m

**a journal of english
and american studies**

miscelánea

3

miscelánea

table of contents

Articles

MAKING SENSE OF A MULTI-PROTAGONIST FILM: AUDIENCE RESPONSE RESEARCH AND ROBERT ALTMAN'S *SHORT CUTS* (1993).[1]

M. MAR AZCONA
University of Zaragoza

Most audience response research in film studies attempts to overcome what it sees as a limitation of ideological criticism, namely, a tendency to locate the spectator at the centre of the analysis of the movies without making any reference to the opinions of actual spectators. The popularity that audience studies are now enjoying among film scholars shows the need to combine the traditional notion of the spectator as a passive and abstract homogeneous entity determined by the text with the notion of spectators as active and heterogeneous beings. Partaking of this enthusiasm for allowing the spectators themselves to speak instead of speaking for the spectators, I decided to follow the kind of audience response analysis undertaken by Judith Mayne (1993), Jackie Stacey (1994), Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes (1999, 2001, 2005) and Annette Kuhn (2002) among many others in order to respond accurately to this need and take into consideration the opinions of real spectators on a specific movie.

It seemed to me that audience response analysis was especially interesting in relation to multi-protagonist films because of the great differences between the narrative structures of these films and of those that we usually consider 'conventional' films. While conventional films tend to structure their plots as the trajectory of the goals and desires of a single protagonist or a couple, multi-protagonist films cast a wider net of characters without establishing such a strict narrative hierarchy between them. The absence of a main character is bound to directly affect audience

comprehension because of the great number of functions that are traditionally associated with the main character. In his definition of the classical Hollywood narrative system, Bordwell (1985) states that in a narrative "the most 'specified' character is usually the protagonist" to whom he ascribes not only the function of being the principal causal agent of the narrative but also those of being the target of any narrational restriction and especially the main object of audience identification (157). If the distinctive element of multi-protagonist films is precisely their lack of a main character: how do they work as far as causal agency, narrative unity, narrational restriction and, especially, spectator identification are concerned? Since a detailed analysis of all these elements would go far beyond the scope of this article, I will concentrate here on how spectators make sense of some of the strategies that these films use, namely the multiplicity of characters, the abandonment of conventional notions of causality and the restriction of audience involvement in the narrative.

A film by Robert Altman was chosen as the object of research because he is, perhaps, the contemporary film director that comes to mind first when a film with a multiplicity of characters and plot lines is mentioned.[2] He is so frequently quoted as the "obvious model for […] multi-stranded parallel storytelling" (Walters 2003: 46) that, by the time his film *The Company* (2003) was released, a 'google' search of the term 'altmanesque' elicited over a thousand mentions that systematically applied the term to any multi-protagonist film.[3] According to Trohler's (2001) threefold classification of multi-protagonist films, *Short Cuts*, with its twenty-two characters arranged in nine different groups, is a mosaic film. Initially characters in mosaic films are linked only insofar as they happen to live in the same city at the same time, though eventually, as happens in *Short Cuts*, the characters' paths cross and their stories become enmeshed, largely through coincidence.[4] As its initial credits show, *Short Cuts* consciously refuses to single out any particular character. Their names, which appear in the same size letters, fly over the screen apparently, and very self-consciously, at random. This refusal to single out a main character implies a radical departure from Bordwell's (1985) account of classical narrative as based on a main goal-oriented character struggling to solve a clear-cut problem that ends with a clear resolution.

It emerged from the survey that watching a multi-protagonist film was not a new experience for most respondents. Most of them had seen other multi-protagonist movies such as *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994), *Magnolia* (P.T. Anderson, 1999) or *Traffic* (Steven Soderbergh, 2000). As will be observed, the respondents' knowledge of other multi-protagonist movies proved extremely useful for the research because some of their comments were not restricted to *Short Cuts* but could be applied to multi-protagonist films as a whole.

Twenty people with ages ranging from 18 to 65 years were provided with a copy of *Short Cuts* and a questionnaire on it (see Appendix 1).[5] Since I was more interested in the qualitative aspects of the research than in its statistical representativity, the respondents were selected according to what is usually known as a 'snowball' sampling method (Cea 1998: 180), that is, a method that uses known contacts to reach potential respondents. Such a partial sample can have no pretensions to being either statistically representative or completely random. However, the opinions of this group of respondents proved useful for my purposes: to explore the ways in which the lack of a main character may affect spectator comprehension of a movie.

Like most researchers using this type of approach, I was aware of the fact that spectator comments constitute a conscious and articulated response and, therefore, cannot be taken entirely at face value. They should not be taken as self-evident truths but as texts (Ang 1989: 11, Stacey 1994: 71-8, Austin 1999: 149-50). However, their status as texts should not be seen as a reason to dismiss them but rather as intrinsic to the method itself. In this particular case, the method chosen for analysing real spectators' opinions provided me with somewhat biased spectators that were watching a film in order to fill out a questionnaire afterwards. They were aware that their answers were going to be analysed in close detail and sometimes tried to justify not giving what they regarded as the desirable answer. That was the case, for instance, in the question regarding whether they thought that the medfly pest —an element which, as will be seen later on, is constantly referred to in the film's initial twelve-minute-long sequence— had any function or meaning within the film as a whole: "No lo he descifrado pero imagino que es importante" (respondent number 5), "no encuentro ninguna relación pero siempre puede tener un sentido para el director" (respondent number 8).[6]

One of the factors that has to be taken into account in order to analyse spectators' views of a movie is the expectations that spectators bring to it even before they start watching it. Together with the stars and the movie's title,[7] the director is one of the factors that may contribute to those expectations and, in the case of *Short Cuts*, it definitely did. The respondents that had seen other multi-protagonist films by Robert Altman such as *M*A*S*H* (1970), *Nashville* (1975), *The Player* (1992), *Prêt à Porter* (1994), *Dr. T and the Women* (2000) or *Gosford Park* (2001) were familiar with his unconventional way of narrating and knew what to expect from a Robert Altman movie.[8] Consequently, their comments on how they managed to make sense of the movie were sprinkled with references to the director. In replies from the respondents that were not familiar with Altman's work, however, references to the difficulties posed by the formal structure of the film were frequent (around 25%). Respondent number 15, for instance, says: "Tuve problemas al principio de la película, por la diversidad de personajes y la historia que llevaba cada

uno de ellos. Más o menos, a mitad de película fue cuando tuve claro cada uno de los personajes". It seems, then, that the great number of characters, the short time devoted to each story —the average scene in the film does not last more than a couple of minutes— and the intersections between the different stories —the fact that characters from one story are related either through coincidence, friendship or family ties to characters from another story— posed some problems to some spectators' comprehension of the film.

Even some of those spectators who affirmed that they had no problem in following the characters' paths through the film did mention that watching a multi-protagonist movie implied a greater deal of spectatorial activity: "La novedad de ver una película coral te mantiene más atento que si la película tuviese un argumento 'normal'. Puede ser debido a que si en algún momento no prestas atención se te puede 'escapar' algo" (respondent number 8).

From what has just been said, it might be thought that although it took the spectators longer than usual to recognize the different characters and narrative lines, once they did —be it after the first half an hour or halfway through the film— their comprehension problems were over. However, some respondents said that they had problems in understanding either one of the stories —"no he entendido la historia de la violonchelista y su madre cantante" (respondent number 17)— or a specific event in one of them —"no he terminado de entender por qué el marido de la chica que tenía relaciones por teléfono mata a la chica de la bicicleta" (respondent number 16). Unlike the problems in recognizing the film's twenty-two characters and nine narrative lines, these problems do not seem to be caused exclusively by the number of characters and fast editing but by other narrative strategies used in *Short Cuts* and in most multi-protagonist films: the substitution of serendipity for cause-and-effect and the restriction of spectator involvement in the narrative.

