Deemed a non-dialectical epistemology of knowledge and existence, dialogism may produce non-binary discursive locations akin to Homi Bhabha's postulation of the hybrid postcolonial *third space*:

> [...] for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third arises, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom [...]. (In Rutherford 1990: 211-212)

Bhabha defines the third space dynamically as a site of identification rather than identity, where hybridity involves a dialogic relationship with the o/Other "on the basis of a non-sovereign notion of the self":

> [I]dentification is a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification —the subject [our 'dialogic vantage point']— is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of that otherness […] the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of the practices which inform it […] so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses. (In Rutherford 1990: 211-212)

Once Were Warriors constructs a postcolonial third space of urban Maoriness out of the refusal of totalising mainstream narratives and the deconstruction of the binary nation-space. It reconstructs hybrid configurations of self out of the deconstructive dialogue with the neo/colonial discourse that incorporates and 'freezes' the Maori in fringe locations of dispossession and disempowerment in New Zealand's nation-space. Duff's novel addresses the disempowering self-construction of its polyphonic range of characters; unpacks the gender, class and race discourse that besets and disables urban Maori; and proposes alternative, hybrid discursive loci of individual consciousness. Beth Heke's groundbreaking embodiment of the responsible warrioress in charge of the new urban *marae* (community ground) defies the "primitivist tradition in western thought […] which constructs "the truth of [Maori] cultures [… out of] their radical opposition to modernity [so that] indigenous modernity can only be a contradictory and inauthentic location" (Thomson 1993: 64-65). Beth manages to resituate the language of Maori self-definition in an enabling discursive space beyond the discrete binaries of the urban/rural, modernity/primitivism, white/black, male/female, and master/slave in a critical dialogue between her tribal community and the slum community. This process of discursive relocation is as much a physical battle as an intellectual tour de force.

Once Were Warriors' heteroglossia of race, class and gender discourses addresses Maori identity formation through ever-shifting narrative perspectives of varying analytical potential. This confusing polyphony issues from a vast array of characters, "dipping in and out of several troubled (and often unspecified) consciousnesses" (Harding 1992: 147), and from 'encrusted' comments of a critical omniscient narrator, which complicates the negotiation of meaning. The emotional directness but analytical inarticulateness of ghetto talk is displayed through a stream-of-consciousness and second-person direct-address technique of writing that establish an immediate sense of self, further enhanced by stylistic idiosyncracies reminiscent of Hubert Selby's experimental novels (Harding 1992: 147). For example, the critical authorial presence slides into different, often opposed voices using the vernacular: "People doing scenes all over. All ov-ah. As though last throes, last throes, last-minute acts before the curtain fell; or to complete something, satisfy sumpthin. A man could see this. But he couldn't put words to it" (72). Dialogue

tends not to separate out and boast a colloquial use of grammar, diction and syntax: "Yeow, brother, you dream away. Ain't dreaming, man. Tomorrow, gonna do. And after I've had the ribs I'm gonna buy me a cooked chicken from the Hindu's. The Hindu's? Man, they ain't chickens, they're chooks. Y'c'd string a tennis racket withem, man" (17). Sound effects such as "hahahaha" are frequent and may be printed in capital letters or italics: "Jake the Muss, that's what his mates —his *crawwww*ling mates call him" (23). The aim of this near-cacophony is to plunge the reader into the palpable, abject reality of the Maori slum.

A spatial metaphor discursively stages the insurmountable gap between the accommodated and disenfranchised: the dire Maori townscape is set apart from the middle-class environment of Two Lakes (recognisable as Duff's hometown Rotorua) by vacant no-man's land. This physical separation establishes a disempowering dialogue with the slum, whose name Pine Block immediately clarifies that in this abject environment people yearn for what is on the other side. This is symbolised by the residential suburban possessions of the white Trambert family, within sight across green pastureland but forever out of Maori reach. With quick brushstrokes, Duff paints a depressing picture of Pine Block: a ghetto where urban Maoris are confined to "two-storey, side-by-side misery boxes", where "unkempt, ill-directioned, neglected kids" roam, and where "lesser people [booze] away their lives, and the booze making things all distorted and warped and violent" (7). Pine Block is "neglected, run-down, abused and […] prideless", and a place of "not having dreams" (11, 8) where the more sensitive ones lose the battle for survival.

Jake Heke is the dominant male in this dysfunctional environment: "*I'm* king a [*sic*] this castle" (73). Proud to be on the dole, he spends his time drinking, partying, fighting and vaunting "[a]ll six foot three inches of hard-muscled towering man of him" but remains fatally inarticulate: "No wonder a man's getting himself drunk all the time: it's the – the – the. No word for it" (17-18). Lacking the discursive tools to address his shortcomings, he wallows in the aggressive urban warrior image, a perversion of the indomitable-warrior myth that formerly informed the honour and prestige of Maori manhood. Its foil, surrender in tribal warfare, would bring irreparable shame, and therefore enslavement and stifling marginalisation. A traumatised, once-bullied descendant of former slaves, Jake "the Muss" —a sobriquet earned for his strong, muscular body— now merely seeks control over his environment through blind violence, oblivious to the traditional Maori notions of respect and care for the community.

Culturally more-informed because of her noble Maori descent but scourged by domestic violence, his wife Beth analyses Jake's manhood from a postcolonial perspective: "you, the white audience out there, defeated us. Conquered us. Took

our land, our *mana* [pride], left us with nothing. But the warriors thing got handed down, see [...] in a mixed-up sense it did. It was more toughness" (47). Thus, she is aware Jake occupies a disabling heteroglossic locus that sees him utterly fail as a father and provider, uncaring and violent towards his wife and children: "the Maori of old had a culture, and he had a pride, and he had warriorhood, not this bullying, man-hitting-woman shet, you call that manhood? It's not manhood, and it sure as hell ain't Maori warriorhood" (28). Beth is "a victim, yet a knowing and complicit one" (Thomas 19993: 60), who locks her Maori heritage in the past, conditioned by a present without future. Welfare dependency, imprisonment, alcoholism and drug abuse, widespread unskilled and badly-paid labour, unemployment and loss of tribal network offer no options to boost her children's potential: "What can a woman do about their future, their education? It ain't in my hands" (14). With both parents having succumbed to a crippling discourse on Maori urban modernity, their children have no prospects in life.

Nig (short for "Nigger"), their 17-year-old son, has already given in to the slum conditions: "what future? No future for a Maori" (16). Thus he is persuaded to exchange what remains of the Heke family network for a destructive version of the Maori extended kinship tradition —gang membership. It proves an even more disabling version of warrior as manhood which he accesses after a brutal initiation sadly but significantly coinciding with Grace's funeral. The young gang leader Jimmy Bad Horse is in territorial competition with Jake Heke and wreaks his revenge by successfully plotting Nig's death in a gang fight.

Boogie (a sobriquet denoting his fear of the boogeyman) is the Hekes' sensitive 14-year-old son who has no other answer to slum life than committing petty crimes. Thus, "a wimp thrown into a den of warriors" (37), he is soon caught up in the legal system and condemned to remand. Taken out of the dysfunctional family environment, he goes through a radical transformation under the guidance of a Maori welfare officer who teaches him his Maori cultural heritage as part of an enabling sense of self. His inscription into a new, hybrid form of Maoriness poising tradition and modernity strengthens Beth's evolution into leadership of the urban Maori community after Grace's suicide.

Grace, the Hekes' 13-year-old daughter, represents the novel's crushed seed of hope and this awareness amongst the family members becomes the catalyst for structural change. A surrogate mother, Grace has taken over Beth and Jake's parental duties, crucially when Boogie's case goes to court. The "alter ego" of her notebook (De Souza 2007: 22) is the discursive locus where she addresses and records her growing sense of self, cultural awareness and hopes for the future, until her budding womanhood is the object of repeated rape at the homestead while parties rave downstairs, propelling her to self-destruction. Alcoholism, at the root

of parental abandonment, causes the final disruption of the family network as it undermines a visit to Boogie's reformatory. Unable to cope with the realities of slum life, she chooses the sturdy oak tree planted in the Trambert backyard to hang herself, facing the opportunities she was never given.

In this chilling turn of events, the 'strange fruit' of her lifeless corpse embodies the consequences of postcolonial violence, deracination and disempowerment. The disabling slum heteroglossia on ethnic womanhood has provoked an all too early, too violent awakening of her self amidst alienating discourse, causing her destruction. Right before she launches herself, Grace is undone by the meaning of 'potential' in the context of a Maori ghetto girl: sexual and domestic violence instead of the accommodation and comforts proffered to white mainstreamers in fancy magazines.

> It popped up in her head, an old familiar word, concept she'd latched onto. From a magazine it was; about everyone having the right —the right, it said— to realise their potential. POTENTIAL. It sat there in her mind as clear as a neon sign. Like the McCLUTCHY'S[3] ONE […] Then she jumped (119).

Nevertheless, Grace's suicide urges Beth's engagement with disempowering Western and Maori discourses on race, class, and gender. Beth's need to make sense of the violent deaths of her son and daughter leads to independence of thought and the recovery of her children's best qualities as the battling mother-leader. Thus the novel transforms the trope of female death into female resurrection (De Souza 2007: 15, 23), but plays on the trope of male death ambiguously. Nig's death underscores male downfall as it adds onto Jake's 'dis-Grace'. Not without reason, the last metaphoric lines of the novel suggest growth and change are only achieved by those who search for them: "And a sky stayed blue. And that cloud formation had changed shape —Oh, but only if you're looking for that sorta thing" (198). Thus through Beth, Nig's destructive gang warriorhood transforms into its emancipated female version of the Maori warrioress, which appeals to the *mana* (honour) of old but remaps race, class and gender as modern urban Maori womanhood. Beth achieves mental resilience in addressing and unpacking these binaries and reactivates the Pine Block community beyond its alienation by propounding Maoriness beyond the alleged authenticity of former tradition.

The discursive lack of a sense of history (time) and belonging (place) is therefore an important dialogic feature for the novel to address: its polyphony in short-ranged broken-English vernacular therefore functions as a unidimensional atemporal human trap in the first half of the novel. It is only in the chapter entitled *They Who Have History II* (120) that Beth re-incorporates the Maori language, belonging and history, coinciding with Grace's *tangi*. This traditional funeral

ceremony for Grace becomes the prime locus of Beth's discursive reconstruction of self. In her inner dialogue, she questions the patriarchal class divide in Maori society, "resenting the male elders, their privileged position, their secret language […] a males-only domain. And only certain males at that. From certain families. From chiefly lines" (120). But soon her misgivings about Maori classism and male-chauvinism give way as the funeral ceremony carried out in *te reo Maori* cleanses her feelings of pain, guilt and anger. Through the regenerative ritual of *whakapapa*, in which tribal chief Te Tupaea establishes Grace's genealogy and places her within history, Beth starts "wondering if perhaps that was what ailed her people: their lack of knowledge of the past. A history" (124). She realises that in articulating a sense of their Maori past and analysing the interplay of the inequalities in traditional Maori society with neo/colonial disempowerment, she can offer her community an enabling sense of self and belonging.

Beth's intellectual awakening leads to an educational project for the Pine Block children and their parents. This project fighting ignorance is reminiscent of Duff's reading self-help scheme and underlines the discursive importance of language. Beth's aim is "to give you kids your rightful warrior inheritance. Pride in yourself, your poor selves. Not attacking, violent pride but *heart* pride. Gonna go to my people, my leaders, ask them the way" (167). Her clan's chief Te Tupaea responds by visiting the improvised urban *marae* in front of Beth's house for weekly bilingual lectures on Maori cultural heritage. He also exhorts the Pine Blockers to forge their own destinies: "telling em to jack their ideas up. Ta stop being lazy […] Ta stop feeling sorry for emselves. Ta stop blamin the Pakeha for their woes even it was the Pakeha much to blame" (182). In coming to the ghetto and lecturing in English, Te Tupaea closes the linguistic, historical and geographical gap between rural and urban Maorihood primitivism and modernity, and cuts across traditional gender and class divisions. Thus, he publicly recognises a *woman* has made the first step out of the vicious circle of urban defeat: "Make that Maori warrior. Oh, and Maori warrioress. After all, we ain't nuthin without our women" (182). He acknowledges this by making Beth a session leader, thus working towards an enabling transformation of Maoritanga for the slum dwellers. This dawning of the Maori community ideal empowers the urban *marae* as their third space.

Grace's death necessarily becomes Jake's undoing, trapped in the urban heteroglossia that addresses Maori manhood as emotional and intellectual regression. His deeply-rooted aversion to the Maori tradition, caused by his family's slave past, prevents him from attending the *tangi*: "I don't like that [Maori] culture shet. I mean, what'd it ever do for me? Same sorta people tole a man and his family when he was growin' up they were just a bunch of slaves. So fuckem" (131). Blinded by a masculinist concept of honour, he is unable to see

that he has traded class for racial oppression, so that Beth has to expel Jake from her home and life as a first step towards their mutual emancipation. The final blow comes when Grace's suicide note is made public. Accusing him of brutal incest, it seals Jake's lot amongst the slum dwellers, and he ends up a vagrant, dethroned and banned. Bearing in mind that Nig fares no better, the urban discourse on Maori manhood is generally shown as utterly crippling. However, at the end of the novel Jake's redemptive reconstruction of self is foreshadowed in his protective, motherly role towards a lonely streetboy, a mutually nurturing relationship that will tap into a Maori third space in the novel's sequel.

3. Tamahori's Mov(i)e: the Feminist Turn

Duff's novel and Tamahori's homonymous film tell slightly different stories due to choice of political agenda and structural differences in the respective narrative media. To start with the latter, both literature and cinema are forms of narration, but in the cinematic adaptation of a novel "any attempt to transfer [a] sequence of events from one medium to another is not a simple process". It is conditioned by the divergent methods of production and manner of consumption of each medium, both technically, socially and economically (Giddings e.a. 1990: 1-4). This divergence makes absolute fidelity impossible and feeds into a range of transfer types characterised by their respective distance to the source text, with which they establish a creative and discursive dialogue. According to Klein and Parker, literal translations stay as close to the original as possible; re-interpretations or deconstructions retain the core of the source text; and entirely new works of art take the source text merely as a point of departure (Giddings e.a. 1990: 11).

Geoffrey Wagner defines his typology of adaptation similarly, moving from transposition through commentary to analogy, but interestingly, Wagner believes a commentary "to represent more of an infringement on the work of another than an analogy" (Giddings e.a. 1990: 11), which leads to the debates raised around *Once Were Warriors*. Tamahori himself claims that the "film was seen to be quite different from [the] book", and that he and his fellow scriptwriters "fundamentally changed the structure of the novel so that there's a lot more hope, heart and positive things in there, without destroying the infrastructure or very violent *core* of it" (1995, my italics). Yet, this statement leaves room for conjecture: if the film was received as substantially different from the novel, should it be considered an analogy rather than a commentary? Would this make for a different agenda?

Tamahori recasts Duff's story as follows. The dysfunctional Heke family is now based in a large South Auckland ghetto and both parents spend their time loafing,

drinking and partying. Jake is the local uncrowned king, imposing his authority on friends, family, wife and children through sheer force and intimidation. His son Nig joins a local gang but survives and returns home; his son Boogie is sent away to a boys' home and returns re-educated into a self-confident youngster; and his daughter Grace is raped by a friend of her father's, 'Uncle' Bully, leading to her suicide in the Hekes' backyard. The strength of community feeling at her traditional Maori funeral forges Beth's decision to forsake Jake, as he remains a slave "to his fists, to drink and to himself" (min. 79). Reconstructing the snaps of Grace's notebook, torn up by Jake in a masculinist fit of rage, Beth discovers Grace's story of sexual abuse too late. Confronted with their parental failure, Beth's determination to return with her children to the *marae* of her family's village is strengthened, but Jake's response is typically limited to senseless violence; after beating Bully up at McClutchy's bar, he falls to his knees in front of his wife, signing his utter defeat and emasculation. The film finalises with Beth's reproach that, unlike Jake, the Maori once were warriors, "people with *mana*, pride and spirit" (min. 95), something which the slum as Maori urban modernity cannot provide.

A number of minor and major changes and "surprising omissions" (Gillard 2005: 19) permeate this plot which turn Tamahori's version into quite a different discursive affair and recast and trim the complex heteroglossia of the source text. First of all, the polyphonous scope is largely reduced to Beth's voice and her personality given more resilience and stamina, since "[t]he scriptwriter Riwia Brown considered that Beth Heke was [the novel's] focal point and restructured the movie accordingly" (De Souza 2007: 16). Thus, Beth is always aware of, and articulate about, the wrongs of slum society, and rebellious and vociferous when it comes to Jake. She is also able to tap into her cultural heritage by communicating in *te reo Maori* (the Maori language) and thus organise Grace's *tangi*. Beth's role in the film exudes addressivity, as her discursive control of language is unflinching and quickly leads to her construction of an independent-thinking and acting self. The strength and cultural awareness the film confers on Beth narrow Duff's self-help argument down to the individual level as no commitment with the slum community is assumed; taking her children back to her village in a soft-primitivist option for the rural tradition implies that urban community revival and transformation are no viable options. Tellingly, it is Jake who impersonates the fate of the slum dwellers: a tragic anti-hero unaware of his postcolonial deracination and enslavement to a crippling macho ethos of alcohol abuse and dumb violence, he is written off by his wife in the last scenes. The film therefore constructs a hybrid third space of gender empowerment, less concerned with race and class inscription.

Another important change is the film's reconfiguration of the pivotal sequence in the novel: Grace's rape and suicide. Unlike the novel, the film immediately

identifies the rapist and this shapes Jake's responsibility for her death in a different manner —although it is tempting to read Uncle Bully as Jake the Muss's alter ego rather than foil. In search for emotional support, Grace's utter sense of loss and despair is exacerbated by her misinterpretation of an innocent kiss proffered by her soulmate, the homeless teenager Toot. This significant reversal of the novel's action works to precipitate Grace's undoing and perfectly matches the ensuing scenes at the no-longer safe haven of her home: taking advantage of the sick, inebriated bonding at Jake's party downstairs, 'Uncle' Bully claims a kiss from Grace, parading his sexual satisfaction as a kinship obligation. Jake misunderstands her refusal as a female challenge to his authority among the men, and retaliates by tearing up the last resort of her 'alter ego', the notebook. Upon this emotional deathblow Grace stumbles out into the Hekes' backyard and hangs herself.

The choice of the poor Maori state dwelling and not the opulent white Trambert property as the location of Grace's suicide, entails heteroglossic thinning of the narrative's agenda: not so much a nuanced statement against the poverty and destruction inherent to ethnic dispossession and disempowerment, it becomes a straightforward plea against domestic violence within the family and taps into a narrower discourse of oppression. The latter ties in with what Tamahori (Sklar 1995: 25) disparagingly calls Jake's "psychological screwup" as the cause of his violence and alcoholism rather than a traumatic construction of self out of his family's slave past, and it also ties in with Beth's forsaking the slum community for the Maori village in a re-encounter with kin and tradition. Thus, Hester Joyce (2007: 161) claims that "[t]he characterisation of these violent men [Jake and Bully] together takes the narrative focus away from the colonial dispossession of the Heke family and transfers it to an exposition of gender inequity".

It is therefore paradoxical that Grace is the only one of the Hekes to die in the film, whereas Nig is saved for the restoration of the mother-centred nuclear family. The film inaugurates possibilities for change employing the traditional trope of female death, while the novel counters this with Nig's assassination at the hands of a rival gang, levelling the gender issue and profiling the motives of postcolonial deracination and class division. As the last lines of the novel convey, change is only to be achieved by addressing the slum's heteroglossia of race, class and gender simultaneously at the public level of the urban community. In juxtaposition, the film primes bonding in the domestic sphere at a thanksgiving meal after Grace's funeral, where a pun on the deceased's name —saying grace for the presence of kin and food— contrasts with Jake's emasculating descent into hell in the closing images (min. 89 and onwards).

All in all, the film draws wholly on the importance given to Beth as a strong independent female —"a 'South Seas Mother Courage'" (Joyce 2007: 161)— and

the discursive implications of Grace's rape and suicide. In writing off Jake as a failure, it shifts the focus of solutions for the Hekes' predicament from the communal to the personal, and reconfigures the *marae* ideal as the reestablishment of a mother-centred family nucleus. As Brian McDonnell (1995: 8) writes, "Whereas in Alan Duff's novel wider community issues and comparisons between Maori and Pakeha are important, the film narrows its focus to emphasize family issues more". Thus, the funeral scene highlights the strong kinship ties between Beth and the tribal Maori present, and the 'better' world that beckons from the rural setting, lining up with the soft-primitivism celebrated (as well as critiqued) in Niki Caro's *Whale Rider* (2002) after Witi Ihimaera's 1987 near-homonymous novel. In the hard-primitivism of *Once Were Warriors*, the specific ethnic and class conditions of indigenous oppression in urban New Zealand and traditional Maori society are hinted at but not explored in depth as concurring causes of the Hekes' troubles. One finds Jake deploring his slave past in passing, and the slum as if it were any ghetto world-wide, with its unemployment, gang warfare, drug and alcohol abuse, bummed-out people and reggae and soul music. The overall result is that the film works more conventionally as a universal family drama whereas the novel takes a more complex commitment with Maori community regeneration in the face of urban modernity.

Scriptwriter Riwia Brown (McDonnell 1995: 8) "wanted the film to be emotional rather than political, i.e. not as concerned with racial politics as the book". It seems that to counterbalance the preponderance of the novel's tragic content Tamahori included "positive pointers" (1995) and consequently trimmed Duff's agenda down to gender engagement. Laurence Simmons (1998: 332) therefore points out the contradiction that "[w]hat is unsatisfactory about the film from a purely political point of view is what ends up being positive about it". Thus, its "film-making in the British-realist or Hollywood-romantic style —superb acting performances, set and costume design, subtle lighting and cinematography, the roller-coaster ride of its narrative"— cover up a "historical novelty and political message" that should be "obvious" rather than "adventitious". While there is no doubt that the film formulates an enabling, feminist statement against domestic violence —and this is in line with Duff's ardent defence of the role of Maori women in working change (Duff 1990: 115; Hereniko 1994: 121)—, Duff's social-realist prose underscores the postcolonial locatedness of his story, highlighting the tough, unromantic nature of Maori slum reality as the controversial heteroglossic intersection of New Zealand's race, class as well as gender relations.