As Thompson (1999: 12) states, conventional films favour "unified narratives, which means that a cause should lead to an effect and that effect in turn should become a cause for another effect in an unbroken chain across the film". Everything in a film should be motivated, whether in advance or in retrospect, for the benefit of unity and clarity. However, the cause-and-effect chain that defines conventional films does not apply to multi-protagonist films. Since "a perceiver of a narrative film comes armed and active to the task" (Bordwell 1985: 38-9), spectators may tend to use narrative schemata which define narrative events and unify them by principles of causality, among others. As the following comment shows, those spectators that tried to make sense of the film in accordance with traditional notions of causality were quickly disappointed. During the first twelve minutes of the film, the scenes used to introduce the characters are mixed with

shots of helicopters spreading the Los Angeles area with a product to kill the medfly: a pest which leaves harmless blemishes on fruit. Although this initial sequence is full of references to the spraying, the topic goes almost unmentioned for the rest of the film. When asked about the possible function or relationship of the medfly to the rest of the movie, most respondents thought that the spraying and the medfly did not have any function in the movie or that it was just a formal element which gave both local and temporal unity to the film by showing that all the characters live in the same city and that the action is taking place on the very same night. However, some respondents, looking for a conventional cause-and-effect relationship, declared that for a while they had taken for granted that the spraying was the cause of the characters' strange behaviour. Respondent number 15, for instance, says: "Al principio de la película pensaba que a causa de la fumigación de la mosca, las personas se comportaban de esa manera, se habían visto afectadas pero a lo largo de la película pienso que no tiene por qué influir, las personas se comportan así porque son así". Respondent number 17 makes a direct reference to the conventional notion of causality and considers that by subverting conventional notions of cause-and-effect the director is encouraging the viewer to make an error. His comment seems to imply that he was expecting a film of a completely different genre: "Creo que es una trampa para el espectador. En otras películas se usa el recurso de la fumigación para justificar los actos de los personajes pero, en este caso, los personajes no se ven influidos por la fumigación" (respondent number 17).

Unlike conventional films' heavy reliance on motivation for the sake of clarity, multi-protagonist films substitute serendipity for causality. To the detriment of conventional notions of motivation, they show an emphasis on fate and chance as the ruling agency behind characters' lives. If this refusal to use a traditional notion of causality may sometimes prompt spectators to establish false causal links when trying to make sense of a multi-protagonist film, these films' lack of a main character is also bound to have direct consequences in the spectators' response to it.

Although the term identification is widely used to account for spectator response to characters, the inaccuracy of the term, because of the different processes it involves, has already been noticed (Stacey 1994; Smith 1995). Murray Smith, for instance, breaks down the different processes through which spectators interact with characters into what he labels "empathic phenomena" and "the structure of sympathy". One of the processes he inscribes in the category of empathic phenomena is emotional simulation, that is, a voluntary process through which spectators, with little knowledge of a character, are able to project themselves into the characters' situation and make hypotheses about the emotions they are experiencing. While every narrative leaves room for this kind of simulation, there

are some films, such as *Short Cuts*, which invite the process much more than others.[9] Unlike empathic phenomena, the processes he inscribes into the structure of sympathy —recognition, alignment and allegiance— require comprehension of the narrative and the characters. Recognition is the stage at which spectators notice various traits of a character and arrange them into some kind of coherent personality. Alignment describes the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions, and to what they know and feel. Allegiance occurs when spectators, having a reliable access to a character's state of mind and the context of the character's actions, make a moral evaluation of the character (1995: 82-5).

Emotional simulation and recognition are the only two processes that seem to be at work in *Short Cuts*. Spectators are able to recognize the characters —although, according to some of the spectators' comments this process is somehow compromised. Through a heavy reliance on external focalization and the absence of other devices that could help spectators to probe into the characters' minds (such as flashbacks or voice-overs) spectators are faced with opaque characters, which makes alignment impossible. Since allegiance relies on the spectators' access to a character's state of mind and the context of their actions, the spectators cannot ally themselves with the characters in *Short Cuts*. Apart from recognition, the only process at work is then the emotional simulation that allows spectators to make inferences about a character's state of mind. In conventional films, this process is subordinated to the overarching structure of sympathy because initial simulations are modified as the narrative develops. However, when watching a multi-protagonist film, spectators will usually have to make do with just emotional simulation because the film will not always give enough evidence to prove their hypotheses right or wrong.

The restriction of the ways in which spectators can interact with characters is also bound to affect how spectators make sense of the film. Most respondents managed to make sense of the film in spite of these restrictions and some thought that it was precisely because of the wider spectrum of characters and interpretations that the film offers that spectators can sometimes glimpse themselves in either one or another character (respondents number 12 and 17). Some respondents, however, were disappointed by these restrictions: "No he conectado con ninguno de los personajes, no me he sentido identificada ni me he metido en el papel de ninguno de ellos" (respondent number 11). This comment was in some cases made extensive to multi-protagonist films as a whole: "Las películas corales no te permiten conocer a fondo al personaje o a los protagonistas, no puedes llegar a identificarte ni sentir lo que están sintiendo ellos en ese momento" (respondent number 11). While these complaints seem to be a consequence of the spectators' inability to align themselves with characters, diverse spectator reactions to the same

character seem to account for the film's refusal to tell them with whom their sympathies should lie. Gene Shepard —the policeman played by Tim Robbins— is regarded by some respondents as the most contemptible character in the movie because of his constant cheating on his wife. A male respondent, however, does not feel contempt but pity towards him: "[El policía] crea un mundo que ya nadie cree pero que está lleno de humanidad. Es un pobre seductor al que sólo quiere su mujer porque también lo necesita. Suplica comprensión y atención" (respondent number 12). Some respondents saw the restriction of spectator engagement with the characters as a hindrance to getting into the narrative. Other respondents, however, regarded it as a key strategy for enjoying the film since it was precisely because of the restriction of audience involvement within the narrative that the film succeeded in bringing about lots of humorous moments in spite of the gloom that pervaded all the stories.

Short Cuts has sometimes been described as a "participatory text" (Balcom 1996), that is, one in which, "an active viewer can activate subcurrents present in the movie, put them together and receive a far richer text than simply letting the movie run its course". It is precisely the willingness to engage in the active participation required by the film that determines respondents' overall reaction towards the film. Respondents who, in general, showed a negative reaction towards the film usually related it to the lack of a conventional plot in terms of presentation, complicating action and resolution. Respondent number 11, for instance, is a good example: "Pienso que la vida de todas y cada una de esas personas carece de interés alguno. Pasas la película a la espera de que ocurra algo interesante y para mí ha sido una decepción porque nada de eso ha ocurrido". It was precisely this lack of what is usually considered a conventional plot that prompted some respondents' complaint that it was just a 'descriptive' movie because, actually, nothing happened in the film (respondents number 1 and 3).

Nevertheless, those respondents who, in general, showed a positive reaction towards the film seem to have a radically different view on this issue. When asked whether there was a lack of plot in the film, respondent number 12, for instance, answered: "No. En ningún momento, más bien todo lo contrario. Cuenta varias historias, y va saltando de una a otra con gran rapidez pero sin perder en ningún momento el hilo en cada historia. Todas las historias van avanzando y deseas saber más de cada una de ellas". This view seems to be shared by respondent number 20 who affirmed that, due to the great number of things that happen in the film, each storyline is strong enough to be made into a film of its own. Another respondent suggested that, from his point of view, that apparent lack of plot was precisely the key to the film. As he puts it "es una película engañosa, parece que no pasa nada pero en realidad pasan muchas cosas" (respondent number 19).

As in previous questions, the respondents' comments regarding the film's plot were sometimes made extensive to multi-protagonist films as a whole. Some respondents complained that the apparent lack of plot in *Short Cuts* was a consequence of its nature as a multi-protagonist movie: "las películas corales no tratan de contar una historia, sólo muestran sus diferentes personajes" (respondent number 3). Other informants, however, did not hesitate to make a case for multi-protagonist movies: "es uno de los tipos de películas que más me gusta con muchos personajes, muchas situaciones. Refleja muy acertadamente el trajín diario y la cantidad de gente extraña y de cosas raras que suceden cada día" (respondent number 7). In contrast with those respondents who mentioned the lack of plot as a feature of multi-protagonist movies as a whole, others thought that the proliferation of characters added complexity to these films' plots: "un personaje principal da una visión mucho más limitada de los acontecimientos, ya que solamente proporciona un punto de vista. El hecho de que sean varios personajes los que comparten protagonismo aporta riqueza y complejidad a la trama" (respondent number 19).