In view of the novel's discursive complexity, its agenda should be dissociated from the "bluff exactitude of the autodidact" exhibited in Duff's essays, interviews and public appearances, in which he blatantly blames victim psychology rather than discrimination for the Maori plight and thus "downplay[s] the seismic shift among

Maori, who […] transformed from a rural people to a post-WWII detribalized urban proletariat" (Oder 1996: 138). Thus, it is worth having a look at a last major issue that runs through the novel and gives its politics considerable strength. An issue, moreover, that has been treated differently by Tamahori and feeds back into the film plot's conservative turn to family and rural tradition.[4] This is the question of Jake's guilt in his daughter's rape. It is its resolution in Jake's favour in the novel's sequel that dissolves the typological ambiguity in Tamahori's cinematic adaptation of the text.

Following Wagner's view that a commentary is more of an infringement upon the source text than an analogy, I would argue that considering the film a commentary, as Tamahori's words imply, is in line with the way it limits the wider scope of the novel's political message, which diagnoses "New Zealanders as unconscious sites of invasion and colonization, if not battlegrounds for wars of race, class and gender" (Harding 1992: 141). The film preserves the very violence at the core of the novel, but discursively roots it in gender, thus giving way to a different narrative and agenda. Thus, "the film shifts the power balance between [Jake and Beth], making it possible to consider the film to be in some ways a feminist re-reading and reconstruction of the novel" (1995: 8).

Whether Jake does or does not commit the rape remains a matter of debate in the novel. It is important to stress, however, that conclusive evidence is never given. Jake stubbornly denies being the perpetrator but cannot trust the gaps in his inebriated memory, and this insecurity together with his penchant for domestic violence destroys him. Perhaps it is the point of the novel to suggest that Jake might have raped his daughter while a veil of mystery over the affair is maintained. Even if he never touched her, by not addressing Grace's sorry narrative and the social and emotional contract of fatherhood he *did* destroy her life. Thus, the suburban version of Maori manhood is presented as delusive heteroglossia which is intellectually, physically and emotionally devastating. If the effect of Duff's plot manoeuvre is to debunk the urban narrative of Maori masculinity that in so many ways locks the slum dwellers in postcolonial defeat —because without a clear culprit every male in Grace's environment is potentially guilty— then it also allows an element of integrity within the individual as the blame is on wider social structures, without exonerating individual responsibility. This interpretation would also line up productively with a dialogic perspective on the constitutive relationship between self and world-as-otherness through addressivity. Whereas in the film "most significantly, Jake does not rape his daughter, an act which in the novel, while remaining ambiguous and unstated, results in his ensuing descent to hell as a cowed, humiliated derelict", he may "in his humiliation engage[-] our sympathies as readers and pav[e] the way for his subsequent narrative resurrection" (Simmons 1998: 335).

This is prefigured in Jake's protective role towards another lost soul, a streetboy called Cody McClean, but definitively given shape in the novel's sequel, *What Becomes of the Broken Hearted*, when Jake's innocence is proven after the police runs a DNA test (8). The sequel sees him address a sense of fatherhood already hinted at in the aforementioned friendship, which allows him to negotiate an enabling sense of self. Interestingly, Tamahori's film was released in 1995, whereas *What Becomes of the Broken Hearted* was first published in 1996, thus showing that Tamahori had correctly anticipated Duff's intentions in not making Jake the culprit. However, Tamahori's twist to the plot partly depoliticises its message, because it locates the responsibility for the crime in individual deviant behaviour rather than the ubiquitous anonymous violence of the slum.

A film's production costs far exceed those of a novel's, so a key business objective is to enhance the film's commercial viability on the national and international market. This favours shifting the plot into a feminist comment on domestic violence, an issue that sits well with the average film audience, pushing the conflictive racial-classist issue further into the background. Kirsten Moana Thompson (2003: 233-35) explains "[t]he wide cultural dissemination of [the film …] partly through its social utility in dramatizing domestic violence, alcoholism, and sexual abuse", but her notion that it also locates the "deep-seated gender violence endemic in New Zealand's culture [...] in the legacy of colonialism" is only true insofar as this history is hinted at and not explored in depth. Tamahori (1995) seems to acknowledge the latter:

> Duff is a very controversial man because he has taken on a huge amount of self-appointed responsibility about articulating what's wrong with the Maori people […] The movie, of course, attracted the same controversy but once the movie was made, all the controversy died away because our film was seen to be quite different from his book.

Thus, the film is less articulate on the reasons for Maori disenfranchisement and presents a more universally-palatable plot in suppressing Duff's controversial ghetto self-help project of "discipline and education and reading" (Hereniko 1995: 123), so that an ethnic controversy could in effect be avoided. That this may have boosted the film's acceptance is shown in the fact that it drew large audiences nationally and abroad, became an indigenous "blockbuster" (Thompson 2003: 230) and allowed Tamahori's step up from promoter of a local TV-commercial to a well-known Hollywood film director. The film certainly creates a meritorious third space, but this site of contestation identifies more with universal gender emancipation than with the subversion of the complex heteroglossia informing Maori disempowerment.

4. Duff, His Novel, Maoritanga and the Third Space

While the feminist film plot emphasises Jake as a male icon of evil, the novel's agenda presents him as both a victimiser and victim, only able to cope with the multiple injustices of Pakeha and Maori society through wrong-headed male prerogative. This more nuanced discursive configuration of his personality neither exonerates him from responsibility in Grace's death, nor puts him down as an inherently depraved character. Inasmuch as Jake is deluded, his surname is significant: Hone Heke was the first Maori chief to sign the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, which gave the Maori full British citizenship (Charles Royal 2009) but whose ambiguous language has raised an ongoing feud about the lawfulness of the massive dispossession of tribal land which caused the Maori urban drift (2007). Duff's poignant description of the New Zealand slums adds its own weight to Beth and chief Te Tupeaea's stern appeal for Maori addressivity (167) to voices blaming the Treaty and its corollaries for the urban predicament; however, Beth also links Jake's smug welfare dependency (21) to the class stratifications in both Pakeha (white) and traditional Maori society: "Just shows we're all good, and we're all bad […] How dare they bring my husband up believing he was a slave" (103). Thus, Bruce Harding (1992: 146) claims the novel:

> abounds with very strong hints that New Zealand has an ethnic caste system […] which has —at least in the past— acted as a barrier to social mobility […] beyond the tacit racism of Europeans, much of [its] momentum comes from within the social structure of Maoridom itself, where conceptions of breeding and rank sit ill with Western notions of egalitarianism and where rigid conservatism often stultifies creative adaptive changes which would benefit the Maori people.

Jake's entrapment in a disabling web of indigenous as well as non-indigenous heteroglossia cannot be productively addressed in binary terms (black and white, male and female, colonised and coloniser, victim and victimiser) but beckons towards a more complex, hybridising social engagement. Although it embeds the politics of guilt and blame within wider social forces, the novel insists on people's addressivity in the search for a socio-historic awareness of self beyond traditional discursive limitations. In the making of a ghetto *marae,* urban Maoriness turns into a discursive site of contestation, as Beth's newfound warriorhood effectively reflects "the passage of women in taking leadership roles in the Maori renaissance of the 1980s" (Joyce 2007: 163). In contrast, almost until the conclusion of the novel Jake fails to address the stereotypical "negative Maori self-image" (Harding 1992: 147) that impedes the constructive dialogue with his social environment without which an enabling self-awareness cannot be constructed.

If Duff's "hard-primitivism" (Harding 1992: 145) flags Beth and Jake as showcases of indigenous alienation in urban modernity, it also suggests Maoriness can be transformed into a hybrid third space beyond the social deprivation, ethnic deracination and "emasculation" of gender performance in the slums (De Souza 2007: 24). In this sense, the novel addresses the complex heteroglossia of contemporary Maori identity formation more accurately and productively than the homonymous film. Thus

> [w]rote one New Zealand critic: "[The film] rescues Duff's novel from its reactionary political agenda and transforms it into a feminist vision". Not quite. The film actually does too little justice to Duff's bold and intricate novel, a slangy, multi-perspective brew rich in interior monologue. However, not unlike other fictioneers turned pamphleteers, Duff's public pronouncements do not match the richness of his art (Oder 1996: 137).

Following up on this, Duff's novel should be judged not in the controversial light of the author's public statements that have both troubled the novel's reception and enhanced the film's, but on the merits of its critical multi-discursive approach to Maoriness. It promotes a balanced view in affirming the Maori "once were warriors" and yet again may be "people with *mana*, pride and spirit" (min. 95), provided they address and inhabit the urban modernity of New Zealand's nation-space as the hybrid embodiment of a postcoloniality beyond binary division. In contrast, film medium technology, marketing, general overheads, expected cash return as well as Tamahori's production team's political sensibilities trim down the novel's heteroglossic potential to a cinematic commentary that markets a meritorious but essentially different story of emancipation.

Notes

[1]. At the time of this review, the conservative National Party was in power, and would be until 1999.

[2]. An Antipodean version of the self-made man.

[3]. McClutchy's is the local bar and Jake's favorite haunt to pick a fight and get drunk. It functions as the 'court' of his 'kingdom' and is his personal fief. Grace inevitably associates this site with drunkenness and the destruction of individual potential.

[4]. An unrealistic end in that 85% of the Maoris live in cities nowadays as a result of 'urban drift'.

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THROUGH THE EYE OF A POSTMODERNIST CHILD: IAN MCEWAN'S "HOMEMADE"[1]

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At an interview published in 1995, Ian McEwan stated that in the collection *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) "[t]he eye of the child gave me somewhere else to stand, a different way —a colder regard, perhaps— a way of looking at the adult world, of describing it as though one came from another planet" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 2). McEwan was specifically referring to the stories in his first work of fiction as pieces about adolescents, individuals who, though closer to adults, are still children: "Adolescents were useful in the short story form, because they were full of adult desire and childish incapability" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 2). This paper aims to examine the aesthetic, psychological and historical implications of one of the crudest representations of boyish experience in English literature: McEwan's "Homemade", which was the author's literary debut and the opening piece in *First Love, Last Rites.* In "Homemade", the adults' authority is either circumvented, or directly undermined, so that ironic cynicism becomes the protagonist's way of dealing with the world, an attitude that proves both empowering and disabling.

McEwan's short story is articulated —in his own description of the narrative— as a critique of the adult world from the perspective of distance and alienation which the eye of the child provides. Rhetorically speaking, the child's perspective proves particularly fruitful in this sense, for it renders an alienated, marginal, distorted and de-socialised vision of normative power. In Ian McEwan's "Homemade", the

power and presence of the adult world is revealingly diminished, symbolic paternal authority ironically debunked by a cynical and enlightened boy who transforms the world into a playground for his sadistic and obscene games, and yet, paradoxically, seems to draw little enjoyment from his exploits. The choice of the child's gaze proves particularly fruitful for our purpose; the child is more than an aesthetic innovation leaping *ex nihilo* into fictive existence, or a surrogate for unconscious, impulsive lives, for as a symbolic referent it possesses "a transformative power which influences not only the image we have of children, but also the image we have of ourselves as adults" (Kuhn 1982: 4). In other words, it would be useful to reflect on the investments which culture makes in the idea of childhood at particular moments of history, for such investments may mirror relevant ideological functions: the child may become a pattern of meaning and be conceived *culturally* as a set of ideas, attitudes and practices.

The child figure in literature has often been endowed with shifting —and even opposing— characteristics, which invariably mirror social and ideological transformations. The child served the Romantics as a symbol of the artist's imagination and sensibility, inasmuch as a vehicle for foregrounding increasing dissatisfaction with industrial and utilitarian values, "a symbol of Nature set against the forces abroad in society actively de-naturing humanity" (Coveney 1957: 31). Childhood became a pivotal literary theme as a result of its positive association with primitivism and irrationalism (Ziolkowski 2001: 2).[2] Following the premise that the child sees the world through prelapsarian eyes, the Romantics equated childhood with unblemished innocence and considered its "freshness of sensation as a norm for adult artistic experience" (Abrams 1973: 382). The Romantic consecration of childhood caught hold of the modern imagination and went through sentimental permutations in Victorian times, yet the work of modernist and postmodernist authors proposed radical reformulations of children's pristine innocence and unadulterated imaginative force.

Although the Romantic concept of the child's 'original innocence' already stood in utter contradiction with the dogma of 'original sin' central to the Christian tradition, it was in late nineteenth-century scientific discourse that the Romantic idealisation of the child was severely undermined (Coveney 1957: 33). While Cesare Lombroso (*L'uomo delinquente* 1876) and G. Stanley Hall (*Adolescence* 1904) stressed their lack of morality and, even, their criminality, Sigmund Freud's analytical exposure of the sexual life of the child posed its most serious challenge (Freud 1995: 547). *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sexuality* (1903) tackled scandalous aspects of infantile experience such as masturbation, seduction fantasies, and children's sadistic conception of the sexual act. Freud showed in his analyses of infantile sexuality that children experience the adult world as both a source of

benevolent and normalising restrictions, and as menacing, mystifying and traumatic. According to Kuhn, it is the irruption of sex (and death) that spoils the Edenic harmony which the child protagonists of the Western literary tradition enjoyed (1982: 132).

However, in the reformulation of the idea of childhood from the turn of the nineteenth century onwards, the dark side of childhood went hand in hand with more palatable aspects, heir to the Romantic view, particularly the universal tendency to fantasy-making in games and daydreams about which Freud also spoke.[3] In, for instance, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911), Freud stated that fantasy-making was free from the restrictions of material reality and social regulations —or the reality principle— and was "subordinated to the pleasure-principle alone" (Freud 2001: 222). Play and daydreams are compensations for the strictures imposed on children by the intervention of socialising institutions (principally, family and school) whose love and acceptance they must learn to find a rewarding substitute for fantasizing as they develop into adults.[4] Thus, surmounting the narcissistic projections onto the real world through the internalisation of the social norm, the assumption of responsibilities and the acceptance of real-life restrictions —one's own limitations included— was the endpoint on the road towards adulthood.

McEwan's "Homemade" —his first published work— has recently been described as an example of "postmodernist depthlessness" (March-Russell 2009: 228). Apropos the stories in the collection, McEwan repeatedly insisted that he initially planned each piece as "a kind of pastiche of certain style", "as a way of trying on different clothes —writing pastiche" (Hamilton [1978] in Childs 2006: 10; Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 2). The stories evidence a young author at the beginning of his career trying to find his own voice through a characteristically postmodernist strategy: parody and pastiche (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 2).[5] McEwan's initial literary steps targeted authors such as Henry Miller or Norman Mailer through an ironic rewriting of their stories about the triumphant sexual exploits of male heroes (Hamilton [1978] in Childs 2006: 10; Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 2).

A beginner's strategy of parodic dissociation from preceding authors, typical of intergenerational relations in the literary field, resembles to a certain degree the attitude of the protagonist of "Homemade", bitterly criticising adult role models and ironically debunking his best friend's position as guide in the rites of passage into adulthood. Yet, whereas the author, Ian McEwan, did succeed in making a name as literary artist through the originality of a first work that achieved public recognition, the *unnamed* narrator of "Homemade" proved unequal to the challenge of going through with his first sexual encounter as an initial step into the

adult world. The I-narrator (presumably an adult) revisits the episode of his failure and displays a substantial degree of rhetorical dexterity he already possessed in his early years in disavowing the central sexual conflict that determines his life. He might know the theory, but cynically hides his lack of real experience of the secrets of life and poses as a connoisseur.

In this sense, there is a basic similarity between the protagonist of "Homemade" and that in "Conversation with a Cupboard Man" —another of the narrators in *First Love, Last Rites* who McEwan described as "alienated figures, outsiders, sociopaths" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 3): "How did I become an adult?" the latter asks himself, "I'll tell you, I never did learn. I have to pretend. […] I'm always thinking about it, like I was on the stage" (76). Indeed, both the experience recounted and the narrative itself could be described as a performance masking the pretender's impotence when coming to terms with his own sexuality, or when successfully choosing a sexual object —the defining feature of adolescent sexuality, according to Freud (1995: 572). Despite the narrator's flamboyantly playful style, he remains throughout a child, for whom sexual experience is unendurably traumatic; one who mimics (as children do in games), but does not fully internalise, the adult world. In tune with other narrators of the collection, the protagonist of "Homemade" dramatises "ignorance, profound ignorance about the world" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 4).

As McEwan suggested in the initial quotation, the child whose "eye" offered a new perspective on the adult world in "Homemade" is at a far remove from his idealised Romantic counterpart. In this story, the adult world is diminished; symbolic paternal authority is scorned and kept in the background by a cynically and precociously enlightened boy for whom the surrounding world is a playground for his sadistic games till, forced by what McEwan called "the absurdities of adolescent male dignity" (Childs 2006: 10), his attempts to lose his virginity end up in a debacle where he rapes his ten-year-old sister Connie, who falls asleep while he penetrates and ejaculates inside her. This "one fuck", which is "the subject of this story", is the single event which he is incapable of mastering convincingly through his irony and which forces the narrator's account into an unacknowledged exposure of his flaws which undermine his rhetorical control (14).

To bring our argumentation into a wider historical focus we should pose the following question: what type of society can engender such a narcissistic, cynical and potentially perverse individual? The young protagonist of "Homemade" does tell us something about the particular historical situation, about crucial changes in the process of socialisation which increasingly becomes that of the "demise of Oedipus" which goes hand in hand (in inverse proportions, as it were) with the return of the Father of *jouissance* (enjoyment) characteristic of postmodernism

(Žižek 1999: 315; Žižek 1992: 124). Therefore, as we will show, through the eye of the peculiar child in "Homemade" a new, more insightful perspective on an adult world undergoing a historical transformation is attained.

Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley (2004) have extensively analysed the proliferation of cultural representations of children in the second half of the twentieth century, especially in the context of horror and violence. The depiction of queer, evil children in literature was particularly abundant in the 1970s, a time when the middle-class family was felt to be vulnerable to the ideological attacks of feminism, civil rights, and gay liberation of the late 1960s (Bruhm 2006: 99). The title in the McEwan story is a warning label as to what is under scrutiny, and the development and denouement of the narrative shows that the homemade product is far from being the good, functional product expected from the intervention of the family as the primary socialising institution. The male protagonist, whose life experience from twelve to fourteen years of age is recounted, does not take part in the Oedipal family drama of traditional psychoanalysis: neither a balancing identification with the father, nor a repressed incestuous desire for the mother (and, by extension, for the sister) is the outcome of family relations. The youth shows his absolute contempt for his father as the embodiment of the work-ethic:

> I used to laugh when I thought of the twelve-hour shift my father worked in the flour mill, of his exhausted, blanched, ill-tempered face when he got home in the evening, and I laughed a little louder when I thought of the thousands who each morning poured out of the terraced houses like our own to labour through the week, rest up on Sunday and then back again on Monday to toil in the mills, factories, timber yards and quaysides of London, returning each night older, more tired and no richer. (15)

The figure of the father is so diminished that he is no rival for the son either as a social ideal (he stole books and sold them on the black market), nor as the obstacle to the satisfaction of an incestuous desire he does not have: "My mother vast and grotesque, the skin hanging from her like flayed toad-hides, and my ten-year-old sister was an ugly bat whom as a child I could hardly bring myself to look at, let alone share a bath-tub with" (14).[6] The protagonist is likewise absolutely derisive towards the school, the other major socialising institution. What is specifically under attack is the formative virtue of games and sports, so important in the British educational system since the times of John Ruskin, which the protagonist laughs at with sadistic gusto:

> Raymond was a mediocre runner and was among ten others chosen to represent the school in the sub-counties meeting. I always went along to the meetings. In fact there was no other sport I watched with such good heart, such entertainment and elation as a good cross-country. I loved the racked, contorted faces of the runners as

> they came up the tunnel of flags and crossed the finishing line; I found especially interesting those who came after the first fifty or so, running harder than any of the other contestants and competing demoniacally among themselves for the hundred and thirteenth place in the field. I watched them stumble up the tunnel of flags, clawing at their throats, retching, flailing their arms and falling to the grass, convinced that I had before me here a vision of human futility. (16)

Moreover, fantasy-making as the mental and performative dimension free from the restrictions of the reality principle of which we spoke above is, in the case of "Homemade", used for perverted goals. The private realm of the home —a haven of safety and comfort, and the repository of consecrated social values to be instilled into the minds of the young to transform them into normalised adults— is wounded at its very heart through the violation of the regulating prohibition of incest by way of a premeditated manipulation of ludic dynamics. The protagonist proposes that he and his ten-year-old sister Connie play hide-and-seek and "mummies and daddies" as "warming up" activities that culminate in the pathetic rape of the latter. Indeed, children's play, traditionally viewed by adults as innocent and charming, is subverted and perverted to become a tool for mischief and utter moral degradation.

The story's main character could be thus described in McEwan's own terms as completely immoral, as an example of "a failure of the imagination", the tool which "permits us to understand what it is like to be someone else" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 6). McEwan states *à la* Rousseau that human beings are "innately moral beings" and that "social behaviour is an instinct with us" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 6). The protagonist's incapability of showing the slightest degree of empathy towards anyone therefore poses a major moral problem in "Homemade" because, in the author's own view, "it is at the level of empathy that moral questions begin in fiction" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 6).

What is the origin of the protagonist's evil in "Homemade" if human beings are innately moral? We cannot account for his malice by saying that adolescents always rebel against social impositions and resist authority to affirm their own identity. Transgression of the law in his case is never deterred by prohibition, starting with those prohibitions imposed by father and family and continuing with school norms and other social restrictions. Violation of laws and prohibitions does not in his case bring a sense of guilt which the traditional version of the superego in psychoanalysis inflicts on the subject to rectify behaviour and police thoughts and unlawful desires. He is invulnerable to the twinges of a guilty conscience because such an agency seems inoperative in his case. He drinks whisky, smokes cannabis, enjoys "the thrills of shoplifting" and makes more

money than his father and uncles put together by selling the "slim volumes of prestigious verse" he steals at Foyle's to an unscrupulous, corrupt Mile End Road dealer (10).[7] He even supersedes Raymond, the friend that falls short in performing the function of guide into the "secrets of adult life": "The world he showed me, all its fascinating detail, lore and sin, the world for which he was a kind of standing master of ceremonies, never really suited Raymond" (10); "Raymond was my Mephistopheles, he was a clumsy Virgil to my Dante, showing me the way to a Paradiso where he himself could not tread" (12). This is the reason why the narrator, at the beginning of the story, says: "it was ironic that Raymond of all people should want to make me aware of my virginity" (9). Both Raymond and the protagonist, distinguish themselves from their peers, whose doings show a balance of pleasure and duty: "While others of our age picked their noses over their stamp collections or homework, Raymond and I spent many hours here [a café near Finsbury Park Odeon] discussing mostly easy ways of making money, and drinking large mugs of tea" (13). And yet, though Raymond, who is one year his elder, has knowledge of what is illegal, immoral or obscene ("the secrets of adult life"), his failure to achieve real experience of the latter is underlined by the narrator: "He knew that world well enough, but it —so to speak— did not know him" (10).

This cafe close to Finsbury Park Odeon is where the narrator, accompanied by his *manqué* Mephistopheles, overhears adults relating their mischievous deeds and constructs his half-baked ideal models of licentiousness. The following passage, which we quote selectively, sounds like a *précis* of libertine literature:

> We listened transfixed to their unintelligible fantasies and exploits, of deals with lorry drivers, lead from church roofs, fuel missing from the City Engineer's department, and then of cunts, bits, skirt, of strokings, beatings, fuckings, suckings, of arses and tits, behind, above, below, in front, with, without, […] we listened to who and how the dustman fucked, how the Co-op milkmen fitted in it, what the coalman could hump, what the carpet-fitter could lay, what the builders could erect, what the meter man could inspect, what the bread man could deliver, the gas man sniff out, the plumber plumb, the electrician connect, the doctor inject, the lawyer solicit, the furniture man install […] I listened without understanding, remembering and filing away anecdotes which I would one day use myself, putting by histories of perversions and sexual manners —in fact *a whole sexual morality*, so that when finally I began to understand, from my own experience, what it was all about, I had on tap a complete education which, augmented by a quick reading of the more interesting parts of Havelock Ellis and Henry Miller, earned me the reputation of being the juvenile connoisseur of coitus to whom dozens of males —and fortunately females, too— came to seek advice. And all this, a reputation which followed me to art college and enlivened my career there, *all this after only one fuck —the subject of this story.* (14; emphases added)

After this passage, to which we will return, the reader learns about Raymond's plan to meet Lulu Smith, who "'will let you see it for a shilling'" (14). They had spoken about her earlier in the narrative as the promiscuous, insatiable, obscenely carnal model of female taken from Miller's *Tropics* who, at the point in time from which the story is told, still overwhelms the narrator:

> Lulu Smith! Dinky Lulu! The very name *curls* a chilly hand round my balls. Lulu Lamour, of whom it was said she would do anything, and that she had done everything. […] Lulu Slim —but how my mind *reels*— whose physical enormity was matched only by the enormity of her reputed sexual appetite and prowness, her grossness only by the grossness she inspired, the legend only by the reality. (12-13; emphases added)

The use of present tense ("curls", "reels") indicates the overpowering effect that this sexual object still has on the grown-up narrator, echoing the fear his younger self felt as he faced the challenge of his first sexual encounter and denoting his inability to come to terms with his own sexuality. The narrator's position of enunciation (the reputed *jouisseur*) is thus undermined by the fact that he lacks the experience of real sexual intercourse with a woman. In "Portrait of the Subject as a Young Man" (1991), Lynda Broughton read "Homemade" as a story about male anxiety concerning women's sexual power that turns the tables of traditional gender relations. Broughton highlighted the rape scene, as the ten-year-old girl not only does not react in panic at her brother's sexual advances, but laughs at his penis ("*So silly, it looks so silly*" [23]) and tutors him as to how to penetrate her ("'I know where it goes,' she said, and lay back on the bed, her legs wide apart" [23]). The problem with Broughton's otherwise exhaustive and subtle analysis is that she took for granted that "Homemade" is a story of a successful rite of passage into maturity and credited the protagonist with a knowledge he does not really acquire: "['Homemade'] recount[s] the events which constituted the hero's progress from innocence to experience […] The last knowledge the hero is to acquire is, of course, sexual knowledge, the knowledge of woman" (Broughton [1991] in Childs 2006: 18). As we will show in what follows, the hero's passage into (sexual) maturity is truncated; a failure which looks paradoxical given that he inhabits a world marked by permissiveness.

McEwan stated that the stories collected in *First Love, Last Rites* are about "all kinds of frustrations" (Louvel, Ménégaldo and Fortin 1995: 2). Frustration undercuts the narrator's ironic detachment and the character's gleeful cynicism in "Homemade". He is unable to enjoy something that he knows, in theory, to be enjoyable. Moreover, his connoisseurship is a fake, a veil of pretence, because, as he himself confesses, it rests on "only one fuck —the subject of this story" (14). He was pressed into doing something despicable because of the shame he felt at

his own virginity, "the last room in the mansion […;] a total anathema, my malodorous albatross" (13). Unwilling to have sex with a seemingly real connoisseur, Lulu Smith, he rapes his sister and feels absolutely frustrated: "I sat there in the lonely detumescent blankness, numbed by this final humiliation into the realization that this was no real girl beside me, this was no true representative of that sex; this was no boy, certainly, nor was it finally a girl —it was my sister, after all" (23). This "one fuck" is the only evidence in the text of the protagonist's sexual experience as there is no account of other, more gratifying, more fulfilling episodes, but just some general remarks such as "when I finally began to understand, *from my own experience*, what it was all about", or self-congratulatory statements such as "the juvenile connoisseur of coitus to whom dozens of males —*and fortunately females, too*— came to seek advice" (14; emphases added).

It is clear that the protagonist's lack of satisfaction does not derive from his sense of guilt as his rape of Connie is not experienced as a violation of the incest taboo. He does not feel remorse for what he had done while his parents were away. Initially, it seems that frustration rests on the devaluation of the object: she is not "finally a girl", a real woman with whom he could say he had lost his virginity and left behind his childhood (23). However, his strong dissatisfaction after this pathetic sexual debut does not arouse in him an expected desire for other encounters in which to show his manliness: "Tomorrow I would tell Raymond to forget the appointment with Lulu" (23). Bearing this in mind and taking also into account our grounded suspicion that the rape was the narrator's only act of sexual intercourse, we conclude that sexual enjoyment eludes him, that he is incapable of finding satisfaction in sex, a frustration he tries to counterbalance by posing as connoisseur of the pleasures of coitus. Readers are faced with an apparent anomaly. The protagonist recognises no limits to his immoral actions but at the same time finds no pleasure in sex, which in our culture is supposed to be enjoyment *par excellence*.

Frustration has nothing to do with guilt, with the intervention of an internalised parental agency that punishes his illicit wishes and actions. Its cause is to be sought not in inhibiting sexual repressions he would ironically disavow, but, rather, in the very absence of prohibition itself. It could be argued that what is at work here is repressed homosexuality, a resistance to compliance with the "heterosexual imperative" dominant in society, hence his rather cryptic affirmation near the beginning that "this story is *about Raymond* and not about virginity, coitus, incest and self-abuse" (Butler 1993: 2, 9; emphasis added). Raymond, who figures as a failed guide and a weakling to be laughed at, is nevertheless placed ambiguously at the centre of the story, as the focus of the narrator's concern, without further explanation. Or, even more strongly, one could argue that what determines the

protagonist's sexual inhibition is the masculine fear of women, the anxieties caused by this object of desire that threatens to undermine male power, for which we find more explicit evidence in the text: such as the prospect of having "to perform the terrifyingly obscure" in his encounter with Lulu Smith or his little sister's sexual expertise referred to above (14). Yet, the point we want to make is that the obstacle to enjoyment is precisely that there is no obstacle, that the barrier of repression is lifted in a way that suffocates the subject and leaves him sexually impotent.

At the beginning of *For They Know Not What They Do*, Slavoj Žižek comments on Freud's inability to help his colleague Edoardo Weiss with the case of a Slovene patient who was completely impotent. This young man's character and predicament bears some basic resemblance to that of the protagonist of "Homemade":

> He [the Slovene] is, in Weiss's words, 'very immoral', he exploits his neighbours and deceives with no kind of moral scruple —yet in all this he is far from able to achieve relaxed fruition in sex, without any kind of 'internal obstruction'; he is 'completely impotent', enjoyment is entirely forbidden him. (Žižek 1991: 9)

For this man there are no moral limitations, yet he cannot enjoy sex. The explanation for this apparent lack of logic is not to be found in Freud, but in Lacan's radical redefinition of the agency of the superego. When what Lacan called the-Name-of-the-Father (the set of internalised social regulations and restrictions) is suspended, the subject's access to enjoyment is blocked. The superego of traditional psychoanalysis was the normalising and pacifying agency in charge of, on the one hand, ensuring that we obey the law and refrain from violating the prohibitions, and, on the other, regulating our access to appropriate forms of enjoyment. However, for Lacan, the superego is to be conceived of in radically different terms:

> Lacan's fundamental thesis is that superego in its most fundamental dimension is an *injunction to enjoyment*: the various forms of superego commands are nothing but variations on the same motif: 'Enjoy!' Therein consists the opposition between Law and superego: Law is the agency of prohibition which regulates the distribution of enjoyment on the basis of a common, shared renunciation (the 'symbolic castration'), whereas superego marks a point at which *permitted* enjoyment, freedom-to-enjoy, is reversed into *obligation* to enjoy —which, one must add, is the most effective way to block access to enjoyment. (Žižek 1991: 237)

With the demise of the Oedipal father dramatised in "Homemade", the pressure of this obscene superegoic agency is increased. Its presence is to be found in the collection of sexual experiences the protagonist overhears adults talk about at the café near Finsbury Park Odeon complemented by passages from the literature of perversion which constitute for him "a whole sexual morality": that is, a whole set

of prescriptions ("morality") to enjoy. The protagonist's passage into adulthood is truncated by this suffocating superego imperative, so much so that his sexuality remains in actual practice infantile and narcissistically masturbatory:

> Raymond acquainted me with the dubious pleasures of masturbation. At the time I was twelve, the dawn of my sexual day. We were exploring a cellar on a bomb site, […] when Raymond […] began to rub his prick with a coruscating vigour, inviting me to do the same. I did and soon became suffused with a warm, indistinct pleasure which intensified to a floating, melting sensation as if my guts might at any time drift away to nothing. And all this time our hands pumped furiously. I was beginning to congratulate Raymond on his discovery of such a simple, inexpensive yet pleasurable way of passing the time, and at the same time wondering if I could not dedicate my whole life to this glorious sensation —*and I suppose looking back now in many respects I have*— I was about to express all manner of things when I was lifted by the scruff of the neck, my arms, my legs, my insides, haled, twisted, racked, and producing for all this two dollops of sperm which flipped over Raymond's Sunday jacket —it was Sunday— and dribbled into his breast pocket. (11; emphasis added)

McEwan approaches sexuality —one of his central themes— to expose its darkest aspects and its most traumatic effects, which are frequently related to the young characters that populate his fiction. As we have argued in the foregoing pages, in "Homemade", one of the author's earliest pieces, the substitution of the traditional (Oedipal) limitation of our access to enjoyment by the post-Oedipal superegoic commandment to enjoy aggravates the imbalance caused by sexuality to a point that the protagonist is left stranded in a particular mode of subjectivity that can nevertheless be contextualised as typically postmodernist: playful, ironic, cynical.

Notes

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[2]. As Maeve Pearson has pointed out (2007: 109), the European model of childhood as the "vessel of grace" had been inherited most notably from the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, meshed with John Locke's conception of the child as *tabula rasa* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "natural child". The whole of it lent a powerful, metaphysical force to the political utopianism underpinning child education, particularly expressed through an increasingly sentimental view of children.

[3]. To the celebratory image of children playing on the seashore of Wordsworth's 1807 "Immortality Ode", we can add Friedrich Schiller's defence of play as

the true essence of man in the "Fifteenth Letter" collected in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794) where he declares: "Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and *he is only wholly Man when he is playing*" (2004: 80; our emphasis).

[4]. Freud described "education" in these very terms in his 1911 essay (2001: 224).

[5]. For postmodernist parody and/or pastiche see, for instance, Hutcheon (1988) and Jameson (1991).

[6]. In a way not unlike that which Bruhm points out in reference to the evil child in gothic fiction and films, the main character in "Homemade" may actually be incorporating much of what is understood to be socially acceptable —work-ethic, liberality in matters sexual— and enacting them in ways more in line with his own interests and investments, "so that work-ethic becomes unchecked capitalism, and liberal sexuality becomes […] perversion" (2006: 107).

[7]. The narrator's mastery of language allows him to view social intercourse from a vantage point; ironically, words, language, and the vast amount of literary works he seems to be acquainted with allows him to adopt different tones, roles, masks, either to persuade or to deceive, and always for his own benefit: he plays Coleridge's Ancient Mariner (13), Dante's Virgil (12), Arlechino and Feste (17), Florence Nightingale (17), Wordsworth's innocent characters in the *Prelude* (12), Havelock Ellis's and Henry Miller's sexually experienced protagonists (14). Ironically enough, literature becomes also the *material* means for the narrator's mischief and moral degradation, since his expensive vices and questionable activities are financed from his profits shoplifting at Foyle's, and reselling the "slim volumes of prestigious verse" to the unscrupulous Mile End Road dealer, as mentioned above. In many ways, the narrator exemplifies the paradoxical nature of the capitalist, postmodern subject —mostly concerned with "easy ways of making money" (13)— submerged in a world where authority is feeble and virtue devalued, a world where, ironically enough, literature has lost its aura to become a commodity.

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FAST FORWARD TO THE PAST: REVISITING TRAUMA AFTER THE FALL

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The concept of the Fall has a long tradition in cultural history and is very often, if not always, associated with traumatic events, the most outstanding example being the Fall from Grace represented in the Bible and its different re-writings. In the field of History the term has also been widely used to describe a certain crepuscular phase in the evolution of a given society, as exemplified notably in the case of Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. And, in a more contemporary context, poststructuralists have extended the idea to refer to the "fall into language" and the inauguration of the Symbolic order.[1]

In a different area of experience, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is also an iconic moment which is not only significant at the level of the symbolic, but also entails a dramatic change in the everyday lives of millions of people, as it signals the disappearance in the Eastern part of Europe of a whole panoply of discourses defining the Real: among them, that of History as understood by Soviet ideology. Since the fall, it has become increasingly possible to interpret History in a different fashion and, in particular, to represent from a new perspective voices that had previously been silenced.

One indicator of these silenced voices that might question the official metanarratives can be found in the profusion of jokes about the political situation that proliferated in communist countries. Two instances of this humour can be given at this point, as they help to illuminate our object of inquiry. In the first, a listener calls Armenian

Radio asking whether it is possible to predict the future. The journalist answers: "It is not hard to predict the future. The only problem is the past, which keeps on changing". The second example can be found in Slavoj Zizek's film *Zizek!* and goes like this:

> An East German worker gets a job in Siberia. Aware of how all mail will be read by censors, he tells his friends: "Let's establish a code: if a letter you get from me is written in ordinary blue ink, it's true, if it's written in red ink, it's false". After a month his friends get the first letter: "Everything is wonderful here: the shops are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and properly heated, cinemas show films from the West, there are many beautiful girls ready for an affair —the only thing you can't get is red ink".

This desire and even relish for cracking a joke can be interpreted as an unconscious desire to show the cracks (pun intended) in the texture of an apparently hard, solid surface. But jokes, of course, are also an indicator of repressed tension and evoke a traumatic experience. Most scholarly examinations of trauma, which draw heavily on psychoanalysis, address traumatic recall as "the return of the repressed", that is, a form of intrusive past that generates a delayed response to an event, which reappears after a period of latency or incubation as a trace in the subject's consciousness as if to haunt or possess him/her. Cathy Caruth seems to cling to this phantasmatic relationship between individuals and their past when she affirms that "[t]o be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or an event" (1995: 5).

In our case, such jokes dealing with an officially seamless, pre-fall scenario, refer to two aspects of our work: first, the revision of the past, not in order to eliminate political enemies, as in those well-known pictures where they are airbrushed out, but to insert new historical material; and, secondly, the difficulty of finding a language in which to narrativize a traumatic past and, by extension, a new version of history.

Thus, when the checkpoint at Bornholmerstrasse is opened on November 9, 1989, the so-called "fall of the wall" begins. Initially this implies only the physical disappearance of a barrier between the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, and also, in the Eastern European countries, the beginning of the collapse of the whole communist regime with its peculiar political and socioeconomic characteristics. Secondly, the fall of the Berlin Wall means the end of the Cold War, culminating indisputably in the victory of Western values and mores. To put it in terms at once trivial and symbolic: now the citizens of the old Soviet empire would not have to buy their jeans on the black market but in any ordinary clothes shop. Last but not least, what that November night triggers is the collapse of an ideology, in the shape of a historical discourse with a strong

teleological component, usually phrased as the "inevitable course of history". This discourse gave coherence to the idiosyncrasies of the political system in the present as well as in its analysis of the past and the future, as can be seen in the well-known examples of the official hymn of the USSR, and "The Internationale", which promise the consummation of the socialist utopia after "the final and decisive battle".[2]

In the well-known German film *Goodbye, Lenin!*, the passing from one regime to another is dramatized as a coma followed by a reawakening affecting the main female character, a devout communist. For many people —unlike what we see in the film— there was an awakening from that utopian dream (or endless nightmare), only to discover that they had been trapped in a huge contraption that had simply fallen apart. The pieces, however, are still there and after dismantling the machinery, the remains of those who were trapped and destroyed within it come to the surface. Thus, the landscape of dumped statues, abandoned edifices, and destroyed factories is a visible representation of the wreckage and residue of a crumbling ideology that must somehow be recycled.

After the fall comes a landscape of ruins, both literal —as in the case of the actual wall in Berlin— or symbolic, and which need recycling and re-signification, like the statues in Estonia which were initially a symbol of the struggle against the Nazi occupation but are now a reminder of Soviet oppression. Ruins can also be recycled and sold as merchandise, and where the Berlin Wall used to be there is now a street market full of memorabilia where chunks of the wall, Lenin pins and military medals are sold, as exponents of the fragmentation of the Soviet empire.

But 'fall' and 'falling' may also leave some hope, which in the end leads to an attempt at reconstruction (a *perestroika* of sorts) from the ruins and debris inevitable in this kind of experience. In this respect, historical experience is not far removed from similar representations of the concepts of *ruin*, *debris* and *fragment*, which already have a literary pedigree. Thus, at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, another famous fall, Lucifer's, is associated with a landscape of ruin for himself and his fellow rebels. The hope of rebuilding, albeit from fragments, can take the form of bricolage, as in Mary Shelley's "hideous progeny", or the Fisher King figure in the last "scene" of *The Waste Land*: "these fragments I have shored against my ruins" (1999: l. 430).

Nevertheless, the past is not always glorious, but very often traumatic and painful, and, as such, doubly repressed: by official discourse and as a strategy for individual survival. Understandably, the ruins of official metanarratives are followed by attempts at reconstruction at the level of the personal, which is how, in parallel with the collective revision of a difficult past in countries such as Germany, Spain, Kosovo, Poland or Rwanda, personal stories emerge which seek to become visible

and identifiable by means of a new narrative. But not everything, of course, can be 'tamed', maybe because of its inherent brutality or simply because the subject places it in the realm of the ineffable and so it cannot be compared with anything else.

Our analysis focuses on three films, each with a very different origin, which, in what we might call a post-Soviet world, take advantage of the disappearing totalizing view of History in order to fill the void with new representations of actual historical experiences and to address a common European concern for revising a recent traumatic past.

The first film, *Everything is Illuminated* (2005), based on the novel of the same name by Jonathan Safran Foer, is a road movie in which a young Jewish American, Jonathan, goes on a journey across the fields of the Ukraine in search of a woman who supposedly helped his grandfather to escape from the Nazis.

From the very first moment, the film draws the viewer's attention to the idea of the preservation of the past: the first image is a piece of amber with a fossilised grasshopper inside. After this image, the camera moves round to show a number of photographs of the young man's ancestors together with other objects. These objects are the result of his obsession with creating a multifarious catalogue, a sort of ancestral legacy, an archive in which the history of the family is kept. Not surprisingly, Jonathan defines himself not as a writer but as "a collector", and as such he is not so much interested in narrating the events as in building a collection that will bear witness to them. In an act that forms a counterpoint to the image of the amber, he even tries to preserve the objects that he collects (a lump of potato, a handful of sand, and even a live grasshopper) in sterile transparent plastic bags.

On his journey across the Ukraine he is accompanied by a guide, Alex Perchov, who also helps as translator, and an old man, Alex's grandfather, who, although in charge of the driving, considers himself to be blind and has a "seeing-eye bitch" with him. This old man is the paradoxical focus of the final illumination in the film. Alex, rather than delving into the past, is especially interested in getting away from it —"I was of the opinion that the past is past", he says at the beginning of the film— and in being carried away by the new culture from the West. So, he walks like John Travolta and dances like Michael Jackson, and his identity is composed of a collage of icons from American popular culture, together with elements from Ukrainian culture: MacDonalds, children playing with skateboards, or large billboards next to the Odessa steps, evidencing the globalization after the collapse of the communist regimes. And still, Alex must deal with the past. To begin with, his father bears an intentional physical resemblance to Lenin and tries to dominate his family in a rather authoritarian fashion. The family business is called "Odessa Heritage Tours", and on these tours Alex is a frequent witness to how the Soviet

past has quite explicitly survived: in the remains of the weaponry from the war against the Nazis, in the allusions to Chernobyl, and even in the famous steps of the immortal scene in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). His own professional interest has more to do with something as objective and dispassionate as accounting. Jonathan, on the other hand, is interested in settling his family's account, and in order to do this he embarks on a search for a place called Trachimbrod, the whereabouts of which he has only a vague idea since the place is not even on the maps. When they finally find it, the first illumination occurs: the place is no longer a physical space and has become something else: "I am Trachimbrod", says Lista, the woman who one day decided to become a collector in order to keep the memories and secrets of a time and place that have been erased from the maps and from History. As a guardian of the relics and memories of Trachimbrod, the old woman has become a historian herself; paradoxically, however, she has lost all notion of the present and her connection with reality: fifty years after the massacre which took place in the *shetl*, she still does not know whether the war is over.[3] The catalogue of objects which she keeps in boxes, just in case ("*na sluchoi*") somebody comes looking for them, constitutes a memorial —not in the usual sense of dates, monuments, museums, triumphal arches, and so on, to commemorate the Holocaust in the concentration camps— but to remember all the forgotten little holocausts of so many executions in lost *shetls*.