This proliferation of characters and points of view was seen by some respondents as an alternative to the usually monolithic view of the world put forward by conventional films and their single protagonists. By offering a variety of reactions to a situation, multi-protagonist films allow for the inclusion of those alternative responses to the same event that are usually left out of movies with a single protagonist and a tight line of action (respondents number 12 and 17). It seems that, for these respondents, the use of a multi-protagonist narrative structure is not just a mere formal device but an ideological stance that tries to counteract what they regard as most films' usually one-sided view of events. Similarly, respondent number 19 considers that films with multiple protagonists try to emphasise the notion of community to the detriment of conventional films' reliance on the power of the individual. As he puts it: "este tipo de películas nos hablan de cómo, sin darnos cuenta, formamos una comunidad interrelacionada de formas insospechadas en la que el número de elementos que nos unen es mayor que el de los que nos separan; algo que parece contradecir la visión de la vida en las afueras y de la familia como microcosmos que ofrecen muchas películas". In this sense, as the constant connections between the characters and several formal devices in *Short Cuts* seem to imply,[10] these films call for an alternative to the typical portrait of city life in isolation; an issue that can be found in other multi-protagonist films such as *Thirteen Conversations About One Thing* (Jill Sprecher, 2001) or the more recent *Crash* (Paul Haggis, 2005), in which a character refers to the isolation of city life by reading about a car crash as a way to regain the loss sense of interaction with other people.[11]

Short Cuts' lack of a conventional narrative structure —understood as order, disruption and restoration of the order— can be a source of annoyance for some

spectators and a source of pleasure for others. Boredom and irritation with the excessive length of the film, its lack of plot and its open ending are feelings that emerged from some of the questionnaires; enthusiasm, repeated viewings, the wish to see more movies like *Short Cuts* or to know more about the characters emerged from others. Similarly, the use of multiple protagonists may be seen as a device that hampers viewers' engagement with a narrative or as the element that favours spectators' involvement with it precisely because of the great variety of possibilities for identification that it allows for. The greater degree of spectatorial activity that watching a multi-protagonist film requires was also mentioned by some respondents. It seems, thus, that while some viewers may be willing to embrace these films' demand to make them change their ways of dealing with a narrative, it may result in a frustrating experience for others. The way in which spectators make sense of a multi-protagonist movie will be closely related to their expectations —their prior knowledge about the director or about this kind of movies— but, especially, to their willingness to put aside their conventional ways of engaging with films in order to make sense of a multi-protagonist movie. The heterogeneous nature of the respondents' views on some of the issues analysed here seems to foreground the problems of talking about spectatorial activity without taking real spectators into account. In spite of its limitations, audience response studies seem the only way to attempt to understand what audiences actually do when they watch a specific film. It should not be seen as a substitute but rather as a useful supplement to scholarly theorization and analysis.

Appendix 1

SHORT CUTS. VIDAS CRUZADAS (Robert Altman, 1993)

Edad: Sexo: V   M

Estudios realizados / en curso, ocupación: . . . .

1- Vidas Cruzadas es una película coral, es decir, una película en la que en lugar de un personaje y una historia principal aparecen muchos personajes y diferentes historias. ¿Conoces otras películas corales?   SI   NO

En caso afirmativo, menciona otras que hayas visto: . . . .

. . . .

Esas películas que acabas de mencionar ¿te gustaron?

2- ¿Has tenido algún problema a la hora de seguir la película?

En caso afirmativo ¿por qué?, ¿en qué momento?

3- ¿Te ha parecido una película inconexa? SI   NO

Si la respuesta anterior ha sido negativa ¿qué es lo que, desde tu punto de vista, da cohesión a la película?

4- ¿Has tenido la impresión de que en la película no pasaba nada, es decir, de que faltaba argumento? Intenta justificar tu respuesta.

5- Al principio de la película aparecen unos helicópteros fumigando contra una plaga llamada "mosca de la fruta". ¿Crees que la mosca de la fruta tiene algún sentido o función dentro de la película? ¿Por qué?

6- Al principio también aparece uno de los personajes, Tess, la cantante de jazz, cantando una canción que dice "Yesterday you owned the world and the next day the world owns you. Cause you're a prisoner, and I'm a prisoner, I am a prisoner of life" (Un día posees el mundo y al día siguiente el mundo te posee a ti. Porque tú eres un prisionero, y yo soy un prisionero, un prisionero de la vida). ¿Crees que la letra de la canción tiene algún sentido dentro de la película? ¿Por qué?

7- ¿Qué personaje(s) te ha(n) gustado más? ¿Cuál(es) te han parecido más antipáticos? ¿Por qué?

8- ¿Qué visión da la película de las relaciones familiares?

¿Y de las relaciones de pareja?

¿Qué te parece que la película presente las relaciones de ese modo?

9- Algunos dicen que las películas corales ofrecen una representación más fiel de la realidad que las películas que tienen uno o dos protagonistas principales que hacen algo o a los que les pasa algo. ¿Estás de acuerdo con esta afirmación?

¿Por qué?

10- En Francia titularon a esta película *Los Americanos*. ¿Te parece un título apropiado? ¿Por qué?

11- El título original de la película *Short Cuts* puede significar "atajos" o "trozos pequeños". *Short Cuts* (US)/ *Vidas Cruzadas* (España)/ *Los Americanos* (Francia): ¿qué título te parece más apropiado?

¿Crees que el título puede afectar la forma de ver la película? ¿Por qué?

12- ¿Te ha gustado la película?

13- ¿Te ha parecido divertida?

¿Recuerdas algún momento especialmente divertido?

Si la respuesta es afirmativa, menciónalo y explica por qué te ha parecido divertido.

14- ¿Te ha parecido demasiado larga?

15- ¿Hay algo más que quieras comentar?

Notas

[2]. The number of Robert Altman's films, including his latest *The Company* (2003), to make use of a multi-protagonist narrative structure amounts to fourteen out of the thirty-two which he has directed —films made for television not included.

[3]. There is more to 'altmanesque' than multiplicity of characters and plot lines but this narrative structure is usually what is referred to when the adjective is used.

[4]. As for the other categories, collective films feature a group of characters, usually not individualised in the course of the narrative, sharing a common goal, and ensemble films feature a single large group such as a family or a group of friends whose members, usually linked spatially to some central meeting place, get involved in different storylines (Troehler 2001).

[5]. Due to the wide variety of issues that the questionnaire attempts to cover, only the questions dealing with the aforementioned issues will be analysed here.

[6]. Since the research was conducted in Spanish I have decided not to translate the respondents' answers when quoted literally. The best translation could never do justice to the colourful nature of some of the comments.

[7]. Since the title is usually the first piece of information that spectators have about a movie, it is bound to be one of the elements that helps create those expectations. Some respondents regarded a movie title as a key element not only in order to bring about expectations about what a movie is like but also in order to determine whether they want to see the movie or not. However, a great number of respondents (almost 50%) acknowledged that they did not pay any attention to the title —which is extremely surprising when you consider how much marketing work lies behind a title. The reason most frequently adduced was that Spanish titles are usually radically different from the original ones and, therefore, a title should neither raise expectations about a movie nor determine whether you wanted to see it or not.

[8]. Though only *Nashville* and *Prêt à Porter* would fit into Troehler's category of mosaic multi-protagonist films —the rest would be ensembles— they all participate in some of the conventions of the multi-protagonist film genre such as the use of loose causal relationships and, therefore, proved crucial in raising spectators' expectations when watching *Short Cuts*.

[9]. Classical films, for instance, do not leave much room for this process. Clarity

being their main aim, they tend to be redundantly informative and usually try to leave no doubt about a character's feelings.

[10].This sense of interconnectedness between apparently isolated characters is constantly reinforced through formal elements —from the film's title to the matches-on-action between different storylines and to the last shot of the film in which a panoramic view of the city gives way to a bird eye's view of a Los Angeles map in which separate homes and separate lives become linked through an intricate web of avenues, roads and highways.

[11]."In L.A. nobody touches you. We are always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss this touch so much that we crash into each other just so we can feel something".

Works cited

ANG, Ien. 1989. *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*. London: Routledge.

AUSTIN, Thomas. 1999. "Desperate to see it: Straight Men Watching *Basic Instinct*". In Stokes, Melvyn and Richard Maltby. (eds.): 147-61.

BALCOM, David. 1996. "Short Cuts, Narrative Film and Hypertext". <http://www.mindspring.com/~dbalcom/short_cuts.html> (retrieved on 1-12-2004).

BORDWELL, David. 1985. *Narration in the Fiction Film.* Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

CEA D'ANCONA, M. Ángeles. 1998. *Metodología Cuantitativa: Estrategias y Técnicas de Investigación Social.* Madrid: Síntesis S.A.

KUHN, Annette. 2002. *An Everyday Magic. Cinema and Cultural Memory.* London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

MAYNE, Judith. 1993. *Cinema and Spectatorship.* London and New York: Routledge.

SHARP, Richard. 2004 "Robert Altman: A season with the company" <www.chicagofilm.com/features/altman> (retrieved on 19/04/2004).

SMITH, Murray. 1995. *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion and the Cinema.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

STACEY, Jackie. 1994. *Star Gazing*. London and New York: Routledge.

STOKES, Melvyn and Richard MALTBY. (eds.). 1999. *Identifying Hollywood Audiences. Cultural Identity and the Movies.* London: British Film Institute.

—. 2001. *Hollywood Spectatorship. Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences.* London: British Film Institute.

—. 2005. *Hollywood Abroad: Audiences and Cultural Exchange.* London: British Film Institute.

THOMPSON, Kristine. 1999. *Storytelling in the New Hollywood.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard U. P.

TROEHLER, Margrit. 2001. *Plurale Figuren Konstellationen im Spielfilm.* Habilitationsschrift (unpublished).

WALTERS, Ben. 2003. "Love Actually". *Sight and Sound*, December 2003: 46.

IN THE NAME OF THE PUBLIC: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE TASTES AND HABITS OF FILM AUDIENCES

M. MAR AZCONA, VIRGINIA LUZÓN and JUAN TARANCÓN
University of Zaragoza

1. Introduction[1]

The article "Forget Your Troubles and Be Happy: Una aproximación etnográfica a la ideología del entretenimiento en el cine estadounidense contemporáneo" represented the culmination of the first phase of a research project through which we tried to analyse systematically the ways in which the average Spanish moviegoer responds to the ideology of contemporary Hollywood films and genres. It has been two years since the publication of that article and in the meantime we have continued to examine the particular relationship established between films and audiences in an effort, first, to understand the motivations of the spectators that frequent the cinemas every day and, second, to grant them the place they deserve in critical discourse.

In our research, we followed in the footsteps of ideological criticism and recent reception studies, two approaches that concentrate on the spectator and place audiences at the core of film analysis. The work carried out by critics like Andrew Britton (1986) or Richard Dyer (1981), which we referred to in the aforementioned article, has been instrumental in disclosing the unwritten contract between mainstream Hollywood cinema and its worldwide audience. Nevertheless, we strove to overcome what we saw as a limitation in these approaches. Dyer, for instance, described the pleasure of film entertainment as utopian to the extent that the vast majority of Hollywood products mirror a reality that spectators can

comfortably recognize as their own but that remains forever out of reach. The work of other analysts like Robert Ray (1998) has followed the same trail. However, in their analysis of mainstream films, these critics regard audiences both as submissive and indifferent to the films' ideology, and, although it is often the case that the experience of critics and audiences are often worlds apart, the authors do not seem concerned to discover what real spectators think about these issues. Nevertheless, other critics such as Jackie Stacey (1994) or Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (1999) have combined film theory with a rich body of ethnographic research in order to put spectators back into film theory. Likewise, we set out to gather the opinions of actual moviegoers, bringing them within the range of critical study.

Our research revealed an interesting ambivalence towards the ideological impact of films. Spectators remained, in general, oblivious to this ideology. They did not show particular interest in the so-called films with a message, nor did the ideological content of films shape their preferences. Yet, they were not unaware of Hollywood's attempt at cultural colonization. Although the specific ways in which ideology in a film works often escaped them, spectators perceived and responded with mocking distance to less polished examples of Hollywood's assault on peripheral cultures like cliché-laden teenpics or the unrestrained exaltation of the US and its unique success in producing cinematographic blockbusters.

Our initial step was directed both towards finding out the motivation that drove people to movie theatres to watch some films and not others, and to exploring the impressions these films made on the audience. We carried out a qualitative study based on a number of non-structured interviews that gave the respondents an opportunity to express themselves in their own terms during the course of a flexible and casual conversation. From there, we set out to expand our investigation to include wider social aspects, namely a detailed examination of the audience's behaviour and preferences. Once more we had recourse to the techniques used in the social sciences. However, on this occasion we decided to question the spectators directly. Our conception of films as part of today's social tapestry, intimately linked to economic, cultural, and political actualities, as well as our approach to film research as outlined above, with the increasing importance given to the audience, required us to confront a number of subjective aspects related to real spectators and, therefore, to devise a suitable method to elicit sociologically relevant data.

2. Research Design

The aim of the second stage of the research was to investigate the movie-watching habits and preferences of residents in Zaragoza aged twelve and more. As in the first stage, the population under study was divided into three groups: teenagers

(respondents aged from 12 to 18), university students (respondents aged from 18 to 30) and adults (respondents aged from 30 onwards).[2] Since we were more interested in carrying out a qualitative study in order to draw conclusions about the information gathered than in the statistical representativeness of the results, the respondents were selected following a non-probabilistic sampling method (Cea 1998: 180). A state school and several faculties and university schools were chosen for the first and the second groups. The third group was composed of some of the parents of the teenagers in the first group, several members of the staff of ten different private companies in the city and the University of Zaragoza, as well as some people attending continuing education courses. As this is a qualitative study, such a partial sample cannot claim to be wholly representative of the population of Zaragoza. Nevertheless, as the conclusions will show, a number of general patterns in film consumption emerged from our research.

At this stage a questionnaire was devised as the study instrument because, as Cea suggests (240), it made it possible to collect the information in a structured way while it also made data processing and analysis easier. It was a self-administered questionnaire, that is, one in which the respondents themselves read the questions and answered them. Our choice of this type of questionnaire was not only due to practical considerations but was also determined by the kind of questions asked. Since many of our respondents would have been in a classroom when answering the questions, this type of questionnaire seemed to be most likely to bring in the highest number of answers at the same time. Furthermore, a self-administered questionnaire gives the respondents more time to think about the answers while, at the same time, partly reducing the bias introduced by the respondents' urge to give what is considered to be the socially correct answer when the questions are read out by an interviewer (241-50).

The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions (see Appendix 1) designed to obtain pertinent information about a wide range of issues, namely,

a) The ranking of cinema among the respondents' hobbies.

b) The number of movies watched by the respondents per month both at the cinema and at home and, which of these two locations they preferred for movie watching.

c) The country of origin of the movies they preferred to watch.

d) Their favourite types of movies and their all-time favourites.

Apart from the questions dealing with the respondents' favourite movies and hobbies, the rest were closed-ended questions. In the open-ended questions, such as the question related to the type of movies they preferred to watch, the respondents were asked to give three items.

The questionnaire was administered over a four-month period from September 2001 to December 2001. A total of 1,014 questionnaires were collected. The number of questionnaires for each group was roughly similar: 342 in the first group, 333 in the second group and 339 in the third group. The sample consisted of 555 women and 455 men (4 respondents did not specify sex). The data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis through cross-tabulation and frequency analysis. A chi-square test was used in order to compare the categorical variables (sex and age). The statistical analysis was done using the *Manugistics Statgraphics Plus* software package.

3. The Results of the Survey

In this section we shall be referring to the results obtained, looking at each question separately. We have decided to look at the results for the three age groups together, as we believe that a contrastive analysis of the data gathered from each group (adolescents; University students; adults over thirty[3]) may prove more revealing.

3.1 A Look at Spare Time Activities and Movie-Watching Habits

3.1.1 Which are your favourite hobbies?

In general, the teenagers under survey prefer playing sports (20%), going out with friends (10.11%), playing videogames (9.86%) or listening to music (7.8%) to activities such as going to the cinema or renting a film to watch at home (6.77%), reading (5.66%) or watching TV (a surprisingly low 3.86%). Indeed, going to the cinema or renting a film imply spending money (some would say that *a lot of* money, especially at the weekend) unlike sports or some other activities, given the availability of, say, pirate copies of music or videogames on the Internet, to mention a current popular example. Admittedly, the same could be said about films, though the time it takes to download them may discourage many fans.