Lista was fortunate to survive one of those massacres, and her existence provides the viewer with a more relevant illumination: it seems that Alex's grandfather was also a survivor of the very same massacre and he now stands face to face with the person who witnessed his escape. Where for some, memory turns into a sort of tourist attraction (remember the "Odessa Heritage Tours"), for Alex's grandfather, the return to the past becomes an illuminating catharsis. While Lista spent her life trying not to forget, his life has been guided by the constant desire to forget, beginning at the very moment when, after he survives the mass execution, he gets rid of his coat with the yellow star, not only to stop being a Jew in the eyes of the world, but because amnesia seems to be the price to be paid for surviving. Alex's grandfather's subsequent suicide can be seen then as a sign that he has settled his own account with his past. Through this unexpected illumination we learn that Alex's grandfather's real name is Baruch, that he is Jewish and that Alex is therefore Jewish too. The result is that, before saying goodbye at the end of the journey, Jonathan gives Alex a chain with a star of David formerly belonging to Jonathan's grandfather. Finally, understanding how these objects are a repository of memory and History, Alex is forced to admit that "everything is illuminated in the light of the past".

In the second film, *The Secret Life of Words* (2005), the traumatic past is also revealed through a process of anagnorisis. The film tells the story of Hanna, a

lonely woman who is hired to nurse Joseph, a burns victim on a North Sea oilrig, whose condition needs to be stabilized before he can be transferred to a hospital. The limitations imposed by this spatiotemporal context —displaced and isolated workers subjected to an uncertain future— are not the only ones affecting the main characters, since physical limitations also come into play: Hanna is almost completely deaf and needs to wear a hearing aid, whereas Joseph is temporarily blind after his corneas were damaged in the fire on the rig. This shared condition of loneliness and extreme isolation generates a feeling of mutual sympathy, which is, nonetheless, full of secrets and half-truths. So, while she conceals from Joseph almost every detail about her life —such as when he asks about her accent, her country of origin, her real name or even her hair colour— Hanna discovers a secret about him which is the core of the melodramatic sub-plot of the story: Joseph was critically injured in the oilrig fire when trying to rescue his best friend, who apparently committed suicide after his wife had been unfaithful to him. Joseph played a key role in this betrayal, so that his physical injuries and the isolation caused by his temporary blindness are understandably aggravated by a deep feeling of guilt.

Although both have survived a traumatic past, Joseph's seems almost trivial when compared to Hanna's experiences; in the climactic scene of the film she confesses her own experience of torture in the Balkan conflict, where rape was systematically used as a tactic of war by the Serbian troops.[4] In contrast to Joseph's loquacity, Hanna's relationship to her own past is determined by silence and lies, which explains why, in her recall of the traumatic scenario, she has to resort to a fictional one in which she herself is a character: an imaginary friend who was tortured to the point where she longed to die. Such an invention functions simply as a strategy of transference, so that once the pain has been displaced elsewhere —to another body or country— it can be fully assimilated and represented. After all, when she narrates the outbreak of the conflict in Dubrovnik, Hanna remembers having resisted the evidence before her eyes by thinking that "wars always take place somewhere else".

Whereas Joseph's story is absolutely private and seems to be embellished by the glamour of the heroic and sentimental, Hanna's is representative of a whole community, a chance outcome of an already forgotten war on the margins of Europe. Thus, while showing Joseph the archives of the victims, Inge, the psychologist in charge of Hanna's rehabilitation, remarks, "here there are thousands of Hannas".

She bears the guilt and shame of the survivors (an issue also explored in *Everything is Illuminated*) as she constantly attempts to erase all traces of that humiliating past, which could well explain her obsession with personal hygiene. But, despite all her efforts to the contrary, the past remains well preserved in the present on the lacerated body of the main character, which has turned into a living document of

those historical events. The scars on Hanna's chest form the film's central revelation, although, ironically, this illumination is not achieved through sight —since Joseph is temporarily blind— but touch, because it is only when Joseph feels them with his hands that "the secret life of Hanna's words" is finally revealed. Kai Anderson claims that "trauma has both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies", as it draws the individual away from its site while at the same time drawing him/her back to it (Caruth 1995: 186). We can observe this dual process in Alex's grandfather and Hanna, both of whom feel compelled to return to the traumatic scenario, drawn as if by a magnet, despite their efforts to leave it behind and forget it.

Once again, as a counterpoint to narrativized history, the materiality of objects —in the guise of Hanna's scars or the archive kept by Inge in Copenhagen— serves as irrefutable proof and everlasting testimony of historical conflicts even after they have been forgotten, an issue implied in Inge's comment to Joseph about Hitler's attempt to destroy all documents associated with the Holocaust.

The third film, *The Life of Others* (2007), explores the relationship between a Stasi officer and two artists —a playwright and his lover, a well-positioned actress— who are under surveillance because of their friendship with dissidents and their apparent opposition to the communist regime in the German Democratic Republic. In the process, the officer will learn, not only about the artists being spied upon, but also about the methods of the regime of which he is a staunch defender, knowledge that will bring about the awakening of his conscience (again an 'illumination'), which radically changes his life.

The police state in which all citizens watch one another has an obvious literary antecedent in George Orwell's novel *1984* (significantly the year in which the action in the film takes place), and where the figure of Winston Smith is a clear intertextual referent, given his role as a manipulator of documents in order to create biased versions of History.[5] In the case of Wiesler, the Stasi officer, his ability to manipulate is directed at the trivial and the everyday, that is, any petty thing that can be used to bend the will of citizens under suspicion. In both the film and the novel we find an instance of Walter Benjamin's idea of the way the archive encapsulates a memory of civilization, while at the same time helping to reveal the barbarism implicit in some historical processes (1988: 256). In the specific case of the film, the surveillance methods are evidence of police efficiency in the service of the cause —Wiesler is a model officer who instructs future agents. On the other hand, after the fall of the Wall, the documents used by the communist regime to inflict psychological torture and reinforce its power become the main evidence of the regime's infamy. In a police state of 100,000 police and 300,000 informants, all watching the lives of their fellow citizens, this "life of others" materialises as the macabre compilation represented by police records, blacklists, tapes with

confessions, interrogation sessions, telephone tapping, reports, code names, samples of smells, or simply notes, to the point where these elements acquire the status of reality itself. In the film, for example, the sexual relationship between the two artists is never shown but narrated in a report that includes even the most intimate details. In the end, Wiesler himself is another victim of the obsession for documentation in which he has so fervently participated, and it is thanks to the false report that he writes to protect the artists under surveillance, and also to the trace of the red ink from the typewriter, that the playwright finds out the hidden identity behind "HGW XX/7", Wiesler's code name as a Stasi officer. In this way, the playwright 'reconstructs' his own past. He returns Wiesler's gaze (the Stasi documents) with his own, the novel he writes (*The Sonata of the Good Man*).[6]

Imposture and the play between reality and fiction are in fact recurrent motifs in a film in which the theatre metaphor is all-pervading: at the beginning, it is the artists who specialise in acting and simulation while the Stasi officer is occupied in finding out the truth about their lives; later, however, these roles gradually change and it is Wiesler who ends up writing false reports to protect the couple, even inventing a play in order to hide the subversive essay.[7] Wiesler's disenchantment begins when he discovers that ideology is absent and has been replaced by pettiness and personal ambition that end up conditioning the course of History: so, a minister is motivated only by his carnal desire for Christa (the playwright's lover), who, for her part, is essentially concerned with getting hold of painkillers on the black market, an addiction that leads to the betrayal of her fellow dissidents. Wiesler's superior in the Stasi can think only of his expectations of promotion in the ranks of the Party, since, as he states succinctly, "What is the Party but its members?" The scene, though tending towards sentimentalism, epitomises nevertheless Wiesler's disillusion with the political regime as he realises that its repressive potential is used simply to satisfy the personal interests of its leaders.

These specular inversions also affect the final illumination in the film. After the playwright revises his own police record, he discovers not only that he has been spied on, but that, in the process, the political and moral views of the agent spying on them have changed, to the extent that he becomes an anonymous hero who suffers the retaliation of the regime for changing sides.

The voyeuristic activity implicit in these actions opens up the title of the film to new meanings, sometimes not without debate. The "life of others" can be taken as referring to the perspective that some Germans —the *wessies*, such as the director himself— have of their fellow citizens from the East, the other Germans. Within the film itself, the title would refer to the life of those spied upon by the police, and also the life reported in the police records that can be read, not only by the person in question but also by the historian. It is also the life that some design for others:

the life designed by the playwright for his characters or by the communist regime for the members of the Party and the rest of the population. And finally, considering the scopophilic nature of any filmic experience, "the life of others" is the life that we, the viewers, contemplate on a screen.

As we move towards conclusions, we should highlight some important aspects that the three films have in common, both in their revision of a recent past and in their articulation of trauma. A major point is their common realisation that it is not the fall that causes trauma; rather, the fall reveals the crucial event in the past and provides individuals and communities alike with the opportunity to address the repressed trauma, bring it to the surface and possibly heal it, perhaps by redefining the Real and inserting new elements into its realm. Trauma affects primarily the subjects' relationship with their past, and also conditions their relationship with the future. Therefore, it is only when the subjects are able to come to terms with their traumatic past that the very possibility of a future can open up for them.

In *Everything is Illuminated* Alex discovers his grandfather's —and his whole family's— past, acquiring in this way a new personal and national identity. This determination to assimilate a difficult past and heal wounds is projected forwards in the guise of Alex's voice-over narration to the viewer. In *The Secret Life of Words,* Hanna's traumatic past is narrativized in Joseph's therapeutically beneficial presence, which enables her to be reconciled with the past and allows her to envision a more positive future. In *The Life of Others*, the playwright recovers from his traumatic past by reading the Stasi files, which also enables him to come to terms with his own future and his country's through the novel *The Sonata of the Good Man*, whose title recalls the piano piece that he used to play, the renditions being secretly enjoyed by an entranced Wiesler.

The three films share the common belief that collective trauma is enacted primarily at the personal level, and feature protagonists immersed in their respective healing processes and trapped in the characteristic traumatic paradox, reconciling testimonial accuracy with the essential ineffability of their experiences. If we agree with T.S. Eliot's famous dictum "human kind cannot bear too much reality", (1986: ll.42-43), we must also admit that the desire to articulate the incommunicable poses a problem of representation. Caruth addresses this fundamental dilemma when she states that "while images of traumatic re-enactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious re-call and control", precisely because the original event that first constituted them exceeds any frame of comprehensibility (1995: 151). Zizek, however, in his film *The Pervert's Guide To Cinema*, offers the possibility of circumventing the problem: "If something gets too traumatic, too violent, gets too, even too filled in with enjoyment, it shatters the coordinates of our reality: we have to fictionalize it".

A good example of how multifaceted this issue can be might be found in the controversial quality of most representations of the Holocaust —ranging from the Berlin Memorial or the musical about Anna Frank to films like *Life is Beautiful* (1997), and more recently *The Boy in The Striped Pyjamas* (2008)— which are often considered banal in relation to the real event. Notable in this context, is the extent to which the historical uniqueness attributed to the Shoah has been overused, thus minimising other genocides.[8]

The three texts invoke the idea that history is not an abstraction and as a result insist on the literalness of the traumatic testimony, whether presented in the form of scars, objects, documents or detailed descriptions that confront the event itself, rather than its symbolic or metaphoric re-creation. This apparent paradox can be explained, however, if we take into account that the material quality of the Real serves to give shape to something that is essentially 'shapeless' and incommensurable in nature. The material vestiges of that traumatic past, therefore, are shown to be the actual repository of the "real" history, indicators of the authenticity and legitimacy of trauma, which in this way ceases to be ineffable and becomes tangible, verifiable.[9]

In all three films there is some trivial element which objectifies the connection between present and past, an idea conceptualised by Pierre Nora in the term *lieux de mémoire*:

> The *lieux* we speak of, then, are mixed, hybrid, mutant, bound intimately with life and death, with time and eternity; enveloped in a Möbius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile. For if we accept that the most fundamental purpose of the *lieux de mémoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial —just as if gold were the only memory of money— all of this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs, it is also clear that *lieux de mémoire* only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications. (1989: 19)

Significant examples of this concept can be found in the three films: the amber jewel in which some object from the past has been encapsulated and kept 'alive'; the soap that Joseph steals from Hanna, which is both a personal item and also an allusion to the ethnic cleansing she and her nation have undergone; and the playwright's police record, which luckily survived destruction by the Stasi, in which he finds the existence of a 'good man'. Taken together, these elements might be seen as what might be termed an objectual heteroglossia which in turn refers to issues related to History and its textuality, since all those objects, metamorphosed and recycled, whether symbolically or literally, are somehow connected with some aspect of the writing of History, including its re-writing, and even erasure.

Furthermore, this material quality, as seen in apparently trivial objects, supplies an extra element of freshness and immediacy. This makes the representation of the past in each film differ from the stereotypes offered by the official versions of similar narratives. A clear example is the contrast between the forgotten little holocausts and the grandiose, heroic tinge of the film *Exodus*; or, in a similar vein, the contrast between the epic tone of spy films and novels from James Bond to Hitchcock and John LeCarré and the miserable everyday life depicted in the Stasi reports.

The second half of the twentieth century has seen a redefinition of the boundaries of what should be considered historical material. This means not just an acceptance of the narrative quality of any form of history, but also the inclusion of other histories which up to now have been spurned as irrelevant, subjective or partial, and which are now being re-valued as historically worthwhile. Seen in this light, we may speak of a broadening of the discipline in order to accept a wide range of new areas of historical research: from women's history, history 'from below', or the history of the body, to micro-history, the history of events, the history of images, and political history, to name but a few.[10] So, in line with the tenets of this new historiography, and as another variation on the story vs. History dichotomy, we can see Memory predominating over History and, in this new context, narratives more attentive to personal vicissitudes proliferating, as an indicator of the fragmentation of a now obsolete totalizing discourse. Just as the old Soviet empire disintegrated into new countries with new national narratives, so the metanarrative of History with its emphatic discourse of collective heroic struggle and denial of the private disperses into myriad different stories by anonymous individuals whose earlier mission was to be just "cogs and wheels" (to use Lenin's terms) in the great machinery of History, but who can now stand up as true historical subjects.

Notes

[1]. A significant development of this linguistic turn is the so-called 'narrative turn' in the field of historiography, best exemplified by the work of Hayden White who views historical texts as literary artefacts inasmuch as they partake of the same rhetorical devices as are normally found in fictional texts.

[2]. Ironically, while these hymns anticipate a glorious future, they also become instances of the Protean quality of the past, as shown in the lyrics of the official USSR and German Democratic Republic anthems, which also underwent successive rewritings depending on the political present.

[3]. Pierre Nora offers an interesting insight about modern memory, which according to him is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image […]. In just a few years […] the materialization of memory has been tremendously dilated, multiplied, decentralized, democratized. In the classical period, the three main producers of archives were the great families, the church and the state. But who, today, does not feel compelled to record his feelings, to write his memoirs —not only the most minor historical actor, but also his witnesses, his spouse, and his doctor (13-14).

[4]. The issue of women's rape as warfare has a literary antecedent in the anonymous novel *A Woman in Berlin*, which has long been perceived as an uneasy text in German society.

[5]. Winston Smith makes an interesting remark about the materiality of History that is pertinent to our analysis: "Do you realize that the past, starting from yesterday, has been actually abolished? If it survives anywhere, it's in a few solid objects with no words attached to them, like that lump of glass there" (126).

[6]. A more prosaic but more necessary version of this process of "reconstruction" concerns the project carried out by the unified Germany authorities for the purpose of literally piecing together the fragments of documents destroyed by the Stasi during the final days of the communist regime. In contrast with the Stasi's attempt to destroy the past and forget it by reducing it to fragments, there is the determination of the new authorities to remember by 're-membering'.

[7]. Falsifying the Real is another of the main issues in *Goodbye Lenin!*, in which the recent past of the German Democratic Republic is revisited, not from the point of view of trauma but from nostalgia. The film has been linked to the so-called *Ostalgie*, a movement which vindicates the lost ethical and aesthetic values of the defunct GDR.

[8]. Norman Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry* is a detailed account of the uses and abuses to which the Holocaust has been put as a historical event.

[9]. The physicality of objects is not the only way to represent a traumatic past. In fact, *Everything is Illuminated,* the novel by Foer, unfolds into two distinct stories: Alex's realistic account of Jonathan's journey to the Ukraine, and Jonathan's magical history of his ancestral *shetl* (omitted in the film). As the search moves backwards, the fantastical history moves forwards, thus weaving a rich texture of intergenerational symmetries and providing, through its use of magical realism, an interesting counterpoint to the more conventional chronicle of tragic events. In a similar fashion, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* resorts to the immaterial gothic world of ghosts and spirits as the most appropriate language for articulating the horrors of Afro-American slavery.

[10]. Georg G. Iggers summarises these new approaches when he states that

> …the social and cultural concomitants of a technological society under conditions of modern capitalism, the widening of cultural perspective from Europe to a world scale, the end of European political predomination, the decline of all elites, the awakening to political and cultural consciousness of previously submerged classes and peoples, the manifestations of conflict which accompanied these transformations —all of these developments have provided a real basis for the reorientation of historical studies. The result has been an enlargement of our picture of the past: a new interest in social classes, cultures, and aspects of daily life which had been neglected by the conventional historiography; a deeper probing into the psychological and anthropological bases of historical behaviour; and, in a limited but not negligible way, an expansion of the conceptual range of history and a more critical attitude within the profession regarding the methodological procedures of the historian. (203-204)

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Reviews

HUIR DEL LABERINTO: CRECER EN IRLANDA DEL NORTE: UNA MIRADA LITERARIA

Esther Aliaga Rodrigo
La Coruña: Netbiblo. Irish Studies Series, 2009.
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Visité Irlanda del Norte y su capital Belfast en la década de los 80: paredes de chapa de cinc, alambre de espino, solares vacíos, cristales rotos, el constante zumbido de los helicópteros sobrevolando la ciudad, tanquetas del ejército británico recorriendo sus calles, soldados armados vestidos de camuflaje y apostados detrás de una esquina, continuas amenazas de bomba. Desde luego, no puede decirse que la década de los 80 fuera buena en este territorio, y esta es la década en la que se publicaron las novelas que Ester Aliaga ha elegido para su trabajo, de ahí el título principal del libro: *Huir del laberinto*, que es precisamente lo que todos/as los/as protagonistas de las novelas que Aliaga analiza intentan conseguir, de diferentes maneras y con mayor o menor éxito. Una primera apreciación es que la autora, sin ser nativa del lugar, ha sido muy valiente al hablar —y hablar con fundamento y conocimiento— de los "Disturbios" en Irlanda del Norte y de su representación en cuatro novelas de los 80. Como se aprecia, por ejemplo, en el volumen editado por David Miller (1998), en los "Disturbios" han intervenido múltiples factores (sociales, coloniales, históricos, políticos, étnicos, religiosos) que los convierten en un terreno conflictivo y resbaladizo que se presta a interpretaciones divergentes, frecuentemente condicionadas por la posición o preferencias socio-políticas de sus autores.

Por otra parte, el corpus de novelas ha sido elegido cuidadosamente para reflejar diferentes puntos de vista y orientaciones. Siendo todas "novelas de crecimiento", a la vez todas pertenecen al subgénero de la "novela de los Disturbios". Sin

embargo, *Ripley Bogle* (1989) tiene como protagonista a un joven católico y *Burning Your Own* (1988) a uno protestante, mientras que *No Mate for the Magpie* (1985) analiza el proceso de crecimiento y la forja de la identidad de una joven católica y, finalmente, *Sunday Afternoons* (1988) de una protestante. Se agradece asimismo que Aliaga se haya interesado por dos novelas escritas por mujeres —*No Mate for the Magpie* cuya autora es Frances Molloy, y *Sunday Afternoons*, escrita por Julie Mitchell— sobre las que la literatura crítica, particularmente en el caso de la novela de Mitchell, es bastante escasa. Dado el interés demostrado por la autora por cubrir cuestiones de género y de afiliación religiosa, se echa en falta en el libro alguna referencia al estudio de James M. Cahalan *Double Visions: Women and Men in Modern and Contemporary Irish Fiction* (1999), cuyo capítulo 5, por ejemplo, se titula "Gender and History in Trouble(s)" y podría haber sido de utilidad.

Entrando más en detalle en la estructura y contenidos del libro, resulta evidente que se trata de la investigación derivada de una tesis doctoral. A mi entender, un ensayo de crítica, teoría o historia literaria pertenece a un género académico/discursivo diferente al de una tesis doctoral, que cuenta con sus propias convenciones y características. Aliaga no ha invertido demasiado tiempo en esta transformación genérica, por lo que su ensayo ofrece algunas desventajas, aunque también ventajas, privativas de la tesis doctoral. Entre los inconvenientes se puede destacar la excesiva fragmentación de los diferentes capítulos y una cierta tendencia a la repetición de ideas. Por ejemplo, los capítulos 3, 4 y 5, introducen de forma general diferentes aspectos sociológicos del marco geográfico, familiar y sociopolítico norirlandés, para luego tratar estos mismos aspectos individualmente en cada una de las novelas, por lo que evitar reiteraciones resulta casi imposible. Se puede aducir que la autora trata de cubrir todos los aspectos —literarios (el capítulo 1 trata sobre el género de la novela "de crecimiento" y el 2 sobre el subgénero de la novela de los "Disturbios") y sociológicos (capítulos 3, 4 y 5)— que puedan tener relevancia para situar al lector dentro del contexto, lo cual es meritorio, pero tiene obligatoriamente su contrapartida en un tratamiento, a mi entender, algo superficial de ciertos temas. En este sentido, en el capítulo 5, dedicado al marco sociopolítico, se considera que la religión y la historia son los principales ingredientes de los "Disturbios" (115), obviando otros factores tales como la clase social, cuestiones étnicas o visiones y aspiraciones políticas. En cuanto al papel de la historia en el conflicto, de los capítulos introductorios y del análisis de las novelas se desprende que la historia de los "Disturbios" comienza a finales de los años 60, siendo ésta una apreciación que suele derivar en una visión del conflicto como algo tribal e irracional y que es muy cuestionable. Y, como dice Miller en la introducción a su volumen editado: "The predominance of notions of tribal conflict and irrational or self-interested violence gives a seriously misleading and distorted view of the conflict in Ireland and in the process hampers the chances for a lasting and just peace"(xix).

Por otra parte, *Huir del Laberinto* es un texto que destaca por su claridad expositiva. La prosa de Aliaga es fluida y el ensayo se lee con placer e interés. Utilizando una expresión inglesa, el libro es "reader-friendly", sin que por eso sea simple o pedestre. El estilo es elegante y únicamente se aprecia algún error ocasional de edición, como en la página 90: "dos aspectos que aparecen en todas las obras y que son un ecso [sic] de la conflictiva situación exterior". Pero, como he dicho, los errores son muy poco frecuentes.

La idea central de la que parte la autora es la de analizar unas novelas de la década de los 80, ya que fue la generación de escritores de este periodo la que

> empezó a contrarrestar y subvertir la anterior representación narrativa del conflicto sociopolítico, contemplando a su país como una realidad plural, que aunque dotado de una idiosincrasia particular, también guardaba resemblanzas con el resto del mundo. […] El reto de estos autores, […], fue el de empezar a crear nuevos lenguajes y perspectivas con los que abordar la complejidad de la situación de Irlanda del Norte. (41)

Para este propósito, Aliaga dedica cinco capítulos a cuestiones generales, enmarcando los textos dentro de los géneros literarios a los que pertenecen (capítulos 1 y 2) y analizando el marco sociológico, religioso, cultural y político (capítulos 3, 4, y 5). De forma general y en relación a estos capítulos, se aprecia que, particularmente en lo que atañe a los textos sociológicos usados para el 3, 4 y 5, la bibliografía es anticuada y se echan a faltar referencias fundamentales más contemporáneas: los trabajos del sociólogo Tom Inglis sobre la sexualidad y el poder de la Iglesia en Irlanda (1997, 1998) o la historia de Marianne Elliot sobre los Católicos del Ulster (2000), por mencionar dos títulos significativos.

Los siguientes capítulos (6, 7, 8 y 9) analizan cada una de las novelas individualmente. Los análisis de Aliaga son perceptivos y sutiles. La autora relaciona diferentas temas y compara unas novelas con otras. Asimismo, no se olvida de analizar los textos en sus aspectos formales, un olvido demasiado frecuente en otros ensayos. Destaca en mi opinión, el capítulo 6, dedicado a la novela de Robert McLiam Wilson *Ripley Bogle*. En él se ofrece un estudio muy interesante sobre los efectos y funciones de la ironía, la sátira, el sarcasmo y la figura del narrador. Quizás se podría haber incidido en la función de la intertextualidad (por ejemplo las referencias a las novelas de Dickens) y la naturaleza postmodernista de la novela, dos características que, como Aliaga sostiene, abren el texto a otras tradiciones y otras realidades. Pero en definitiva, está claro que no se puede hablar de todo en profundidad.

Como consideración final, diré que *Huir del laberinto* es un libro que cualquier estudiante de Literatura irlandesa y norirlandesa debería leer y un libro que también resulta clarificador y útil para todos aquellos interesados en los Estudios Irlandeses y en aprender más sobre los "Disturbios" y la "novela de los Disturbios".

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HAUNTING AND SPECTRALITY IN NEO-VICTORIAN FICTION: POSSESSING THE PAST

Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham, eds.
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The increasing proliferation of Neo-Victorian publications bears witness to the contemporary fascination with the Victorian tradition. Generally speaking, Neo-Victorian studies have focused their attention on the ongoing debate on nostalgia and the notions of parody and pastiche. Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham's co-edited volume, tellingly entitled *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past* (2010), undoubtedly makes a significant contribution to this field of research. As they proudly state, their "collection of essays [is] the first to focus on the neo-Victorian novel against the backdrop of the master trope of spectrality and haunting" (2010: xi). In doing so they favour those approaches which take postmodern contemporary fiction as a form of "refraction" (Gutleben and Onega 2004), that is to say, they privilege "the assumption of a dialectical process between the canonical and the postmodernist text" (2004: 7). The book's main aim is precisely the exploration of the "dynamic relationship" (xxv), between the Victorian tradition and the contemporary present.

This collection of essays offers an invaluable introduction which broadens our knowledge of the different approaches to contemporary representations of the Victorian tradition and the tropes of haunting and spectrality. They usefully remind us of the distinction between Sally Shuttleworth's term 'retro-Victorian fiction' and Dana Shiller's 'neo-Victorian fiction': while the former aims at reviving the past, the latter is rooted in revisionism and "reinvention" (xii-xiii). Then, Arias and

Pulham bring to mind David Lowenthal's "mistrust of nostalgia" to argue that "we no longer seek in the past a refuge from the present; instead we excavate the past to expose its 'iniquities and indignities'" (xiv). This interpretation lays the ground for their link of the neo-Victorian with Sigmund Freud's notion of the uncanny. As they state, in the neo-Victorian novel, the Victorian trace functions as a "revenant, a ghostly visitor from the past that infiltrates our present" (xv). Thus, in their return from the past, these Victorian spectral traces open up an illuminating dialogue with the present, while also problematizing set conceptions about both the Victorian tradition and the contemporary present (xv). For their argument to gather strength, they offer an illuminating overview of the so-much quoted Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (1993), Nicolas Abraham's and Maria Torok's theory of phantom (1994), and Julian Wolfrey's *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (2002). This explanation is of utmost significance, since these theories frame most of the essays of the collection.

A case in point is that most of the essays collected in this volume locate, to some extent, the site of spectrality in the very textuality of the impressive scope of neo-Victorian novels they analyze. The essays provide a detailed analysis of the narrative voices, perspectives, metaphors and a wide range of intertextual allusions to other Victorian texts, through which they smoothly draw the readers' attention towards the spectral networks and wavering borders that each of the neo-Victorian novels under consideration interweave and challenge. To give but one example, in keeping with Julia Kristeva's description of temporality (cyclical and monumental) and female subjectivity, Agnieszka Golda-Derejczyk provides a precise narratological analysis of Roberts's revisionist 1990 novel *In the Red Kitchen*. This examination allows her to associate Roberts's text with "an echo-chamber" (56). But it is the second chapter, by Mark Llewellyn, that most openly deals with the spectral nature of the neo-Victorian text itself. He makes use of Isobel Armstrong's reading of the glass motif to compare the neo-Victorian text with "a glass permitting a double-viewed reflection" (26). Commenting on the ever-growing contemporary interest in Victorian spiritualism, he goes so far as to assert that "we are enacting a specifically nineteenth-century preoccupation with the spectral, s(p)ecular and reflective possibilities of the historical mirror, whether intact or crack'd" (25). That is to say, we seem to be looking for "a version of the Victorian afterlife" (25) in the neo-Victorian text. What I find most interesting is that, contrary to the main idea put forward in the introduction, whereby great emphasis was placed on the Victorian as the spectre of contemporary fiction, Llewellyn identifies the spectre of the neo-Victorian text with the contemporary novelist (35). This parallelism provides an insight into the paradoxical situation of the neo-Victorian text, whose transparency and attempt to find a source of faith

in the text is problematized by the novelist's metafictional comments and the use of a cryptomimetic method. In this view, neo-Victorianism becomes a source of both faith and deception.

The main advantages of the dialectical process taking place at the neo-Victorian text is that this two-way dialogue opens a door for the release of "occluded secrets, silences and mysteries which return and reappear in a series of spectral/ textual traces" (xx). In this sense, Arias and Pulham's interest in the tropes of haunting and spectrality may be said to follow the line of research of trauma studies which has also been simultaneously undertaken by other critics such as Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben in their latest collection of essays (co-edited), *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: the Politics of Bearing-After Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering* (2010). As has been clearly shown by Kohlke and Gutleben, Neo-Victorian fiction "gives historical non-subjects a future by restoring their traumatic pasts to cultural memory" (2010: 31). The second section of Arias and Pulham's book is devoted precisely to this idea. More specifically, it tackles the issues of gender politics and the supernatural in a series of neo-Victorian novels in which "Spectral Women" take the narrative lead and focus. In "Repetition and Eternity: the Spectral and Textual Continuity in Michèle Roberts's *In the Red Kitchen*", Golda-Derejczyk centers on the positive and productive results of the novel's introduction of the themes of "spiritualism, mediumship, and writing as self-description" (47). She concentrates on the shared experience of abuse and oppression that three female characters of Roberts's novel undergo. Golda-Derejczyk wittingly points out that it is the mediumistic skills of the Victorian character of the novel that open a glimpse of hope for these three characters (46). Here, spiritualism becomes not only a powerful channel of communication between them but also a form of passive writing (53). In contrast to Golda-Derejczyk's optimistic observations, Esther Saxey provides an insight into the paradoxical situation of the figure of the ghost and the uncanny double in both Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996) and Valerie Martin's *Mary Reilly* (1990). Her essay addresses the ways in which these novels "employ the ghost and the monster to toy with the idea of liberation, but then to undermine it" (80). As Saxey perceptively explains at the beginning of the essay, the supernatural element has traditionally been used in both the Victorian and the neo-Victorian period as a mode through which sexual repression and social oppression could be expressed and denounced (58-59). Yet, drawing on Foucault's 'repressive theory', Saxey provides an illuminating discussion of the novels' use of the figure of Hannah Cullwick as the uncanny double and Abraham and Torok's figure of the phantom. This allusion allows Saxey to introduce several themes and complexities which these two novels bring to the fore: is it legitimate to exploit the sexual attraction that the maids held for their masters in order to obtain employment? In stressing the ambivalence and double-bind meanings of the use of the supernatural in both novels,

Saxey argues that these novels avoid the misleading self-gratifying ending of the neo-Victorian liberation plot while, at the same time, bringing to the fore the social hypocrisy and gender problems faced by women in the nineteenth century; problems which, in one way or another, continue to haunt modern culture.

The last section of the collection, entitled "Ghosts in the City", covers the textual depiction of mid-nineteenth-century London in neo-Victorian fiction as a place haunted by repressed fears and anxieties from the past. I would like to highlight the lucid way in which Arias combines her close-reading of Matthew Kneale's *Sweet Thames* (1992) and Clare Clark's *The Great Stink* (2005) with Abraham and Torok's theory of the crypt and Sarah Dillon's metaphor of "the palimsest of the mind" (148). Firstly, she equates the city of London with "a cryptic space" (147). Thus, the novels' "maze-like" (143) and "verticalized" (144) depiction of the city is compared with the main characters' unconscious minds. Besides, she also draws our attention to the way, in which London's architectural depiction reflects Victorian society. Finally, her interpretation of the river Thames as a fluid space which blurs all binary oppositions between absence/presence, past/present, cleanliness/pollution attests to Arias's identification of Victorian London with "a 'phantom' in neo-Victorianism" (155).

All in all, the editors ought to be congratulated on the high standard of the publication. It provides useful information on a wide-range of theories and neo-Victorian novels. Arias and Pulham have handsomely gathered eight essays which demonstrate the enormous critical potential of the tropes of haunting and spectrality in the field of Neo-Victorian Studies. Furthermore, the analysis of these tropes offered in the collection has proved to be a useful tool to expose and problematize both Victorian and contemporary gender, sexual, and social politics. It is for this reason that scholars engaged, not only with neo-Victorian fiction, but also with gender and trauma studies, should find this volume worth reading and inspiring.

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THE MULTI-PROTAGONIST FILM

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Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. 2010.
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The multi-protagonist film is not a new phenomenon. Ensemble films have existed since the early days of cinema. They have been referred to by a variety of names, such as mosaic films (Tröhler 2007) or network narratives (Bordwell 2006). However, despite the relative pervasiveness of this genre, no serious systematic attempt had been made at conceptualising it so far. Apart from its many other merits, María del Mar Azcona's work can claim a type of 'uniqueness', since her *The Multi-Protagonist Film* (2010) is the only monograph devoted to the study of this kind of movie published to date. Its publication at the beginning of this decade is justified by the unprecedented rise of ensemble films during the 1990s and 2000s. Such a phenomenon clearly merits a detailed analysis, and Azcona's monograph fills this niche perfectly.

The Multi-Protagonist Film is part of Wiley-Blackwell's series "New Approaches to Film Genre", edited by Barry Keith Grant. This series includes such well-rehearsed genres as the western, the horror film and the war film. Azcona's contribution stands out for its originality in proposing the multi-protagonist film as a genre in its own right. Initially, this appears to be a bold statement, since ensemble films have not been traditionally regarded as a category in themselves. However, the reader's misgivings are quickly dispersed by Azcona's solid argumentation: based on a fluid approach to film genre, her theorisation of the multi-protagonist film leaves no doubt about its status as a fully-fledged genre.

As is stated in its introductory chapter, this book sets out to unravel the internal workings of ensemble films. At the same time, it attempts to unearth the reasons behind their remarkable increase at the turn of the millennium. With these purposes in mind, *The Multi-Protagonist Film* begins with a recapitulation of the history of the genre, offering a comprehensive compilation of many of the movies which have used this form from cinema's early days till the present moment. The origins of the genre are traced back to the silent era, taking the reader through the different stages of its (not so) short history up to the turn of the millennium, the period this book focuses on primarily.

After the historical overview, chapter 2 presents the theoretical basis upon which Azcona's study is based. This chapter is particularly important as it fills the gaps left by earlier theorists such as Margrit Tröhler (2007) and Kristin Thompson (1999). Azcona has a flexible view of genre similar to that of authors such as David Bordwell (1989), Steve Neale (1995), Tom Ryall (1998) or Rick Altman (1999). Approaching genres as fluid, constantly evolving entities, rather than as fixed, clear-cut categories allows her to establish a more nuanced theory of this particular entry into the genre system. This approach, on the one hand, has the virtue of transcending the unproductive question of belonging and, on the other, allows her to connect the rise of these films at the turn of the century with the changing conditions of their socio-cultural context. Thus, taking into account the ever-changing nature of genres, and keeping in mind that "[g]eneric nature depends not simply on a set of sufficient and necessary conventions but also on various types of connections among texts" (31), Azcona is able to outline a very useful list of conventions which characterise multi-protagonist films at the beginning of the 21st century. This comprehensive list considers aspects such as the characters in these movies, storylines, narration, point of view and endings, as well as their idiosyncratic deployment of elements like chance, group dynamics and coincidence (37). The second part of this theoretical chapter is equally illuminating, and it is devoted to the theorisation of this genre's visual style: it is in the "visual and aural articulation of the links between plots, characters, and thematic elements" (38) that its particular style lies. The genre's stylistic specificity involves a very recognisable use of editing, soundtrack and framing and all these aspects are amply illustrated by a considerable number of examples.

The rest of the book is devoted to case studies of individual multi-protagonist movies from different periods and contexts. Chapter 3 looks at *Grand Hotel* (1932) as an early example of the genre. Even though the book is concerned mostly with contemporary cinema, starting the analysis with a film from the early days of cinema is a smart move: it not only opens up the scope of the study, but it also makes us aware of the longevity of the genre, thus highlighting the amount of

critical work that remains to be done. Azcona shows how this then-'experimental' movie (released in 1932) set an example for subsequent attempts at the form, inaugurating some of the main conventions in the genre and she draws attention to the suitability of the multi-protagonist structure when it comes to expressing the contingent nature of human experience.

Chapter 4 deals with the work of Robert Altman. The special attention paid to this director is pertinent, since he may be rightfully considered as the most influential figure in the whole history of this genre to date. Altman's penchant for multiple protagonist narratives has been evident throughout his whole career: he has made ample use of this form to explore the nuances of human interaction, establishing in the process a set of conventions that have helped shape the genre through the years. The detailed analysis of *Short Cuts* (1993) sheds light on some of them, such as the sense of fragmentation that pervades these films or the serendipity that tends to rule their characters' lives. The end of the analysis points in a direction to be taken later by many examples of the genre, namely, the film's preoccupation with the representation of the crisis of the heterosexual couple. The ability of those early ensemble films to accurately depict drastic changes in inter-personal relationships in the present day, together with their suitability to reflect the consequences of globalisation, has been crucial in their consolidation.

Chapter 5 tackles the intersection of the multi-protagonist movie with the teenpic. This is a genre which fits especially well in the multi-protagonist structure given the importance it bestows on the group. For this reason, Azcona's focus on these films not only feels relevant, but also helps raise their "critical profile", so to speak: traditionally regarded as a "low" genre, the "animal comedy" (Paul, 2002), historically one of the first manifestations of the form, has been comparatively neglected by the academia. These early examples of the genre were followed by more complex teenpics, which dealt with the coming of adulthood and the threat to the group of heterosexual coupling. As an example of this, the author chooses *American Pie* (1999), a successful ensemble teenpic that combines both traditions and whose popularity with the public was not matched by the critics. Azcona's insights call our attention to the merits of a film which in her analysis proves to be more interesting than it appears to be at first sight.

Chapter 6 focuses on the interaction between the multi-protagonist film and the romantic comedy. The author points out the proliferation of this form in a genre whose focus had been traditionally limited to a single couple of lovers. Interestingly, Azcona relates this trend with the state of turmoil contemporary romantic relationships find themselves in: she ingeniously connects these movies' conventions with sociological changes in the field of intimate relations. For instance, she argues that the polyphony of voices offered by these films allows for a better representation

of today's diversity in sexual choices and practices, that their emphasis on chance seems to mirror the fleeting nature of contemporary liaisons, and that their fondness for open endings mirrors the uncertainty and contingency characteristic of these relationships. These insights are confirmed by the detailed study of *Singles* (1992), which suggests that the multi-protagonist film may indeed be better equipped than the traditional romantic comedy to capture the *zeitgeist* in the intimate realm.

The last chapter looks at the developments that the ensemble narrative has brought about in the thriller. The author explains why the multi-protagonist template has started to gain prevalence in a genre traditionally focused on a single hero: in an increasingly globalised world ruled by an intricate web of corporate interests and personal connections, the individual protagonist's ability to act is seriously curtailed. The study of *Syriana* (2005) illustrates the way in which the multi-protagonist thriller, with its variety of subject positions and its disorienting effect, is better equipped to depict the complexity of a rapidly changing world which has been entirely deprived of old certainties. Due to the palpable actuality of the issues dealt with in this section, this chapter is particularly commendable: even without the benefit of hindsight, Azcona carries out a lucid analysis of the interaction between today's complex socio-political panorama and the way in which the thriller's conventions are evolving the better to articulate the concerns of an increasingly interconnected society.

All in all, *The Multi-Protagonist Film* is a momentous contribution to film genre studies. The book is well organised, clearly written and highly informative, offering a comprehensive picture of the multi-protagonist movie from its beginnings till the present day in an accessible yet rigorous and well-researched manner. In addition to this, *The Multi-Protagonist Film* fills an important gap in today's genre criticism by presenting a fully-fledged theory of a 'new' category which, oddly enough, has been a constant presence on our screens for a long time now. By the end of the book, one cannot help but wonder why such a remarkable genre has gone unnoticed for so long.

Notes

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CHAOS AND MADNESS: THE POLITICS OF FICTION IN STEPHEN MARLOWE'S HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

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Stephen Marlowe (born Milton Lesser 1928-2008) is mainly known for his detective stories. Despite his prolific output as a writer, the attention paid to his work from within academia has been scarce, the result, perhaps, of prejudice held by many academics against pulp novels, as Mónica Calvo-Pascual indicates (4); and possibly the result too of the assumption that high sales figures in the world of books are incompatible with quality. Calvo-Pascual is the first scholar to develop a monographic study of three of Marlowe's historical novels, which she examines as exemplars of the evolution of the genre. Succinctly, the author explains that "the texts move from a traditional (pre-postmodernist) model of the historical novel *Colossus* (1972), through *The Memoirs of Christopher Columbus* (1987) as a perfect example of postmodernist historiographic metafiction, to *The Death and Life of Miguel de Cervantes* (1981), another, less radical, instance of historiographic metafiction where fiction eventually defeats and takes over history —from which the story victoriously departs" (6).

The historical novel emerged toward the end of the 18th century —Calvo-Pascual hails Sir Walter Scott as "the father of the historical novel" (20)— with the purpose of contributing to the propagation of knowledge of the past by making its study accessible and attractive. This it did through an enlivened style, the combination of historical with fictional events and characters, and by focusing on the daily lives of ordinary people. Even though it mixed fact and imagination,

in no way did the historical novel challenge the authority and objectivity of historiography: the novelist focused on the silences of historiography, he did not pretend to be a scientist or a historian, nor did his work, however realistic in detail, aspire to truth. It was in the course of the 19th century that the status of historiography was called into question. Friedrich Nietzsche was one of the main interrogators at this trial. In *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* he claims that "To be sure, we need history. But we need it in a manner different from the way in which the spoilt idler in the garden of knowledge uses it, no matter how elegantly he may look down on our coarse and graceless needs and distresses. That is, we need it for life and action" (2007: 7). Two implications derive from this assertion. One: against the "consumptive historical fever" afflicting his age and forcing everyone to hold onto the past (8), Nietzsche demands that the look backwards be used to understand the present and desire the future. To a certain extent, this was precisely what the historical novel was doing. Scott, in fact, saw history as the convenient frame in which to stage a contemporary narrative (Lukács 1962: 30). Two: The spoilt idler he refers to, lacking needs or distresses, can assume an objective stance on reality, which becomes untenable when the past is used for living. Nietzsche continues: "Insofar as history stands in the service of life, it […] will therefore […] never be able to (and should never be able to) become pure science, the way mathematics is, for example" (15). In other words, historiography designates the subjective interpretation of events, conditioned by the interests, the passions and the specific circumstances of the historian. The disaster of the two world wars and the development of mass media in the 20th century, which offered different histories of what happened, proved Nietzsche right in his dissociation of history from truth, making it clear that total systems of knowledge no longer held.