As for University students, cinema is not, yet again, one of the respondents' favourite hobbies. It ranks fourth among the female respondents' hobbies (11.11%) and fifth among the male respondents' (only 4.9%.) Both men and women prefer other activities such as sports, music and, unlike the teenagers under survey, reading. Interestingly, the cinema is much more popular among the female respondents of this group (11.11%) than among the male ones (4.9%.) This suggests that females are more cinema-oriented than males. However, as will be explained next, movie-watching rates (as evinced by questions 2 and 3) were very similar for the men and women of this group.

Although watching films seems to be one of the adult group's favourite pastimes, they clearly prefer other leisure activities such as reading, sports, or listening to music. In terms of gender, cinema is a more popular pastime among women than men. This, once again, seems to confirm the cinema as a much more 'female' activity than a 'male' one. For these adult women, cinema was their second choice, reading being for a large majority their first, while men opted for sports, reading, listening to music, hiking, tourism, and do-it-yourself above films.

Overall, it can be concluded that the cinema is not a clear favourite for any of the groups, as it ranks fourth or fifth, preceded by other activities such as sports, music or reading. However, women seem to be keener on the cinema than men, except in the case of the teenagers, where the percentages obtained were fairly similar. These data will be further elaborated on in later subsections.

3.1.2 How often do you go to the cinema?

More than half (59%) of the adolescents that responded to our questionnaire stated that they go to the cinema between once and twice a month. However, 28% of them go to the cinema less frequently than once a month and only 10% go more often than twice a month. In more general terms, two thirds of these teenagers go to the pictures at least once a month. On the other hand, analysing these responses separately, it can be observed that more girls than boys go to the cinema regularly. 76% of these girls go to the cinema at least once or twice a month whereas 64% of boys do so. It is worth mentioning that a slightly lower percentage of girls than boys opted for the cinema as one of their favourite spare time activities.

The results obtained from the University students' questionnaires were somewhat different. Most of the respondents (50%) in this age group go to the cinema once or twice a month. The answer that ranks second is "less than once" (28.44%), which means that less than 25% of the respondents in this age group go to the cinema more than twice a month. As in the case of the adolescents that participated in the survey, this is not a high rate of attendance at the movie theatres or multiplexes. The percentages for men or women offer no significant differences in this case.

As for the adults, most of the respondents (61.07%) claimed that they go to the cinema less often than once a month. However, the percentage of people that go to the cinema between once and twice a month (30.9%) is relatively high, rising to 33.33% in the case of women. Therefore, in this age group, women also seem to go to the cinema more often than men. It is also interesting to note that these people go to the cinema less often than the University students, all in their twenties, that responded to the questionnaire. This possibly reflects their increasing work and/or family responsibilities and their diminishing spare time.

As can be seen, women constitute the bulk of the cinema audience. In addition, these overall results also confirm the critical view that young audiences are the most numerous cinema-going group. As Doherty asserts (2002: 1), "without the support of the teenage audiences, few theatrical movies would break even, fewer still become hits, and none become blockbusters".

3.1.3 How many videos or DVDs do you watch at home?

Things change when it comes to analysing people's movie-watching habits at home (on TV, VCR or DVD). About 25% of the adolescents say they watch between three and four films a month, but around 50% respond that they watch four or more. This means that the large majority of these informants watch at least three films a month at home, which is, we believe, a significant number. There are no noticeable differences between the frequencies obtained for girls and for boys. One possible explanation for the differing results obtained in this question and the previous one (cinema-attendance rate vs. home movie-watching habits) is the fact that cinema tickets are too pricey for this kind of public, whereas video rentals are more affordable, especially when the whole family watches the film at home, in which case the parents would probably pay for it.

Let's now turn to analysing the University students' answers. Many of the respondents (32.11%) say they watch only one or two films a month at home. The answer that ranks second is, again, "less than one" (24.31%). In this case, however, the percentages for these two answers only account for 56.42%, which means that, when compared to the previous question, there is a higher percentage of respondents that watch more than three films a month at home. As for the percentages for men and for women, no significant differences were found.

Movie watching, whether at home or at the cinema, does not seem to be the favourite pastime of the University students under survey. Once again, there might be several explanations for this, such as cinema ticket prices or their preference for other social activities, such as night clubbing or going to the pub, which are not always open to adolescents. In the case of those students living away from home, it is relevant that DVDs or VCRs are not usually available in student flats or in common rooms in Halls of Residence.

On the other hand, the results show that, on the whole, adults watch less than one film a month at home. Yet, the percentage of those people that watch more than one rises significantly as compared to the number of films that they watch at the cinema. 13.62% of the informants state that they watch between three and four films a month, and up to 15.33% claim to see more than four films a month. But then again, there is a tendency for adults over 30 to see fewer films than University students, even at home. Finally, when it comes to watching films at home, the

difference between the number of films watched by adult men and women is not as large as when attendance at movie theatres is compared.

In conclusion, it can be said that the number of films watched at home is inversely proportional to the respondents' age. In other words, the older you are, the fewer movies you watch, which confirms the fact that as well as being "the most numerous cinema-going group", as suggested in the previous section, teenagers are also the most powerful home-cinema consuming group.

3.1.4 Do you prefer to watch movies at the cinema or at home?

Most teenagers seem to prefer watching films at the cinema to watching them at home. This preference is even more evident in the case of girls (almost 50%), compared with 38% in the case of boys. This is hardly surprising, given that this activity was usually identified as a bonding and fun activity by teenage girls in the first stage of this continuing research project.

Likewise, the University students under survey appear to prefer watching movies at the cinema to watching them at home. While this preference is very clear as far as female University students is concerned (70.51% prefer to watch movies at the cinema while only 25% prefer to watch them at home), the percentages for the male University students are much closer to those of the younger age group. 49.18% claim to prefer watching movies at the cinema while 45.90% prefer watching them at home. These results are very much in line with those obtained for the teenagers.

In general, adults also prefer watching films at the cinema. It seems that one's age does not affect this widespread tendency: 69.58% prefer the movie theatres while only 26.76% prefer watching films at home. However, if we analyse men and women separately, it is revealing that while 74.12% of the women questioned said that they preferred watching films at the cinema, only 64.63% of the men claimed to prefer cinema-going.

The results obtained for the three groups are fairly consistent, as both men and women of all ages prefer the cinema to the comfort but also the limitations of the living room, which seems to confirm Patrick Phillips' opinion (2003: 92-93) that the technology of cinema exhibition holds audiences much more powerfully than television does owing to the cinema screen size, the quality of sound and images and the spectator's lack of control over the screening. Phillips has also called attention to the "upturn in cinema visits at a time when VCR and DVD systems and multi-channel satellite/ cable TV dominate domestic entertainment".

Finally, we found it significant that considerably more women than men preferred to watch films at the cinema. An important finding, then, would be that the bulk of filmgoers are female, at least in our particular context.

3.2 Defining Film Tastes

3.2.1 Do you prefer to watch films from…?

The majority of our teenage informants (56%) prefer US films to those from other industries. 22% prefer to watch Spanish films, whereas a surprising 6% prefer other films. It is interesting to note the way in which the answers given by girls differ from those given by boys. 59% of girls prefer American films, compared to 54% of boys. Yet, only 17% of girls prefer Spanish films, compared to 27% of boys.

Most of the respondents in the group of University students (55.5%) state a clear preference for American movies. 23.85% favour Spanish movies. These results are remarkably similar to those given by the adolescents. Yet, unlike the teenagers, no significant percentage differences were found for men and for women.

As for the films that adults prefer to watch, 43.31% said that they preferred Spanish products; only 28.71% had a preference for films from the US. There are no relevant differences for women and men. These results contrast with the preferences of younger moviegoers, who clearly preferred US films. It is clear that age *does* influence one's choice in this case. Adult audiences seem to have a preference for stories that are closer to them, rather than the typically spectacular narratives from Hollywood.

3.2.2 Which type of film do you prefer to watch?

In this rather lengthy section, we refer to the different genres that the respondents prefer to watch. A wealth of information was obtained, thus we have tried to be as descriptive as possible in order to be able to reach some general conclusions.