With the poststructuralist theories of the 1960s the historical novel gave way to what Linda Hutcheon called 'historiographic metafiction' which imparts the lesson that "the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted" (1988: 123). Historiographic metafiction, thus, offers to the reader a play of signifiers without referents, posing questions about the relationship between fiction and reality via devices such as irony and self-reflection. Certainly, metafictive devices are not new; some were already present in the traditional historical novel, as Calvo-Pascual rightly points out. Novelty resides in the self-conscious attention of the historiographic metafictional novel to its status as an artifact and its exposure of the truth of history. As Hutcheon puts it, the novelty "seems to reside in its manner, in the self-consciousness of the fictionality, the lack of the familiar pretence of transparency, and the calling into question of the factual grounding of history-writing" (1989: 35).

The novelty of Calvo-Pascual's carefully crafted work resides both in the choice of an American writer who, unlike most of his compatriot authors of historical novels who locate their works in the recent past of their country, has opted for the remote past of Europe; and in supplementing the fact/fiction with the order/disorder binary. Calvo-Pascual draws a parallelism between literary artifacts and microscopic molecular systems as theorized by Nobel Prize winner Ilya Prigogine and her co-worker Isabelle Stengers in *Order Out of Chaos* (1984), where they describe how far-from equilibrium systems are constituted by particles that interact with each other. Before they collide the molecules behave independently, constituting what they call "the molecular chaos assumption" of the system's initial conditions. Collisions "produce, as if by a preestablished harmony, and apparently purposeful behavior" (246), which results in large-scale coherence, "as though each molecule were 'informed' about the overall state of the system" (171). As in Prigogine's self-organizing system, a literary work is not a closed, isolated structure. It exists as a non-equilibrium system within the context of a multiplicity of discourses that on colliding cause a feeling of purpose that, in its turn, brings a measure of coherence and harmony to its superficial disorder. So, if fiction is based on and combined with fact, which is, ultimately, a form of fiction, order lurks behind a facade of chaos which is, ultimately, a subtle form of order.

The structure of Calvo-Pascual's book follows a clear pattern. It consists of seven chapters preceded by an introduction setting out the aims of the book and the definition of the subject, followed by some concluding remarks, two appendixes (the first lists the novels published by Lesser under different pseudonyms; the second his short stories), an extensive bibliography and an index. Each chapter is inextricably related to the rest but is also self-contained and can stand alone. Chapter One offers a precise overview of the relationship between history and the novel that could have benefitted, however, from a longer elaboration of the relationship between history and romance (Calvo-Pascual offers only a passing reference to this on page 16). The information in Chapter Two is useful for an understanding of *Colossus: A Novel about Goya and a World Gone Mad*. Close in style to Sir Walter Scott, its plot is structured around historical episodes presented through an omniscient narrator who identifies with Goya. According to Calvo-Pascual, these are dexterously combined with invented happenings and personages with two purposes: to fill gaps in historiography and to "add suspense" (24). Unfortunately, although the author brings up the ingredient of suspense, she does not investigate in that direction, despite Marlowe's expertise in the mystery formula. Be that as it may, unlike Scott, who relegated historical figures to the background, Marlowe chooses a historical person, Francisco Goya the painter, as protagonist and renders his life in a realistic mode, which is enhanced by references to specific places in Madrid and Saragossa, to traditions, and to eating habits, and

by the use of expressions in Spanish. That Marlowe follows the traditional model of the historical novel is also evident from the lineal and teleological design of his story line, solely disturbed by the introductory chapter to each of the six Books *Colossus* is composed of.

Chapter Three revolves around Goya's mental disorder and the close liaison between madness and art. Ingeniously, Calvo-Pascual posits that madness arises as the response to the cruel socio-political context that led to the War of Independence, but that it also operates as a strategy of survival. Phrased differently, Goya's departure from reason was the only reasonable and responsible way to cope with the irrational reality surrounding him. Eloquently, the author expresses this in the following terms:

> When his master Francisco Bayeu criticizes both the lines Goya draws as being "pure chaos" and his baroque excess of color in contrast with the "reason", order and sobriety of neoclassical line and sobriety, the protagonist expounds his belief that Bayeu does not understand reason —since reason for Goya, is color […]. In other words, the protagonist's conception of order is the chaos of the neoclassic. Hence, the critiques of Goya's paintings as chaotic acquire a new, positive dimension, since this chaos appears as the new order of reason that enables the artist to discern and cope with the chaotic, disastrous reality he reflected in those paintings. (46-47)

Finally, Calvo-Pascual reflects on how Marlowe, through this text, presents an indirect critique of Spanish reality in the twentieth century, when the novel was written, whose reality he experienced firsthand, having lived on and off in Spain for ten years, gathering information. Likewise, in *The Memoirs of Christopher Columbus; with Stephen Marlowe*, Marlowe uses events of the past to illuminate those of the present, but the anachronisms this time are forthright. Chapter Four delves deep into Columbus' life so as to gauge Marlowe's fidelity to historical records. His accuracy and thoroughness over matters of historiography is counterbalanced by sundry comparisons to the French revolution, literary references and descriptions of later periods —Columbus himself alluding to Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, Samuel Coleridge, and Sigmund Freud—, which are used to ponder on the nature of time as an uncertain and sinuous structuring device. Just like *Colossus*, this narrative loses any claim to historical truthfulness by fictionalizing the lives of historical personages and by introducing characters that did not exist and events that never occurred. But Marlowe goes further in breaking the sequential, cause-and-effect presentation of reality through the use of irony, contradiction, philosophical digressions, fragmentation, juxtaposition of different voices, collage of genres, shifts in style, overlays in time and place, and a multiplicity of formats, all of which combine, in Calvo-Pascual's view, to invalidate Columbus' reliability both as a narrator and a historian, as well as to demystify the grand and heroic

element of the discoverer. Springing from the non-linearity of the narrative is the element of chance, whose interrelation with the hidden pattern of order behind the apparent randomness of the events related in the novel is investigated in Chapter Five.

The Death and Life of Miguel de Cervantes; a Novel by Stephen Marlowe begins with the undocumented friendship of Cervantes' great-grandfather and Christopher Columbus, whereby Marlowe connects this novel with his previous one. In Chapter Six, Calvo-Pascual focuses again on the mixture of historical truth and fantasy and examines in detail the representations of persons, objects and customs out of place in this novel. Significantly, she revisits Michel Foucault's concept of "heterotopia" in order to apply it to the notion of time outside of time. Defined as the space with "the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect", heterotopia provides a useful tool of analysis for historiographic metafiction insofar as the latter echoes texts and contexts of the past while querying them through parody. The anachronisms in *The Death and Life of Miguel de Cervantes* are more subtle than in *The Memoirs of Cristopher Columbus*, yet, Calvo-Pascual promptly points out, the effect is stronger. In her words, "The subtlety of these elements entails that the readers' suspension of disbelief is not constantly disturbed by the narrator's outrageous comments […]. Consequently, the larger degree of involvement in the reading process produces a greater impact when the fiction that sustained the suspension of disbelief is dismantled" (153). This dismantling occurs at certain moments in the book, mostly in "Part Second", which covers the period of Cervantes' liberation from captivity in Algiers until his death in 1616. Marlowe does not respect the few existing historical records existing on the writer's life during this period, and imagines a spurious course of events which, of course, did not take place. This speculation about an alternative work gives the work a science-fiction quality that paradoxically accentuates its "Cervantesque feeling of authenticity" (149).

Chapter Seven explores the science-fiction elements that, "like atomic particles" (155), rearrange themselves to create parallel realities, to later focus on the alternative mental order of Marlowe's Cervantes, who is read in the light of Don Quixote. It is important to note the dependence of chaotic systems on initial conditions, the potential of any system to fall into chaos, and the fact that chaos theory deals with the behavior of dynamical models (Kellert 1993). This accounts for Calvo-Pascual's careful attention to "the motif of the protagonist running away from his hometown with the help of a powerful man after an accident" (186) that sets the three novels in motion, and the nomadic trait shared by Cervantes and Marlowe. A summary of the most important aspects of the chapters serves as a conclusion.

Chaos and Madness is theoretically engaged. The author has an admirable ability to explain abstruse concepts in simple terms. Her analysis is sophisticated, yet clear and fluently written. As a rule, Calvo-Pascual works with precise definitions, leading readers interested in the complex world of Stephen Marlowe by the hand. Part of the book's interest lies in the exhaustive and careful documentation of Marlowe's texts. Calvo-Pascual has searched through numerous historical databases, proving to be an excellent historian, despite the distrust of fact that is axiomatic in her writing. She succeeds in demonstrating the fictional/disorderly potential of history/order and thus adds a highly relevant perspective to the vast bibliography on historiographic metafiction.

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Celestino Deleyto and María del Mar Azcona present an in-depth study of the first three feature films of Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu, "one of the most powerful voices in the cinema of the new century", as the authors maintain in their Preface (ix). This is the first volume devoted exclusively to the Mexican director and it is part of the series Contemporary Film Directors edited by James Naremore. Every volume in the series is dedicated to a filmmaker, from Wong Kar-wai to Pedro Almodovar to Jim Jarmusch, to name but a few, and they all contain a critique of the director's work followed by an interview. In the present volume, the authors busy themselves with an important aspect of Iñárritu's oeuvre, namely, his dimension as a transnational, global artist, whilst devoting ample attention to his use of the multiprotagonist film and what the authors describe as "scrambled narratives" (xi). Well known for using a number of common themes and a somewhat unusual narrative structure, Iñárritu concedes in the final interview that he cannot "expand the pattern [of multiprotagonist films] anymore" (131) and so his next film, *Biutiful* (released in 2010), will be a linear narrative concentrating on the story of one character. We now know that this was indeed the case, but Deleyto and Azcona's study proves that in order to reach the linearity of *Biutiful*, the fragmentation of the multiprotagonist film had to be explored to its ultimate consequences.

"I was always an outsider," Iñárritu claims in the interview with the authors (123). Deleyto and Azcona set out to investigate the reasons for such a presumed

marginality with incisive and meticulous care, dissecting the first three works of the director; that is, the ones which brought him international fame: *Amores perros* (2000), *21 Grams* (2003), and *Babel* (2006). The first part of the study, entitled "Of Times and Places: The Films of Alejandro González Iñárritu", is devoted to a critical approach of the three films, whilst the second contains the interview with the director which took place in Barcelona on June 22, 2009, while he was immersed in the postproduction of *Biutiful*. In the interview, we discover an intimate Iñárritu who distances himself from his more public persona: a director who is generous, kind, intelligent, and well read. The structure of the interview mirrors that of the study, becoming a splendid complement to it. The interview not only echoes the proposals made by Deleyto and Azcona in the course of their analysis, but also reverberates them, acting as a kind of acoustic chamber for the ideas they have been structuring.

It would seem that for a filmmaker who claims that "art should have no nationality" (122) the contextualization of his oeuvre should be a banal exercise. Nothing further from the truth. Deleyto and Azcona wisely decide to begin their study by situating Iñárritu within the history of Mexican cinema and culture, which allows them to demonstrate the ways in which he transcends national parameters. The authors question the validity of the concept of Mexican national cinema and in a solid, articulate manner, explore how Iñárritu's texts prove "the extremely porous nature of that concept" (3). Later, in the interview, the director proves them right: "Nationalist cinema as a concept does not interest me," he asserts (122). One of the most stimulating questions asked in relation to this idea is whether Iñárritu's films represent a rethinking of Mexican identity for the twenty-first century or they are instances of the crisis of national cinemas. Even further and more basically: whether they are evidence of a crisis of the cultural concept of national identity in general. Reference is made here to the antecedents, the older generation of Mexican filmmakers (Ripstein, Hermosillo, Leduc, amongst others), and the triad Alejandro González Iñárritu-Alfonso Cuarón-Guillermo del Toro as representatives of the new Mexican cinema in its more transnational aspect or, as Jeff Menn puts it: the Mexican "Nouvelle Vague" (2007: 70 and passim).

In relation to the ideas outlined above, the exploration of the concept of "Mexicanidad" is much welcomed by readers who at this stage may have a feeling akin to the one expressed by Iñárritu in the interview, when he claims that "the image projected by Mexican cinema is bipolar" (124). Within "Mexicanidad", Deleyto and Azcona pay particular attention to the constituents of solitude and awareness of death as contributing to the construction of Mexican identity.

Firmly rooted in Mexican cinema's rhetoric of excess, *Amores perros* exemplifies the impact of the multiprotagonist format, a narrative structure the influence of

which can be traced in popular telenovelas, the novels of William Faulkner (22), and the way Iñárritu's father tells stories, "a primary influence" according to the filmmaker (128). In their thorough and incisive analysis of this first film, the authors focus on the initial car crash which constitutes the origin of the narrative, proving how urban dynamics become a privileged setting for multiprotagonist films, in so far as they offer random connections —"accidental crisscrossing" (31)— amongst citizens of the big city.

The presentation of a truly enticing mosaic of lives ruled by random events is the emollient which promotes the contemporary feeling of a world beyond our understanding, tragically explored in Iñárritu's second film, *21 Grams*. As the authors accurately prove, the display of emotional time in the film has the power to capture the instability and precariousness of human identity. Human experience, however, can be structured in a myriad of alternative ways. Iñárritu's blockbuster *Babel*, proves firm evidence of this. Here the authors focus on the temporal structure of the film, offering a scrupulous and exhaustive analysis. The key theoretical reference is to Manuel Castells's concept of 'timeless time', one of the main features of 'the network society'. From here on, the authors demonstrate how the narrative structure of the film is based on the clash between temporal paradigms. By making reference to the use of time, musical score, and converging narrative strands, Deleyto and Azcona reflect upon the dynamics of multiprotagonist films.

If time is of the utmost importance, as has been mentioned above, space also features high in the construction of Iñárritu's narratives. Again, reference is made here to the work of Manuel Castells, cleverly combined with ideas by philosopher Michel de Certeau and geographer Yi-Fu Tuan. *Babel*, the authors claim, is a fictionalization of the space of flows; namely, "migrations, diasporas, and tourism [which] may not be so closely connected with communication networks, but they are as characteristic of the social structure of the modern world as those in charge of the information systems" (67). The fluctuating concept of space is also explored in relation to *Amores perros* (Mexico) and *21 Grams* (Memphis and Albuquerque).

"The most dangerous borders are the ideological, not the physical ones," Iñárritu claims in the final interview (126). A typical feature of space is its ambiguity, its mobility. The authors find an interesting metaphor of this in the director's move from Mexico to the US ('Al otro lado'), together with his characters and stories. The concept of 'la frontera' has ample and firm "presence in Mexican history, in the definition of national identity, and in the Mexican collective psyche" (88), as evidenced by the existence of a wide number of border films from the 1970s on. Deleyto and Azcona focus here on the special position occupied by *Babel*, a hybrid between a border movie and a multiprotagonist film, particularly in the section

devoted to the story of Amelia, who goes to Tijuana in order to attend her son's wedding. The reference in this section is to the seminal study on border theory written by Gloria Anzaldúa in 1999, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, which allows the authors to claim that "In a world characterized by more frequent and intense transnational links between people, the border is where the transnational takes place, and the borderland is the space constructed around such exchanges" (96). Widely centred around Tijuana and what it represents in the film, Deleyto and Azcona examine music and iconography in order to offer an insightful exploration of such an ambiguous space to conclude that "In *Babel*, Tijuana is the site of the diasporic public sphere" (100), a cultural borderland which contributes to the film's vivid sense of locatedness together with Tokyo and the Moroccan villages of the other two stories.

Celestino Deleyto and María del Mar Azcona offer an important contribution on the work of one of the most interesting contemporary filmmakers. Through meticulous analysis and attention to detail, style and structure, the authors offer an in-depth analysis of the work of Alejandro González Iñárritu. They reveal his innovative appropriation of the generic convention of multiprotagonist films whilst deploying time, space, and aesthetics in his own personal, fascinating way.

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NEO-VICTORIAN TROPES OF TRAUMA. THE POLITICS OF BEARING AFTER-WITNESS TO NINETEENTH-CENTURY SUFFERING

Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, eds.
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Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben's *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma. The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering* represents an illuminating and comprehensive study of trauma and post-traumatic shock discourse in the context of their frequent presence in Neo-Victorian literary works from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The selection of essays in this volume makes for an understanding of the varied forms in which trauma in Neo-Victorian fiction can be re-enacted and, to some extent, re-experienced.

A particularly helpful aspect in *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma* is the inclusion of the introductory section, which provides an informative overview of the chief concepts and ideas to be dealt with in the course of the book. Hence, it emphasizes the double temporal focus of trauma fiction —obviously concerned simultaneously with the moment in the past when the ordeal took place and the point in the present in which its effects continue to reverberate. Kohlke and Gutleben also encourage a consideration of the political implications of bringing back past wounds and they stress —as many of the essays in the volume also do— the often vindictive value of such a decision. Hand in hand with the political finality of historical memory, as the authors note, go the ethical implications this may entail. Inasmuch as it is concerned with dreadful episodes of human suffering: the belated re-enactment of tragedy requires a conscientious approach which, if abandoned, easily verges on sensationalism and morbid zeal. Finally, Kohlke and Gutleben

provide an outline of the main strategies that are identified throughout the different articles in the book in order to represent trauma. They anticipate how Neo-Victorian fiction writers resort to either the objectification of trauma, concentrated on the creation of a work of art or even the reception of it, and occasionally to the mimicking of the very signs and symptoms of the trauma itself.

The main body of *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma* consists of three parts. The essays in Part I, "Poethics and Existential Extremity: Crises of Faith, Identity, and Sexuality", reflect on how traumatic experiences, fundamentally at an individual level, such as crises of sexual identity or personal definition, or the collapse of personal beliefs, inform so much Neo-Victorian literature. As is cleverly suggested by the pun in the title, Part I is concerned with the discussion of the ethics and the aesthetics of the retrieval of certain traumatic events in the Victorian past. A study by the editors, "Postmodernism Revisited: The Ethical Drive of Postmodern Trauma in Neo-Victorian Fiction", heads up the section by discussing the conjunction of Postmodernist ideas and Neo-Victorian narratives. In this regard, the position of trauma discourse at the intersection of those artistic tendencies and Victorian literature, and the long-lasting influence of the traumatic effects projected upon literary creations from all of these movements, are proposed by Kohlke and Gutleben as the major hypotheses leading to the presence of trauma in Neo-Victorian literature.

With those views as a mainframe, the next two chapters analyze the recreation by works of Neo-Victorian fiction of traumas which had originated as a result of the clash between religious and scientific ideas. Accordingly, a common core of Darwinian theories is shared by the works examined in Georges Letissier's and Catherine Pesso-Miquel's articles. In the former, "Trauma by Proxy in 'The Age of Testimony': Paradoxes of Darwinism in the Neo-Victorian Novel", Letissier notes how relevant the anxieties and distress provoked by scientific discourses from the Victorian era, in particular, those connected with Darwinian postulates on natural selection or the theory of evolution, continue to be for Neo-Victorian authors. The latter, as Letissier observes, will envision this ideological conflict either as a reality of catastrophic dimensions or as the key to a renewal of our system of values. Pesso-Miquel, in "Apes and Grandfathers: Traumas of Apostasy and Exclusion in John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Graham Swift's *Ever After*", insists on the centrality of Darwinian science in Neo-Victorian fiction. In her article, Pesso-Miquel proposes reflecting on how parody or irony in these and other Neo-Victorian novels may serve to create in the reader a feeling of empathy with the traumatic experiences at the core of these fictions. As the author notes, in opposition to Victorian novels, which offered a view of evolution as synonymous with progress and Empire, these stories present, rather, a negative

result of this evolutionary process, which ends up in corruption and decay. From a gender studies perspective, Part I closes with the exploration of another traumatic reality around which Neo-Victorian novels frequently turn, as is the issue of incest. Mark Llewellyn's article, "Perfectly Innocent, Natural, *Playful*': Incest in Neo-Victorian Women's Writing", goes beyond the ideological analysis of how trauma derived from episodes of abuse and incestuous relationships reverberates in works by A.S. Byatt and Sarah Waters to raise questions even about the ethics of our own re-reading of the Victorian past.

The individual focus of the belated re-experiencing of trauma shifts to a collective one in Parts II and III. Even though only explicitly stated in Part III, entitled "Contesting Colonialism: Crises of Nationhood, Empire, and Afterimages", Parts II and III both deal with the effects of tragic events associated somehow with the action of colonialism —a fact which remains slightly imprecise in the case of Part II. Under the title "History's Victims and Victors: Crises of Truth and Memory", Part II gathers articles which reflect on fictional works which reenact the collapse of notions of nation and Empire when these become blurred by the traumatic outcome of imperialistic expansion in the colonies. In this regard, Rostan insists on the pragmatic capacity of literature to elicit a form of solidarity which results in a therapeutic re-experiencing of traumatic feelings. Hence, Dianne F. Sadoff studies the case of two Neo-Victorian re-writings of Dickens' novels —Lloyd Jones' *Mister Pip* and Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*— to demonstrate how these three authors coincide in their presentation of trauma as an unrepresentable reality. In view of this, as Sadoff argues, their works attest for the need to immerse the reader in a scenario which is still haunted by the anxieties, guilt, and shame of the deferred action of the ordeal.

The volume continues to discuss the issue of the (un)representability of trauma, which takes an interesting turn when considering the graphical presentation of the traumatic event itself. In this regard, Vanessa Guignery's article "Photography, Trauma, and the Politics of War in Beryl Bainbridge's *Master Georgie*", engages in a debate about the reliability of war photographs distributed by the media in the Victorian period. This idea, central in Bainbridge's novel, leads Guignery to distrust our apprehension of traumas from the past and our propensity to be manipulated by central authorities. The ethical dimension of trauma, although with a focus on the postcolonial after-reminiscences of its effects, is also at the core of Celia Wallhead and Marie-Luise Kohlke's essay "The Neo-Victorian Frame of Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*: Temporal and Traumatic Reverberations". The discussion here fittingly links Guigney's study of the untrustworthiness of our after-perceptions of tragedy, insofar as Wallhead and Kohlke's analysis brings to the fore a contemporary fictional attempt to subvert that kind of centralized manipulation.

On this occasion, the authors highlight Mitchell's novel's attempt to make the reader approach the reality of trauma by destroying our traditional Western-based views and taking us closer to the Other's position.

From a almost opposite perspective, although with a similar purpose of attaining the reader's empathy with the post-suffering of the dire consequences of war, Kate Mitchell's "Australia's 'Other' History Wars: Trauma and the Work of Cultural Memory in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*" examines the involvement of this novel in the ethical project of retrieving past traumas for contemporary readers. Mitchell thus stresses the value of subjectivity and the action of emotional engagement in historical fiction as a means of communing with an audience that is likewise impelled by emotional forces. In connection with this, Rostan has also insisted on the advantages of representing collective trauma in Neo-Victorian fiction, where, despite the difficulties it entails, "it simultaneously bombards the everyday with the grave magnitude of the extraordinary and, paradoxically, converts this extraordinary experience to a generalizable phenomenon across a collective" (Rostan 2006: 176).

In its last section —Part III— the volume offers a series of studies with the postcolonial as a common background. Nevertheless, as was mentioned before, it perhaps lacks some further subdivisions or specifications, as the first two essays included in this part are evidently concerned with the politics of gender within the umbrella of the postcolonial. Hence, in "Famine, Femininity, Family: Rememory and Reconciliation in Nuala O'Faolain's *My Dream of You*", Ann Heilmann examines how the suffering caused by the Irish Famine in the 1850s, aggravated by the constraints of being a woman in this period, is presented as an open wound whose pain reverberates in the life of Kathleen, the protagonist of O'Faolain's novel. For Heilmann, the remembrance of trauma on this occasion sets in motion a form of remediation by prompting the reader towards "empathic unsettlement", a sensitivity that entails "being responsive to the traumatic experience of others". (LaCapra 2001: 41-42).

After approaching trauma from a feminist postcolonial perspective, the volume brilliantly leads us to a discussion that challenges some of the main tenets of the previous analysis. Elisabeth Wesselin's article —"Unmanninng Exoticism: The Breakdown of Christian Manliness in The *Book of the Heathen*"— revises the treatment of trauma in Robert Edric's novel focusing on its conception of masculinity. What she finds is a harsh critique of manliness —frequently associated with the Christian duties of the evangelisation and control of the colonies. Simultaneously, the attack on Victorian beliefs concerning the superiority of the white man —as she observes— defies the traditional notion of "empathic settlement" from the previous discussion to unravel the reality of

a shared post-suffering of trauma marked by the different power position of its participants.

The inscriptive or commemorative value of mourning as the belated experience of trauma within the Canadian context is the centre of the article by Elodie Rousselot, "Turmoil, Trauma, and Mourning in Jane Urquhart's *The Whirlpool*". Rousselot revises the use of postmodern techniques in the novel in order to debunk the biased presentation of traumatic events in Victorian literature. In particular, the saturation and excess in the employment of some of those traditional resources in *The Whirlpool* are examples of this, while at the same time they allow mourning to act as a centripetal force whereby a necessary sense of community may be achieved for the Canadian nation.[1] The perils of a partial, Western-based approach to postcolonial trauma are also at the core of the last article in the book, "Tipoo's Tiger on the Loose: Neo-Victorian Witness-Bearing and the Trauma of the Indian Mutiny". Here, Marie-Luise Kohlke examines how fictions on the Indian Mutiny have reiteratively, both in Victorian and Neo-Victorian literature, served as an alibi for reasserting Otherness and the socio-political hierarchy between the colonies and the metropolis.

This excellent compilation of essays on the politics of trauma in Neo-Victorian fiction would have gained a lot had it been completed by a concluding chapter. The multiplicity of concepts and ideas handled throughout the various essays in the book requires a recapitulation. Nonetheless, the volume is outstanding and undoubtedly represents a landmark for the study of Neo-Victorian fiction.

Notes

[1]. In this regard, Judith Butler, as Rousselot very conveniently observes, has noted that marking that loss "becomes condition and necessity for that certain sense of belonging" (Butler 2003: 467).

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TRAGEDY AND OTHERNESS: SOPHOCLES, SHAKESPEARE, PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Tragedy and psychoanalysis have always been at work within each other —with major tragedies explicitly inspiring Freud's work, and with psychoanalysis waiting to unravel the conflict between next of kin in the works of classical tragedians like Sophocles or Shakespeare. Nicholas Ray writes from within the field of psychoanalytic criticism— a little askew, though, as the approach he favors is broadly that of Jean Laplanche, and he casts a critical gaze on the Freudian concepts and on Freud's account of the self. The Oedipus, notably, is here an object of interrogation, rather than a psychical process which is taken for granted. Ray stresses the complexity of the process by which self relates to other in both tragedies and psychoanalysis, a complexity which may be foreclosed by Freud's own formulations. Or perhaps by an overly strict adherence to them.

One significant point in his argument is Freud's early formulation, and then abandonment, of the 'seduction theory' —i.e., Freud came to believe that neurotic symptoms did not originate in an actual traumatic childhood episode, furthering instead the view that such traumatic episodes were retroactively created fantasies. This was a crucial step for Freudian psychoanalysis to take, all the more so from the point of view of psychoanalytical poetics, since the psychic material came to be treated as being analogous to fiction. These fantasies are grounded, according to standard Freudianism, on a universal and deterministic process of sexualization. The development of the Oedipal theory coincides with Freud's use of Sophocles

and then Shakespeare as illustrations. Ray's book sets out to reexamine the relationship between the theory and the texts, to reread the texts askew from the Freudian view, watching the blind spots of Freud's reading, and to challenge Freud's totalizing and deterministic view of sexuality and fantasy.

This is an interesting project in many senses, not just as a critical revaluation of Freudian criticism or a new examination of tragedies by Sophocles and Shakespeare —it also provides suggestive insights for a theory of retrospection and of retroactive effects— what Freud called *Nachträglichkeit*. Ray's reexamination of psychoanalysis is indebted to Laplanche's critique of the Oedipus: according to Laplanche, Freud's account of psychosexual development is misleadingly endogenous and deterministic and does not make sufficient allowance for otherness, for the unexpectedness and contingency of the encounter with externality and the other. Freud's Copernican revolution of the human subject was also Copernican in a limited sense, that is, it did not consider the possibility that there might be no center whatsoever for the psyche. In his poststructuralist version of psychoanalysis, the self is radically de-centered, and this calls for a rewriting of the Oedipus. In abandoning the theory of seduction, and the role it gave to exogenous elements in the constitution of the self, Freud was conniving with the subject's tendency to mask his heteronomy, his dependence on the intervention of the other. Laplanche insists on the fundamental otherness of the messages received by the infant: otherness in the sense that they are fundamentally misunderstood, coming as they come from an unassimilated adult world, and otherness because of their lack of transparency to the adults, the senders, as unconscious elements are involved in any message. Therefore Laplanche goes back to the seduction hypothesis with a difference —any interaction between the child and the adult world contains a potential for the element of retroactive traumatism that Freud had identified in his early formulation of the seduction hypothesis. And the subject, and his unconscious, are structured around these unassimilated or insufficiently symbolised elements —all of which is Laplanche's own version of the Lacanian tenet that the unconscious is not so much within the subject as 'between' subjects. These psychoanalytic models would of course benefit from an integration with a theory of social interaction, and of the social constitution of the subject understood as an interiorized system of relationships —which was in part R.D. Laing's contribution— although I am not aware of any sustained and satisfactory integration of psychoanalytic work with, say, Goffman's symbolic interactionalism.

Riding on the back of Laplanche's theory of the role of alterity in the constitution of the subject, the self-stated aim of the book is "to endeavour to bear witness to the irreducible alterities which inhabit the three tragedies examined, and the specific ways in which they can be shown to resist the exigency of narcissistic closure to which Freud's thought becomes more emphatically subject after the

formal repudiation of the seduction theory" (42). Ray defines, in passing, what a Laplanchian hermeneutics of art might be: a nonprogrammatic encounter with otherness, given that works of art or culture are prime examples of enigmatic otherness, indeterminate messages only partly controlled by the author, and which will produce undeterminable effects, unforeseen by the artist. "In other words, the site of cultural production is a *reopening* of the subject's originary relationship to the other" (44). And Freud's own production of psychoanalysis was partly derived from his encounter with the enigmatic alterity of Sophocles' and Shakespeare's tragedies. These texts (*Oedipus Tyrannus, Julius Caesar, Hamlet*) apparently narrate the protagonist's assumption of an identity, a centring of autonomous subjectivity: "Oedipus the fifth-century philosopher, Brutus the revolutionary libertarian, Hamlet the frustrated figure of an ostensibly modern severance from paternal law" (50). Ray seeks to identify in the tragedies themselves an originary de-centering at work, one which undermines the protagonist's status as an autonomous subject. These are, moreover, tragedies about parricide, a subject central to Freud's account of ritual and psychic life in *Totem and Taboo.* Parricide as a move necessary for the coming-into-being of the subject is ambivalent, and Ray further explores its intrinsic ambivalence, already prominent in Freud's analysis, with an added emphasis on the role of pre-existing and external otherness in the constitution of the parricidal subject. That otherness is partly accounted for by "the contingent ideologies of the subject's surrounding culture" (53) —the trajectory of the subject is irreducible to an intrinsic fate. As an analyst, Freud identifies with Oedipus, Brutus, Hamlet —while Ray tries to dissociate himself from this identification and underlines those elements in the text which problematize the protagonist's autonomy, those "forces which threaten the self-presence that Freud is led to assign to the primal, parricidal text" (55).

Ray's reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and of Freud's reading of the same, emphasizes the elements of enigmatic otherness in the mythical story. This alterity is not adequately addressed by Freud, who "remains blind to the troublingly enigmatic specificity of the tragedy" (59). Oedipus, an optimistic rationalist, relies on his own intellectual strength and minimizes the significance of the Sphinx's challenge —Freud does likewise, calling it a "riddle", whereas the story resonates with more troubling and enigmatic overtones. Ray notes, for instance, that Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams,* which first addresses the Oedipal theme, was written according to Freud as "a portion of my own self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death" (in Ray, 61). There is also a story told by Ernest Jones about a curious premonitory scene, in which Freud saw himself, like Oedipus, as a riddle solver, apparently without realizing the unconscious irony of this identification. Oedipus' answer to the Sphinx was an answer to a riddle, but Ray notes that it should have been understood as an enigma, not a riddle. An enigma may require an answer, but

"any response will be inadequate" (63) —and, moreover, the interpreter's relation to his answer is an enigma in its own right. Oedipus was associated with the fifth-century philosophers by Hegel and then by Jean-Joseph Goux (*Oedipus, Philosopher*), as the emblem of the new humanist paradigm which saw man as the measure of all things, a symbol of Western thought as a whole, in fact. Goux notes that, contrary to Nietzsche, Hegel did not realize the troubling and ambivalent consequences that the tragic fate of Oedipus suggests for philosophy. Freud's notion of the unconscious comes to symbolize, too, the dark, pulsional, parrincestual nature of this move, and it is not by chance that "Freud discovers the unconscious and the Oedipal drives at the same time" (Goux in Ray: 75). Yet the reduction of fate to the unconscious, Freud's own answer to the Oedipal riddle, only has the effect "of displacing the riddle elsewhere, namely 'back' into the primordial constitution of the subject" (79). Freud's partial blindness in reading the Oedipus story discloses for Ray "a great deal more about Sophocles' play and, in turn, about psychoanalysis than Freud was fully able to grasp" (83).

Chapter Two of *Tragedy and Otherness* is an excellent reading of *Julius Caesar*. The relationship to the Freudian project is, however, much more indirect —the play is related via a comment by Harold Bloom to Freud's parricidal theory of ritual in *Totem and Taboo*. However, Freud's explicit references to this tragedy are meager and indirect, and arguably Ray makes too much of them. Still, the chapter stands on its own right as an outstanding reading in the deconstructivist mode. It is also an example of the way Ray combines psychoanalytic insights with historical and contextualized readings —seeing *Julius Caesar* not merely as an instance of archetypal parricide, but as an intervention in the context of early modern debates on tyranny and kingship: "If the *tyrannus* of the fifth century BC marks out the (albeit aporetic) vector of an inaugural subjectivity, the figure of the tyrant proleptically deconsecrated by early modern tragic drama is a measure of the subjectivity which the sons of the realm are constitutively denied: their liberty and autonomy is to be attained at the cost of rising up against the absolute Father, setting him on the 'scaffold' and cutting him off" (120).

But was Caesar a tyrant, or is tyrannicide a legitimate step in any case? Following Ernest Schanzer's reading, Ray argues that "the tragedy works to hold open the very question of just what it is that the assassination might mean" (122). The event itself was inherently ambiguous —the crux of the matter being that Julius Caesar was *not yet* a tyrant, although he seemed to be well on the way to becoming one. Therefore, his assassination could be described as tyrannicide only proleptically, and the doubt is cast as to whether the actions of his murderers were caught in a vicious circle, or a defectively self-fulfilling prophecy. Alterity enters the argument as follows: everywhere the play resists attempts to oversimplify the significance of

Caesar's assassination (although there is no lack of one-sided views coming from many characters, notably the contrasting public speeches of Brutus and Antony). What is more, the play "refuses to be assimilated to the model of anachronistic back-projection whereby the present context of its composition would impose, in terms of its own epistemological purview, a single and identifiable meaning in the past it represents" (124). Caesar is a complex character, inherently contradictory in his actions and purposes, and the play preserves the enigmatic core of his otherness —which could only have been dissipated by the non-existent future which was cut short by the murder. And the conspirators' actions also had unintended consequences (notably the Civil War), different too from the ideal restoration of the Republic they invoked as their purpose.

Once again, Ray's reading is finely attuned to the narrative interplay of prospection and retrospection. In this case, too, he points out that Freud's reading of this tragedy (to the extent that there is one) forecloses the play of difference, for example in the interpretation of Brutus' character. Brutus too is complex, divided within, hesitating between two father figures or ancestors, Caesar himself, perhaps, and (or, rather, *or*) the ancient Brutus who expelled Tarquin from Rome and instaurated the Republic. Ray examines the way in which Brutus' "double coinage" is manipulated by Cassius and others, and the way the paradox of the self cannot be solved here either: "The moment of centring, the accomplishment of selfhood, is equally and necessarily one of decentring" (141), and so Brutus fashions himself as an inherently divided subject. The tragedy incorporates the double genealogy of Brutus with a greater tolerance for contradiction than is found in Plutarch —emphasizing the way Brutus is, like Rome, at war with himself. The difference between tyrannicide and tyranny is also deconstructed, as the logic of their actions drives the conspirators into mimicking the very gestures of "hermeneutic tyranny" they reject in the prospective tyrant.

In formulating his seduction theory, Freud had to acknowledge that the original (now traumatic) event cannot be returned to its exact original state, as the Same —and Ray uses this analogy to emphasize the element of otherness that the conspirators' deeds and their interpretations add to Caesar's self and actions. Perhaps Hillis Miller's conception of the performative would be a useful complement to Ray's perspective here: the conspirators try to define Caesar as a tyrant, etc., and they do not recognize the constitutive and performative element in their own portrayal of him, due to the inescapable prematurity of their deed. As to the play itself, in Ray's reading it systematically refuses to determine the meaning of the events it portrays: one could perhaps say that its own performative intervention in the events is a deliberate self-dismantling one: "Shakespeare's metadrama seems to say that the deed can be repeated, the scene reconstructed, the words spoken translated, but that this alone will not give us access to what the

scene means" (159). It might be added that this view holds a suggestive potential of implications for the staging, one could almost say the performative performance, of Shakespeare's play. The conspirators themselves imagine the future performances, but quite characteristically they assume their meaning will be nonambiguous. The playwright knows otherwise.

The Freudian connection comes almost as an afterthought to this chapter: in *Totem and Taboo* Freud assumes that the Primal Patriarch's murder is unequivocally an instance of tyrannicide, although a reactive performance of guilt will follow in the rituals developing from it. Ray makes Freud side with the conspirators in their tendentious denunciation of the tyrant —since Freud conceives of the archetypal patriarch as consistently tyrannical. But one wonders whether Freud, like Brutus, was not somewhat more ambivalent in his views on the patriarch, under the surface of his text. "Complex, not the same as itself from the outset, the event, like the experience of trauma, makes possible and necessary the deferred and constant returns to it of which Shakespeare's [*or Freud's?] text* is only one of innumerable instances" (170).

Ray finds significant that Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was written in response to the death of Freud's own father. This book's reading of the protagonist's Oedipal conflict in *Hamlet* is well known, and it will therefore come as no surprise that Ray's last chapter on *Hamlet* engages more directly with Freud. While it examines the play from an interesting and original perspective, I find that it is less suggestive and intense than the previous chapters on *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Julius Caesar*. The main point is once again Freud's failure to adequately engage with otherness —in this case "leaving increasingly unacknowledged the significance of parental desire in the constitution of the subject's psychic life" (174). Once again the historical context plays a role —praying for the dead being at the time a Catholic custom recently banned under the new dispensations of the Church of England. The Ghost's call "Remember me!" rather than "Revenge!" should be interpreted in this connection, as well as Hamlet's general predicament, trapped in a mourning ritual without issue. This argument blends well with Stephen Greenblatt's reading of *Hamlet* in *Will in the World* or in *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Ray's reading complexly engages the critical literature on Hamlet understood (mistakenly, he argues) as a modern subject; Ray emphasizes the imagery of audition and "poisoning through the ear" —as symbols of excessive remembrance. Polonius' injunctions to Laertes are reread here, paradoxically, as representing a quite modern self-fashioning, free from the excessive weight of fatherly instruction. There is no absolute freedom from the father in Hamlet, but it is only when Hamlet becomes more self-determined, like Laertes, that he achieves a measure of freedom from the weight of paternal overdetermination, and is able to fulfil his mission. "Auto-fidelity must, in the final analysis, override fidelity to any of the

father's foregoing precepts" (207). But, as shown by the example of Polonius, this autonomy from paternal authority is also elicited and enabled by the father himself. As noted before, one might argue that there is in Ray's Hamlet an element of self-portrayal —as regards this distancing from the psychoanalytic Father, the better to fulfil his mission and also fashion his own life path.

An afterword insists that Freud's approach was not "mistaken" but rather caught up in the exigency of his own ipsocentric focus on the individual psyche. Ray, with Laplanche, emphasizes the role of unforeseen, multiple, and irreducible *others* in the constitution of the self. Attention to the role of otherness in the de-centered subject, he argues, should make psychoanalysis more aware of the multiple dimensions of the cultural field, and transform itself into a more de-centered, and more complex, inquiry into the structure and constitution of human subjects and their cultural artifacts. His book is an excellent contribution to this project.

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CIVILIZING AMERICA: MANNERS AND CIVILITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Dietmar Schloss, ed.

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Civilizing America is a collection of essays which originated in a Conference entitled "Civilizing America: Manners and Civility as categories of Social, Cultural, and Literary Analysis". It is a timely book for two reasons. Americans are unpopular in profoundly different ways with many people because of their apparent insensitivity to other cultures. A collection like this underscores the fact that Americans have been seriously concerned with questions of conduct and manners, though in their not so long history they have perceived these in different ways and manners have not always meant the same thing to all Americans. The other reason is frontally academic because this book advances and participates in an aspect of Civilization Studies in which manners and civility are key terms. The editor Dietmar Schloss recounts the scholarly interest in the role of conduct in the transformation of society sparked off by the English version of Norbert Elias's landmark study *Uber den Prozess der zivilisation* (1939) [*The Civilizing Process* (1978)]. Civilization Studies with America as the focus received a fillip with Elias's book and this collection is a contribution to this valuable kind of cultural criticism.

The book is complex and its excellent organization chronologically sets out the development of the idea of civility from colonial times to the present. It is prefaced by Schloss's own informative and argumentative Introduction. This is followed by an essay on civility in eighteenth century British women because it is in this location that one looks for initiatory moves for the discussion of manners in America. After

this European context we move to the American scene with a section on fashioning American identity in the colonial period and that of the early American Republic. There are essays here on American drama and the idea of self control (Fliegelman), food and civility in early America (Purucker), John Cotton (Schulz), social disgust in 18th century Anglo society (Shields) and Brockden Brown's novels (Verhoeven). This section is followed by one on the Search for American manners in the early nineteenth century with essays on John Neal and etiquette (Richter), Coopers's spat with Fanny Trollope (McWilliams) and Cooper's idea of manners (Clark), Emerson on manners (Herwig Friedl) and manners in Ante-Bellum America (Mulvey). The next section is on consolidation of manners in the late nineteenth century in America with essays on the American novel (Winnett), the American novel of manners (Bettina Friedl), James (Perosa), Benjamin Franklin and Alger (Scharnhorst), American Naturalism (Muller). The final section is about the demise and reinvention of manners after 1900 with essays on Modernity (Fluck), Ishmael Reed (Klinkowitz), Leslie Silko (Fischer-Hornung) and manners and contemporary American Fiction (Ickstadt). Clearly there is great range and depth in this collection.

Manners matter and this book is precisely an attempt to investigate the process by which manners and other types of restraint are deployed in America in the present context of the market, multiculturalism and democracy. That America has a Civilization one can grant, but, is it backed up by a culture of refinement and gentility? There is a question mark here and the question comes up time and again in writings by Americans. Conduct is crucial and it affects public behaviour and influences the public perception of a people. This collection, organized chronologically, gives us a sense of the ways in which manners, conduct and culture have shaped or not shaped America. It brings an interdisciplinary touch to crucial questions of manners and social change. Manners and civility were seen as inward things that shaped the culture of a people. Americans felt ambivalent on this way of looking at the matter. Culture, as the great Indian statesman, C. Rajagopalachari, has said, is about people applying all kinds of restraints upon themselves. But accepting the self-imposition of all kinds of restraints in a market economy, in a society which is democratic, and which has been profoundly influenced by the thinking of the Enlightenment was not that easy. It was recognized that perhaps the inward model could not explain the public nature of Americans very well. The old concept of manners is perhaps not very effective in understanding modern democratic market societies. The old values, and with the Renaissance gentleman in mind, implied etiquette, good behaviour, restraint, and a worldly wisdom which could engage with different situations with aplomb. But these are perhaps not as important in a market driven democracy like America where there has been an emphasis on being natural and doing your own thing.