As far as the films preferred by teenagers, comedies were chosen over and above the rest (22.86%). Action films rank second (17.4%) and horror films third (12%). Yet, comedy is only the second option for boys (21.39%), closely following their first choice, action films (22.19%). Science fiction films (12.29%) are in third place, ranking above horror films (10.69%) and suspense films (5.61%) a poor fifth choice. Their last choices, predictably, were romantic films and dramas.

Girls, for their part, overwhelmingly prefer comedies (24.24%), followed by horror movies (13.88%), action movies (12.87%), romantic movies (11.86%, compared to the boys' 2.77%) and suspense films (7.32%) in that order. Unlike boys, girls do not appear to be interested in science fiction films (only 6.56%), but seem to have a much more varied taste than boys in terms of their favourite film genre. Finally, neither boys nor girls are attracted to dramas.

It is worth mentioning the extent to which the results of this survey confirm the existence of 'gender-neutral' genres, such as comedy, but also of 'female' and 'male'

genres, such as romantic films in the former case, or action films and science fiction in the latter. Significantly, however, a substantial proportion of girls chose action movies, which came slightly higher than romantic films in the ranking, and many more teenage girls than boys claimed to prefer horror films, which is perhaps another surprising finding among people in this age group. Hence, two interesting conclusions may be drawn from these results. Traditional notions of femininity are challenged, in as much as romantic and dramatic films are not among the clear favourites for these girls. On the other hand, it seems that boys prefer to assert their masculinity publicly by watching action films and disdaining romantic movies (only about 2% claim to like them).

Substantial differences along gender lines were found for University students' preferences. Women in this age group prefer suspense films (21.2%) followed, with similar percentages, by romantic films (17%) and comedies (16.9%). Men, however, chose comedies, especially spoofs (20.2%), followed by suspense films (17.5%) and action/adventure films (15.8%). In line with the teenagers, romantic and horror films seem to be one of the least favourites among the male respondents (5% and 4.4% respectively), while science fiction is the least favourite among the female ones. Once again, horror films seem to be more popular among the women respondents than men. On the other hand, dramas obtained very low percentages in both cases. As can be seen, there seems to be a common preference for both comedies and suspense films.

Once again, it is worth pointing out that 15.8% of the male respondents and 13% of the female ones chose action/adventure films as one of their favourite genres. Although usually considered a 'masculine' genre, action/ adventure films also seem to appeal to these female respondents more than those genres usually considered to be 'female', such as dramas. However, it should be recalled that action/ adventure films, like most Hollywood films, usually include a love story or a handsome male star in an attempt to make them appealing to women too. These results seem to parallel Doherty's argument (2002: 128) that since younger children will watch what an older child is interested in and girls will watch what boys are interested in, "to catch your greatest audience, you zero in on the 19-year-old male". This might explain the popularity of action movies among female teenagers and University students.

In addition, University-age women state a clearer preference for romantic films than teenage girls, maybe due to a certain settling of their sexual identity and drives. In any case, from the results obtained it can also be concluded that, as is usually assumed, men do not like (or refuse to admit that they like) romantic films (only 5% claimed to like them.) However, romance ranked higher than horror among these respondents (5% and 4.4%), although this percentage is not significant

enough to call into question traditional notions of masculinity. However, these results confirm the higher appeal of horror films for the teenage audience.

Regarding the overall favoured genres, adults manifestly prefer action films. The second favourites were suspense films, whereas comedies and horror films came third and fourth respectively. Women prefer suspense films and comedies with similar percentages (17.25% and 17.75%). Their third option were melodramas, followed by romantic films. Once again, it should be highlighted that women's first option contradicts the popular belief that women prefer tender, romantic products, which are found in fourth place. Men, for their part, plainly prefer action films (24.31% compared to 13.26% of women), followed by suspense films,[4] while comedies come third. In this latter case, traditional gender preferences do not seem to be challenged. In fact, many gender differences still remain, such as the fact that 14.42% and 13.1% of adult women chose dramas and romantic films, compared to 8% and 3.7% of adult men. However, a similar number of men and women chose comedies and suspense films, which strongly establish these as 'gender neutral' genres.

Hence, these men and women tend to corroborate to a large extent the belief that action and romantic films are male and female genres. Even though, as has been explained above, romantic films were not the first choice for women (only 13.1% of the female informants mentioned them among their four favourite genres), this percentage falls to a significant 3.7% in the case of men. Drama films are also clearly preferred by adult women. Finally, although science-fiction films did not turn out to be a very popular genre among either of the groups, it seems to be more of a "male" genre as only 6% of these women chose it compared to 10.8% of men.

Among the three groups, there is an overwhelming tendency to choose comedy as one of the favourite genres, regardless of the gender of the respondent. Suspense and action films are also very popular among most of the respondents in all the groups. However, certain genres seem to be the exclusive territory of a particular group, as is the case with horror films and teenage girls, science fiction and teenage boys, and dramas and adult women.

3.2.3 What are your all-time favourite films?

This must have been the hardest question to answer. One can imagine that choosing only three films from the whole History of Cinema is not an easy task. However, the results obtained proved extremely interesting for our research not only because they allowed us to see whether the choice of films matched the choice of genre to which we referred in the previous section, but also because they showed some significant generational differences among the respondents, as well as a generalised marked preference for recent products over older films.

At the time of the survey, most of the titles mentioned by the teenager group were very recent, a fact that suggests that for teenagers, the newer the film, the better. Also, since these informants had obviously watched these films at the cinema, the film-going experience was clearly decisive for their choice. This confirms their general view that watching films at the cinema is much more enjoyable than watching them at home. Indeed, in the previous stage of our research, the teenagers interviewed seemed to remember not only the stories they had particularly enjoyed, but also the social experience that went with this.

For the teenage group, *Life is Beautiful* (1997) and *The Matrix* (1999) ranked first *ex aequo*. Following their lead was the Spanish production *Torrente: El Brazo Tonto de la Ley* (1998), as well as the horror spoof *Scary Movie* (2001) and *Titanic* (1997). These results confirm to a large extent those obtained through the question relating to the respondents' favourite genres. If we analyse these results separately, we can see that girls clearly prefer *Life is Beautiful* (an unusual sort of dramatic comedy) and *Titanic* (a romantic story with special effects and moments of action), whereas *The Matrix* came third. Yet, the first *Torrente* film (an action comedy) got an overwhelmingly vote from the boys, as against the residual vote from the girls, followed by *The Matrix* (a science-fiction action film) and then the sequel *Torrente II: Misión en Marbella* (2001) and *Scary Movie*. Once again, these separate results also seem to confirm the more general conclusions that boys prefer comedies, action films and science fiction, whereas girls prefer comedies, action/adventure and romantic films.

As has been mentioned, the majority of these teenagers' favourite films were very recent. Indeed, another interesting fact became apparent: some of the films that obtained votes, such as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001) or *The Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), were just about to premiere in Spain but had not been released yet when the survey was carried out. We therefore think that market forces in the shape of trailers or popular culture products such as books and videogames may have been at work, forces that help to publicize a new film among the teenage audience.

Finally, a certain lack of cinema culture among these teenagers can be deduced from their questionnaires, or at least a reluctance to watch not-so-recent films (or is it just the fact that commercial TV does not offer them the chance to watch them?) Among the 'oldest' films mentioned, the most popular one was *Pretty Woman* (1990), even though the musical *Grease* (1978) also managed to capture a significant proportion of the vote, though small, of course, compared to *Titanic*. Both of these films, nevertheless, have become regular TV classics, at least in the Spanish context.

Indeed, hardly any of these adolescents mentioned classical films among their favourites, with the notable exceptions of *Duck Soup* (1933), *A Night at the Opera*

(1935), *Stagecoach* (1939), *Casablanca* (1942), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), *Some Like it Hot* (1959), *Psycho* (1960), *The Birds* (1963) and *The Exorcist* (1973). In any case, these classics obtained between 1 and 3 votes in a sample of more than 300 questionnaires, which makes them marginal. Apart from reflecting the obvious influence of marketing on these teenagers, these results suggest, in our view, a certain lack of knowledge of and interest in cinema History, on their part, and possibly their parents', which contrasts with a working knowledge of History of Literature or Art, compulsorily acquired at primary and secondary school.

Let us now consider the University students' answers and whether the films chosen as 'favourite movies' support or contradict the respondents' answers to the previous question. As in the adolescents' case, most respondents claim to prefer US movies. However, the film that ranks first in both men's and women's answers is *Life is Beautiful* (1997). There are also three Spanish movies: *Torrente*, *Tesis* (1996) and *The Others* (partly produced with US money, and with English-speaking actors and a Hollywood star, Nicole Kidman, in the protagonist role).

In the case of women, their favourite genres were suspense (first in the ranking), then romantic films and comedies (second and third). Their favourite films include five romantic films: *Titanic*, *Pretty Woman* (1990), *Ghost* (1990), *Dirty Dancing* (1987) and the classic *Gone with the Wind* (1939); three suspense films, *The Others*, *The Sixth Sense* (1999) and *Tesis*, but no 'pure' comedies since *Life is Beautiful* has many comic moments but is an unusual sort of comedy. As for the boys, their favourite genres were comedy, suspense and action/ adventure. Their favourite films included two comedies, *Brácula* (1997) and *Torrente*, both Spanish, then a suspense/ horror film, *The Others*, and three films that could fall into the category of hybrid action/ adventure films: *The Matrix* and *Star Wars* (1997) (science fiction and action/ adventure), as well as a 'pseudo-historical' action film: *Braveheart* (1995). On the whole, then, their favourite films seem to match their genre preferences.

Like the teenagers, they mentioned very few classical movies. The only major exception was *Gone with the Wind*, although only 1.92% of women voted for it. This information reflects, once again, their apparent lack of film culture. In fact, the other 'oldie' mentioned was *Dirty Dancing*, which suggests that their knowledge of the History of Cinema is circumscribed to the last fifteen years.

As for the adults' favourite films, the men mentioned *Casablanca*, *Star Wars*, *Gone with the Wind*, *2001 A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Life is Beautiful*, *Titanic*, *Out of Africa* (1985), *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Dersu Uzala* (1975) and *Todo sobre mi madre* (*All about my Mother*) (1999), in that order. The women, for their part, mentioned *Gone with the Wind* (the film with by far the highest vote), *Life is Beautiful*, *Out of Africa*, *Titanic*, *Casablanca*, *Pretty Woman*, *Ghost*, *Todo sobre mi madre*, *Rear*

Window (1954), and *Solas* (1999). Relatively few recent films were mentioned, which contrasts with the results from the other two groups. Interestingly, the men's all-time favourite films do not correspond entirely with their favourite genres, though the women were consistent in their choice of genres and films. The men had opted for action films, suspense films and comedies, but only *Star Wars* and perhaps *Ben-Hur* could be categorised as action films. *Life is Beautiful* may in part be considered to be a comedy, but the other favourite films listed do not correspond to any of the three genres mentioned above. In fact, there are many dramatic films, even though only 8% of men said that they preferred this type of film.

Finally, as was mentioned earlier, this group of adults claimed to prefer, by far, Spanish to US or any other country's films. Yet, the only Spanish films mentioned among their all-time favourites were *Todo sobre mi madre* and *Solas* in the case of women, and *Todo sobre mi madre* in the case of men. We think this may be due to a conscious rejection of American films en bloc, which is in some measure contradicted by their actual choice of films.

Some interesting patterns emerged out of these results. In spite of the overall popularity of comedies among the three groups, hardly any comedies were mentioned in answers to the last question, with the exception of the teenagers. In our view, this may be due to the fact that comedies are not supposed to be the most highly 'respected' of genres, as evinced by the fact that very few comedies (if any) have won 'Best Picture' awards, whether in Spain or the US. Comedies are supposed to carry an inferior cultural value, which may in part explain the absence of comedy titles among the younger or older adults' favourite films. It may be added that this cultural bias against comedy is fully and enthusiastically shared by film critics (see for example King 2002).

However, the Italian Oscar-winner *Life is Beautiful* proved to be the most popular film of all times for both men and women in all the age groups. Indeed, this well-respected film satisfied many of the audience's preferences. Its combination of comedy and serious drama, together with its 'Europeanness' and the fact that it deals with blistering historical facts with a tender touch, turn it into a much more 'respectable' film that the general audience can warm to.

4. Conclusion

As mentioned in the Introduction to this paper, one of the aims of this research was to obtain objective data as far as the tastes and habits of film audiences were concerned as it is easy for critics to fall into the trap of speaking for the general audience when discussing films. The results of our research may have sometimes confirmed or contradicted what is usually taken for granted (that men are into

action-adventure films while women fall for romantic stuff and so on). However, it is only through this kind of research that we can gain an understanding of actual spectator preferences and begin to take them seriously.

Our research has shown, among other things, clear generational differences as far as cinema attendance, favourite genres and movies are concerned. Women in general, and teenagers in particular, form the bulk of the cinema-going public. In addition, some genres, such as horror and science fiction, appear to be the exclusive domain of teenagers, while other genres, like action-adventure, suspense, and especially comedies, seem to be equally popular among male and female spectators of all ages. Conclusions such as these have not only provided us with some useful initial insights into the public's real preferences but they may also help us to further our understanding of the workings of the film industry.

The results of this investigation, which we hope to be able to elaborate on during the current and future stages of our research, may prove essential if we want our critical work to be supported not only by our own subjective perceptions but also by objective evidence provided by the members of the public.

Appendix 1

ENCUESTAS ZARAGOZA. 2001

Lugar de realización:
Edad:
Sexo:
Profesión:

A. ¿Cuántas veces al mes vas al cine?

      menos de 1
      1-2 veces
      3-4 veces
      más de 4

B. ¿Cuántas películas al mes ves en vídeo/ DVD?

      1 menos de 1
      1-2
      3-4
      más de 4

C. ¿Prefieres ver películas en el cine o en casa (vídeo/DVD/TV)?

D. ¿Prefieres ver películas de ...?

    1. Estados Unidos

    2. España

    Otros países

E. ¿Qué tipo de películas son tus favoritas? (señala un máximo de 3)

    1. de acción/aventuras

    2. de risa

    3. de amor

    4. de suspense

    5. de terror

    6. de ciencia-ficción

    7. dramáticas

    8. otros

F. ¿Cuáles son tus tres películas favoritas de todas las épocas?

G. ¿Cuáles son tus hobbys favoritos? (un máximo de 3)

Notes

[1]. This research was funded by Project Number BFF2001-2564 of the Spanish Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología. We would like to express our gratitude to Alfonso López-Baisson López for his invaluable research assistance and to all the anonymous respondents for their collaboration, especially to the students of the Instituto Miguel Catalán de Zaragoza. We would also like to thank Celestino Deleyto for his very useful comments and all the other members of our Research Project.

[2]. These are labels that were adopted for the sake of clarity as it goes without saying that University students are part of the adult population. In addition, we are aware that not all the population aged 18 to 30 are in Higher Education but for practical reasons we chose to carry out our research among the students at the University of Zaragoza.

[3]. It is worth mentioning that the majority of the respondents in the latter group were teachers, administrative staff, social workers, unskilled workers, housewives, and self-employed people.

[4]. The extraordinary weight of suspense films both among men's and women's preferences may be due to the popularity of Alejandro Amenábar and the release of his hit film *Los Otros* (*The Others*) (2001) at the time.

Works cited

BRITTON, Andrew. 1986. "Blissing Out: The Politics of Reaganite Entertainment". *Movie* 31-32: 1-36.

CEA D'ANCONA, Mª Antonia. 1998. *Metodología cuantitativa: Estrategias y técnicas de investigación social*. Madrid: Síntesis.

DELEYTO, Celestino et al. 2002. "Forget Your Troubles and Be Happy: Una aproximación etnográfica a la ideología del entretenimiento en el cine estadounidense contemporáneo". *Atlantis*, 24.2: 59-72.

DOHERTY, Thomas. 2002. *Teenagers and Teenpics. The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s.* Philadelphia: Temple U.P.

DYER, Richard. 1981. "Entertainment and Utopia". In Altman, Rick. (ed.). *Genre: the Musical*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul: 175-189.

KING, Geoff. 2002. *Film Comedy*. London and New York: Wallflower.

PHILLIPS, Patrick. (1996) 2003. "Spectator, Audience and Response". In Nelmes, Jill. (ed.). *An Introduction to Film Studies*. London and New York: Routledge: 91-128.