Mark Twain's Huck Finn presents a view that is almost mythic in its resonance for Americans. He does not want to be civilized. He has been there before:

> The Widow Douglass, she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer, I lit out. I got into my old rags, and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied.

Huck represents the American wish to be natural and not burdened by the past, by culture or tradition. Much of American national character is the result of the Huck Finn syndrome. When Natty Bumpo refuses to settle down and marry and raise a family, or in cowboy movies when John Wayne lights out into the West with the sun going down we see powerful images of America and its refusal of gentility and civility and settled living.

Fanny Trollope was particularly repelled by the greedy and frenetic behaviour of Americans. Her refined aristocratic sensibility was offended. She visited America in the mid nineteenth century and pointed to American naturalness and lack of culture. Hers was an aristocratic concept of what manners should be like and was unsympathetic to democracy and equality. All men are not born equal. She was horrified by the landscape, disgusted with Cincinnatti which for her was a city of hogs, uncomfortable with a Mississippi steam boat, the kind Huck would have liked. She wrote:

> The total want of all the usual courtesies of the table, the voracious rapidity with which the viands were seized and devoured, the strange uncouth phrases and pronunciation; the loathsome spitting, from the contamination of which it was absolutely impossible to protect our dresses, the frightful manner of feeding with their knives, till the whole blade seemed to enter into the mouth; and the still more frightful manner of cleaning the teeth afterwards with a pocket knife, soon forced us to feel that we were not surrounded by the generals, colonels and majors of the old-world.

James Fenimore Cooper, who famously spoke of the American poverty of materials even as he defended the great landscape and the trees and rivers of America as worthy of literary treatment, had a more nuanced approach to her fulminations. In his *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found* he tried to do a balancing act and launch a defence of America, seeing the nation as involved in a cultural process, yet to be consummated. But he ended up more or less underscoring Fanny Trollope's criticism. Cooper saw Trollope's arguments as only part of the story but could not quite convince his readers about his three stages of settlement—the first stage being rigorous and requiring settlers to be affectionate with one another, the second stage of competition and occasional differences between families, and the

third stage of harmony. Cooper was a believer in a radical aristocracy and his deep-rooted conservatism is of a piece with the attitudes which produced the long line of Boston Brahmins who are all in a sense familiar with the mind of Europe and see America in that context, not as a law unto itself. They represent the face of American civility but clearly they are not dominant.

In fact, in the nineteenth century, the Boston Brahmins and the educated elites of the North, and in our times the recent phenomenon of celebrity culture, the Michael Jacksons, the Oprah Winfreys, the iconic sportsmen and women, are America's answer to the aristocracy of the Europeans. The aristocracy of Europe were expected to set an example in manners. One may quarrel with this but the fact remains that they at their best did provide leadership, though their decadence has been in evidence for quite a while. There was a trickle down effect and the masses imitated or saw the aristocracy as an ideal to be emulated. In America the situation is just the opposite. The iconic figures of America are not natural born aristocrats. They have made it big and demonstrated what is possible in America —any one is good enough but it is work and drive which brings you there. There is a trickle-up effect. This has had the effect of making all Americans potential celebrities. And that in turn made manners not a settled code which was handed down but something in the making —a process rather than a product. There is, as a witty scholar in Schloss's collection puts it, a "controlled decontrolling of emotional controls".

But this does not mean that Americans did not aspire to European ideals or engage with them in a sophisticated manner. The educated elites and the Boston Brahmins are a case in point. In fiction, not only Cooper, but also Hawthorne and James, find American naturalness problematic. Hawthorne was engaged with the Puritan past and uncomfortable with the rugged American present, precisely because he saw that the old world had much to offer in terms of manners and conduct. In fact, his criticism of the Puritan past was in direct proportion to the Puritans failing to conduct themselves properly. In James we see this tension interestingly represented in novels like *Daisy Miller* and *The Europeans*. What we have here is a profound critique of American naturalness set against aristocracy in Europe and Americans who believe themselves to be part of it. In Daisy's case, James is making the point that notwithstanding her fashionable attire and her sophisticated sense of dress she is destroyed by Americans who have internalized the hypocrisies of European manners and she is rejected by the American expatriate community because she is natural. American naturalness is American innocence. James gives us a take on the natural American as a tragic figure, certainly not the object of ridicule. As one of the essayists in this volume, Bertina Friedl says with much accuracy and finesse

> James's Daisy Miller is familiarly ostracized by those expatriate Americans whose Europeanized judgement on appropriate manners no longer permits them to regard natural good taste and artlessness as more appealing than inherited class distinctions and fastidiousness of behavior. They may be puzzled by Daisy's elegant appearance, but they are unable or unwilling to construe her spontaneity and unassuming friendliness as anything but vulgar.

Dean Howells also accepts James's sense of the natural as having to do with integrity of character which is sufficiently expressed through natural dignity and good manners. So American naturalness, when combined with elegance and sincerity, is superior to European aristocratic affectedness.

Whether one likes it or not, one is still judged by a code of manners, etiquette and good conduct, and Americans cannot be seen as not being interested in these matters. An aversion like Huck Finn's to external civilization is, of course not peculiar to America though I would argue that American history makes it particularly easy to dismiss such matters somewhat more expeditiously than an Englishman or a Frenchman would. The market is, of course, a determinant and getting on in life even to the exclusion of genteel manners is a strong temptation. The medieval belief in the civilizing process, so aptly described in the essay by Manfred Henz, has had necessarily to give way to a different conception of manners. In the Renaissance and till about the 18th century, thinkers believed that a society's progress was in direct proportion to the establishment of a polite code of behaviour, to the degree of self fashioning a person could engage himself in. To this, Americans, whether part of an elite or not, responded by invoking Locke and Rousseau with their belief in natural rights and began stressing the idea of the natural man. The state of nature was an ideal, and it became an American ideal. America was now seen as Nature's Nation. Jacksonian democracy as opposed to Jeffersonian aristocratic thinking informed the thought of major thinkers like Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau. America herself was a poem and Cooper's remark that America had a poverty of materials was actually a wrong conception because what seemed poverty was riches of nature. This was a view profoundly challenged by Cooper, Hawthorne and James, but they do this by offering variations of the natural position, not completely rejecting it but adding a nuanced and sophisticated dimension to it. And it is this strain in American thinking which in a way has prevented wholesale surrender to the extreme natural position. Formal American poetry is part of this interrogation of the free verse driven natural position. But both the naturalists and the not so natural are one in rejecting the conservatives as anti woman, anti democratic and de facto proponents of a corrupt aristocratic feudal order. Schloss's collection is an attempt to delineate the way in which Americans through the decades have engaged with questions of manners,

civility and conduct, something so visible in the "wealth and diversity of literary achievement that has come out of the United States over the past two hundred years" (xiii). Schloss further says "democratic freedom does not entail the radical absence of restraints but is itself the product of a complex ensemble of restraints and self restraints" (xiv). So we may conclude, agreeing with Schloss that obnoxious American behaviour does not preclude a serious self-reflexivity about these matters of moment. Americans do have manners after all!

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Abstracts

READING THE *HELICON* COLLAGE: HIDDEN STORIES IN THE COLLECTED FRAGMENTS

Elena Domínguez Romero

The present study sets out to show that the pastoral anthology *Englands Helicon* can be read as a compilation of separate poems or fragments, or of fragments interspersed with sequences of poems that form love stories here and there throughout the anthology. For this to be possible, the Classic models of Virgil's Eclogues II and VII have been followed so that the reconstruction of the sequence will be based on an analysis of the above mentioned models, taking the sequence as an *imitatio cum variatione* of the two eclogues.

Both possibilities were equally valid for seventeenth century readers who knew the literary tradition of the time. It all depended on how they chose to approach the text. This study also contends that most contemporary readers —unless specialists in Early Modern Literature— would need to be given the appropriate tools in order to be able to organise the fragments into love stories, that is, to read the *Helicon* poems in sequence.

Keywords: Early Modern, Virgil, anthologies, reading models, sequences.

El presente trabajo trata de poner de manifiesto que la antología poética *Englands Helicon* puede leerse como una compilación de 150 poemas individuales, pero también como una serie de secuencias de algunos de estos poemas. Estas secuencias, a su vez, darían lugar a las historias amorosas que tienen lugar a lo largo de la obra. Con esta finalidad se han seguido los modelos clásicos representados por las

Églogas II y VII de Virgilio de modo que la reconstrucción de las secuencias narrativas pueda basarse en los mencionados modelos como si de una *imitatio cum variatione* de las dos églogas se tratara.

Ambas posibilidades resultaban igualmente válidas para los lectores del siglo XVII que conocían a la perfección las convenciones literarias de su tiempo. Todo depende del modo en el que éstos decidieran aproximarse al texto. Sin embargo, este estudio también deja entrever que una gran mayoría de los lectores contemporáneos —excepto los especialistas en literatura del siglo XVII— necesitarían de determinadas herramientas de lectura para ser capaces de organizar los fragmentos de poemas en historias amorosas, esto es, para leer los poemas del *Helicon* a modo de secuencia.

Palabras clave: Período Moderno Temprano, Virgilio, antologías, patrones de lectura, secuencias.

TRANSFORMING THE WILDERNESS INTO GOD'S CREATION: JOHN JAMES AUDUBON IN A CANADIAN SPACE

María Jesús Hernáez Lerena

This article deals with the kind of knowledge historically imposed upon the wilderness of the New World, with the threat that nonverbal reality poses for the human mind, and with the taxonomic fever that took over Natural Science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I will look at these issues through two texts which cover the expedition of John James Audubon to Labrador (Canada) in the summer of 1833: one of them is a biographical document, *Audubon and His Journals* (1897), the other is a fictional work, the novel *Creation* (2002) written by Katherine Govier. I will draw from Audubon's *Journals* and from Govier's novel in order to discuss why Labrador was envisaged by both artists as challenging the ingrained human duty to draw lines and to separate one form of life from another. The uncharted territory of Labrador baffles Audubon's usual power to name and to draw, and takes the reader back to the myth of creation, to *Genesis*, where it is clearly established that nothing really exists without the confirmation of language.

Keywords: wilderness, scientific explorations, Genesis, Canadian literature, ecocriticism.

La novela de la autora canadiense Katherine Govier *Creation* (2002) se configura como un retrato ideológico del naturalista John James Audubon y de su vocación por catalogar el mundo animal, por ofrecer a su audiencia europea imágenes de nuevas especies de pájaros encontrados en Norteamérica. Su tarea como científico

y artista se enmarca en un periodo histórico en que la fiebre por expandir los conocimientos de la biología se justificaba gracias a la tarea mesiánica que Dios asignó a Adán de nombrar a todos los animales. En su estéril expedición a Labrador (Canadá), Audubon es víctima del miedo a una realidad todavía sin lenguaje —y por lo tanto amenazante— que representaban los territorios sin colonizar al norte de Norteamérica. Tanto sus *Diarios* (1897) como la novela de Govier, exploran ese miedo que es consecuencia de un hábito cultural que tiene raíces en la Biblia y en el conocimiento científico. Este artículo analiza la confluencia de los impulsos imaginativos e ideológicos presentes en los documentos autobiográficos de Audubon y en la novela de Govier, dentro del contexto crítico de la asimilación del paisaje en la literatura canadiense.

Palabras clave: naturaleza, expediciones científicas, Génesis, literatura canadiense, ecocrítica.

"BIG EMPTY NEGROES" AND "GAY, EXCITING" MEXICANS: RECONTEXTUALIZING FELLAHEEN IDENTITIES IN JACK KEROUAC'S *ON THE ROAD*

Eftychia Mikelli

The term 'Fellaheen' is used in *On the Road* to collectively refer to marginalized ethnic groups. My article looks at constructions of Fellaheen identities in the novel, exploring representations of racial and gendered images in mainstream 1950s America. The article argues that the main characters' perception of the Fellaheen is modelled upon the dissemination and reproduction of racialized and gendered stereotypes through dominant cultural practices in Cold War America. Addressing the biased discourses of his times, Kerouac explores their impact on individual, and by implication, national level, and ultimately questions their validity. Focusing on the novel's preoccupation with African-American and Native American characters, I examine the textual strategies that problematize and ultimately expose the absurdity of the premises that condition the reproduction of standardized images of the exotic. Particularly focusing on an exploration of gender issues in the novel, I also address the processes of colonization that seem to be in operation, and subsequently explore strategies of narrative resistance in *On the Road*.

Keywords: Jack Kerouac, The Subterraneans, Fellaheen, race, gender.

El término 'Fellaheen' se utiliza en *On the Road* para referirse a grupos étnicos marginados. Mi artículo estudia las construcciones de la identidad Fellaheen, indagando en las representaciones raciales y de género dominantes en la América

de los cincuenta. El artículo defiende que la percepción de los Fellaheen por parte de los personajes principales está influida por la diseminación y la reproducción de estereotipos raciales y de género a través de prácticas culturales dominantes en la América de la Guerra Fría. Kerouac aborda los prejuicios de su tiempo y explora su impacto a nivel individual y, por implicación, nacional, y finalmente cuestiona su validez. Teniendo como foco de atención la preocupación de la novela por los personajes afro-americanos y nativos americanos, me propongo examinar las estrategias textuales que cuestionan y, en última instancia, ponen al descubierto lo absurdo de las premisas que condicionan la reproducción de imágenes estandarizadas de lo exótico. En particular, me centro en explorar los temas de género en la novela, abordando también el proceso de colonización que parece operar, y, posteriormente, analizo las estrategias de resistencia narrativa en *On the Road*.

Palabras clave: Jack Kerouac, The Subterraneans, Fellaheen, raza, género.

LAS METÁFORAS PROVISIONALES DE LA POSTMODERNIDAD: LA OBRA DE WILLIAM GASS

Belén Piqueras

Philosopher Max Black proved in 1962 that metaphor is a rhetorical device that does not necessarily depend on an exegetic factor; he proposed instead the *Interactive* formulation that he based on the 'untranslatable' dimension of metaphor and that he understood as an alternative to the metaphorical mode of cognition by analogy existing until then. Metaphor, seen in this new light, emerges as a strategy of epistemological resistance aligned with some of the theoretical foundations of modernism and postmodernism.

This article maintains that metaphor finds a privileged position in postmodernism, and many writers —among whom William Gass deserves special attention as a disciple of Black himself— use this metaphor of *interactive* nature as a structural device of literary works that are very often founded on the intuitive processes of metafiction; these pieces, that translate with difficulty, are formulated both as allegories of the act of writing and as prototypes of formal integrity. Paradoxically though, the aesthetic utopia of modernist tincture originally conceived by these artists gets dissolved into polymorphic and labyrinthine texts that usually have an equivocal and provisional character as tropological constructions.

Keywords: modernism, postmodernism, metaphor, models, metafiction.

El filósofo Max Black demostró en 1962 que la metáfora es un recurso expresivo que no depende necesariamente de un factor exegético; propuso como alternativa

al modo metafórico de cognición por analogía, vigente hasta ese momento, una concepción *interactiva* de la metáfora basada en su 'intraducibilidad'. Así entendida, la metáfora emerge como una estrategia de resistencia epistemológica muy afín a algunos de los postulados fundamentales del modernismo y del postmodernismo.

Este artículo defiende que la metáfora encuentra un lugar privilegiado en el postmodernismo, y que muchos escritores, —entre los que hay que destacar a William Gass por ser discípulo del propio Black— recurren a este tipo de metáfora de naturaleza *interactiva* como principio estructural de unas obras fundamentadas habitualmente en los procesos intuitivos de la metaficción; son piezas difíciles de traducir, verdaderas alegorías del acto de escribir y prototipos de integridad formal que paradójicamente logran que la utopía estética de sesgo modernista que inicialmente parecen esbozar, se desdibuje en un texto polimórfico y laberíntico cuya viabilidad tropológica resulta equívoca y provisional.

Palabras clave: modernismo, postmodernismo, metáfora, modelos, metaficción.

ONCE WERE WARRIORS, BUT HOW ABOUT MAORITANGA NOW? NOVEL AND FILM AS A DIALOGIC THIRD SPACE

Cornelis Martin Renes

Alan Duff's bestselling novel *Once Were Warriors* (1990) raised bitter controversies for its harsh depiction of indigenous alienation in the ghettos of New Zealand's cities. Duff is part Maori and wrote from his own slum experience, and his text shifted responsibility for the Maori predicament and possible solutions partly back to the victims themselves, which met with fierce criticism from indigenous and progressive non-indigenous readership. Under the direction of Lee Tamahori, also of mixed descent, the novel found its way to the screen in 1995 and thus reached a world audience. Given that Duff's original screenplay was not used for the homonymous film, it should come as no surprise that novel and film tell different stories. While both embed a dysfunctional Maori family within a crippling urban environment, their content and discursive strategies are not quite the same. Applying a Bakhtinian approach to New Zealand's postcoloniality, this essay investigates up to what point the discursive dialogue between both narratives obeys the requirements of the narrative medium chosen and results in the marketing of different agendas and sites of contestation.

Keywords: postcolonialism, alienation, Maoriness, dialogism, third space.

La exitosa novela *Once Were Warriors* (Alan Duff 1990) provocó una gran polémica por su duro retrato de la alienación indígena de los ghettos de las ciudades neozelandesas. De ascendencia maorí y europea, Alan Duff parte de su experiencia vital en los ghettos para escribir su texto, en el que el autor también responsabilizó a los propios maorí por su existencia problemática en la ciudad y por no hallar soluciones, cosechando la desaprobación de los lectores tanto maorí como no maorí. Bajo la dirección de Lee Tamahori, también mestizo, la novela se adaptó para la gran pantalla en 1995 y el filme homónimo alcanzó fama mundial. Sin embargo, puesto que el guión original de Duff no se llegó a utilizar, no ha de sorprender que la novela y la película cuenten historias diferentes. Ambas retratan a una familia maorí disfuncional en un ambiente urbano opresivo, pero su contenido y estrategia discursiva divergen. Mirando la postcolonialidad maorí bajo una perspectiva bakhtiniana, este ensayo investiga hasta qué punto el diálogo discursivo entre ambas narrativas obedece a los requerimientos del medio narrativo escogido y tiene como resultado agendas y sitios de contestación divergentes.

Palabras clave: postcolonialismo, alienación, identidad maorí, dialogismo, 'third space'.

THROUGH THE EYE OF A POSTMODERNIST CHILD: IAN MCEWAN'S "HOMEMADE"

Jorge Sacido Romero
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From Romanticism onwards, childhood was constructed as an alternative to the alienating world of modern progress. Though this idealised version of childhood consecrated in Romantic literature was questioned by the end of the nineteenth century, the child's perspective on the adult world has remained throughout a useful way of exploring social deficiencies and of exposing some of its most unpalatable aspects. In the present essay, the authors trace the transformation in the conception of childhood to then focus on Ian McEwan's "Homemade", the opening story in *First Love, Last Rites* (1975), the collection that marks the author's literary debut. The particularly evil nature of the child protagonist as well as his frustrated passage into adulthood after his pathetic first and single sexual experience (the rape of his own sister) is related to the major historical transformation of the traditional model of paternal authority in the postmodern period which engenders a cynical and perverse type of subjectivity that is nevertheless marked by its paradoxical inability to enjoy.

Keywords: McEwan, "Homemade", childhood, short story, postmodernism.

Del romanticismo en adelante, la infancia se ha construido como alternativa al mundo alienante del progreso moderno. Aún cuando esta versión idealizada de la infancia consagrada en la literatura romántica se puso en cuestión ya a finales del siglo XIX, la perspectiva que el niño tiene sobre el mundo adulto se siguió y se sigue considerando un modo útil de explorar deficiencias sociales y de poner en evidencia algunos de sus aspectos más desagradables. Los autores de este ensayo trazan las líneas maestras de la transformación de la concepción de la infancia para luego centrarse en "Homemade" de Ian McEwan, el relato inicial de la colección *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) que constituyó el debut literario del autor. La naturaleza particularmente malvada del niño protagonista así como su frustrada transición a la vida adulta luego de su primera y única experiencia sexual (la violación de su propia hermana) se ponen en relación causal con la profunda transformación del modelo tradicional de autoridad paterna en el periodo posmoderno que genera un tipo de subjetividad cínica y perversa que, sin embargo, se caracteriza paradójicamente por su incapacidad para gozar.

Palabras clave: McEwan, "Homemade", infancia, relato breve, posmodernismo

FAST FORWARD TO THE PAST: REVISITING TRAUMA AFTER THE FALL

Carolina Sánchez-Palencia
Manuel Almagro

The representation of traumatic experience usually brings to the surface an element that has been long repressed. To a great extent it also implies "breaking the silence" imposed by an authoritarian voice proposing a one-dimensional version of the historical Real. This paper analyses the way in which some recent films —which dramatize the collateral effects of the collapse of Communist regimes— offer new representations of actual historical events and address a common and, at the same time varied, European concern for coming to terms with a recent traumatic past. The films feature their protagonists trapped in a characteristic traumatic paradox as they have to reconcile testimonial accuracy with the essential ineffability of their experiences. However, guided by a common desire to rewrite the past and to heal personal and collective wounds, they resort to the materiality of objects which function as what Pierre Nora terms 'lieux de mémoire', that is, new signifiers for the (re)creation of a different History.

Keywords: trauma, historiography, fall, revision, memory, re-writing.

La representación de la experiencia traumática frecuentemente hace resurgir un elemento que llevaba tiempo reprimido. En gran medida también implica "romper

el silencio" impuesto por una voz autoritaria que propone una versión unidimensional de la Historia. Este trabajo analiza la forma en que algunas películas recientes —en las que se muestran los daños colaterales del colapso de los regímenes comunistas— ofrecen una nueva representación de hechos históricos reales y se encuadran dentro de un interés europeo común pero variado para asimilar y normalizar el pasado traumático reciente. En dichas películas, los protagonistas se hallan atrapados en la característica paradoja traumática, al tener que reconciliar la veracidad del testimonio con el carácter esencialmente inefable de sus experiencias. Sin embargo, llevados por el deseo común de re-escribir el pasado y de sanar las heridas tanto personales como colectivas, recurren a la materialidad de objetos que funcionan como 'lieux de mémoire' (según la terminología de Pierre Nora), es decir, como unos nuevos significantes para la (re) creación de la Historia.

Palabras clave: trauma, historiografía, caída, memoria, re-escritura.

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