RAY, Robert B. (1985) 1998. "Hollywood and Ideology". In Hill, John and Pamela C. Gibson. (eds.). *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford U.P.: 327-338.

STACEY, Jackie. 1994. *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*. London and New York: Routledge.

STOKES, Melvyn and Richard MALTBY. 1999. *Identifying Hollywood's Audiences: Cultural Identity and the Movies.* London: British Film Institute.

STEPHEN SPENDER, THE 1930S, AND SPANISH WRITING

DAVID CALLAHAN
University of Aveiro

The Future of Writing

Much has been written about the response of the English literary world to that central thirties event, the Spanish Civil War. Valentine Cunningham is decisive in his assessment, in his magisterial *British Writers of the Thirties*, that "at no time in English literature has one foreign country so obsessed our poets" (1988: 431). It was a literary world which constructed important meanings about itself at this time through how it perceived itself responding to the conflict in Spain. To be a writer was, for many, to be implicated in a direct way in the Spanish Civil War, inasmuch as it was read as a war in which the future of Writing itself was being decided. However, one of the overlooked facets of this response involves the reading of and responding to Spanish writers on the part of the literary worlds for which the war was so significant; Cunningham's 500-page volume doesn't mention Lorca's poems once, for example. The literary production of Spanish writers and their assessment of their role in the intense and embattled circumstances of the Civil War interested English observers even when they were unable to do more than guess at the nature of the actual writings of the Spaniards. The situation in Spain appeared to have concentrated all of the socially contingent factors upon which the writer's relation to society was based, to have encapsulated the difficulties facing the individual writer with respect to his or her political responsibility and social function. At the

forefront of this encounter with Spanish writers in Britain was, as might be expected, Stephen Spender, litmus paper for so many of the tests of the decade, whose ensuing relation to what he found is of interest to anyone curious about the nature of both Spender's poetic development and the 1930s in general.

For all of the scholarly energy expended since the conflict in relating the Spanish Civil War to the study of literature, the actual reading of Spanish writing by interested observers, as opposed to personal contact with Spanish writers, was extremely limited. More Spanish books were translated into English in any three-year period in the 1920s than during the three years of the Civil War.[1] The broadsheet *Volunteers for Liberty*, put out for English-speaking members of the International Brigade, and edited initially by the then important English novelist, Ralph Bates, who had lived in Spain for several years, contained almost no Spanish writing, translated or otherwise. And when in 1940 John Lehmann produced his *New Writing in Europe* he included the curious chapter, "Spain is the Word", in which only 2 of the 20 pages deal with Spanish writers, in cursory fashion as might be imagined. This, immediately after three years of intense involvement with the country.

When Spender himself wrote on Spanish authors, as in his article for *New Writing* in 1937, "Spain Invites the World's Writers", or, in the same year, "A Communication: The International Writers' Congress" in the *London Mercury*, he mentioned several of them but it was clear that he didn't expect his readers to know who he was talking about. The personalisation of politics in the battle for hearts and minds led Spender to describe the writers rather than quote their works, and indeed the urgency of events meant there was little time for introducing writers from such an unfamiliar literary tradition at any length; indeed, Spender's hurried summary suggested that the principal tradition that contemporary Spanish poets belonged to was simply that of the Civil War itself. In attempting to interest British observers in contemporary Spanish writers, Spender was endeavouring to further contextualise events by reference to individual consciences, which he followed up by translating a small selection of poems as well. These translations —four poems by Manuel Altolaguirre, and one by Miguel Hernández, along with his collaboration in a high-profile volume of translations of Lorca's poetry—in addition to his interest in contemporary Spanish writing, mean that, more than any other of the notable writers of the time, he did attempt to bring Spanish writers to the attention of English readers.

Contact with Spain

Indeed, Spender was actually one of the few members of the English literary world to have begun to make contact with Spanish writing even before the outbreak of

the Spanish Civil War. He made two extended visits to Spain prior to the conflict. The first of these visits, in 1933, is of little importance here, and the following remark in *Letters to Christopher* [Isherwood] is revealing: "Barcelona is certainly the most red hot revolutionary place I have ever been in […] But as I know nothing of Spanish politics I didn't get very thrilled: not nearly as much as in Berlin" (1980: 57). The following year, 1934, he told Isherwood that he knew no-one in Barcelona (69). For Spender at this time, then, unless he could relate to a place through either its writers or a love affair it was difficult for him to relate to it in more extended fashion.

However, by his second visit, in March 1936, four months before the outbreak of the Civil War, it was quite different; he found Barcelona immensely stimulating, began to make personal contacts and to learn something about Spanish politics and literature. Furthermore, he informed Isherwood that a friend "has read me some modern Spanish poetry, particularly by Lorca. It is quite easy to understand & very beautiful, I think" (108). On the strength of his interests he began to learn Spanish and quoted four lines from Lorca (from the "Romance de la Guardia Civil española"), noting that: "There are a lot of very good things like that I would like to understand better than I do at present. I don't know any idioms nor can I understand the use of pronouns always" (110). He mentioned a translation (unspecified) of Lorca he had done, and then, just after the outbreak of the Civil War he wrote to Isherwood from Vienna mentioning Spanish lessons he had been taking and stating again:

> I have discovered some very beautiful modern Spanish poetry, mostly by Garcia Lorca. I'm also going to read a play by Lopez, which is often performed in Russia [probably Lope de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna*] […] I read a very good novel indeed, called *Seven Red Sundays*, by Ramon J. Sender. (119)[2]

The need to adopt the tone of someone introducing a new subject to a not-very-interested interlocutor disappeared with the progress of the Civil War, and Lorca was one writer Spender was able to refer to in his "Spain Invites the World's Writers" without any need for further explanation. In the anthology *Poems for Spain*, edited by Spender and John Lehmann in 1939, there was even a separate section entitled simply "Lorca", although this did not contain any of Lorca's poems, as he had hardly had time to write Civil War poems before he was murdered, but rather poems lamenting his death and drawing inspiration from his example. What the earlier letters to Isherwood show is that Spender's interest in Lorca was genuine and antedated the Civil War; they also enable us to fix with some precision the length of time over which Spender was reading the Spanish poet.

As a mediator Spender was crucial in the transmission of Lorca's poetry to English readers, for apart from writing and speaking about it, he also co-translated a volume

of the Spaniard's poems in 1939. Not only was this volume —*Poems*— the more comprehensive of the two collections of Lorca's poetry to have appeared in England —which indicates the extent to which Lorca had captured the British imagination— it was also linked with Spender's name, and by 1939 Spender was one of the most prominent figures in the literary world. It is also consistent with the evidence to suppose that Spender spoke or wrote to others about Lorca well before this, as he had to Isherwood.

Spender's translations were produced in partnership with the Catalan scholar Joan Gili from a selection made by Lorca's friend Rafael Martínez Nadal. The method of the two translators was not always consistent for at times it was strictly "literal", while at other times it attempted to reproduce rhyming patterns, with the consequent juggling of lines, minor additions and deletions. As always, there were the occasional infelicities of translation but there were also moments of good fortune: "¡Ay, su anillito de plomo/ay, su anillito plomado!", for example, emerges strongly as "Ah, their little leaden wedding ring,/ah, their little ring of lead" ("Canción/ Song", 8-9). The clumsiest note is the translation of "todos los amigos de la manzana" as "all the friends of the apple" ("Oda al Rey de Harlem/ Ode to the King of Harlem", 66-67). Lorca's metaphors are not quite that bizarre; it should be, of course, "all the friends on the block". Spender's difficulties were most apparent when he tried to capture rhyme schemes analogous to the originals. In the "Sonnet on the Death of José de Ciria y Escalante", for example, he had to strain word order and strand the occasional weak word at the end of the line, as in "[...] he saw you?" The fluid (in Spanish) "Un delirio de nardo ceniciento" became the wracked "Delirium of cinerous nard burns", in order to form a half-rhyme with "Remembrance". Words not in the original were inserted, like "dream" in the penultimate line so as to rhyme with "stream", "go" in the last line of the first sestet so as to rhyme with "Giocondo" (62-63). However, the nature of the translations is not so significant here as their resonance within the literary milieu to which they were directed, further ensured by Spender's high profile; indeed, despite wartime printing restrictions they were reprinted in 1943.

Lorca was not the only Spanish poet whom Spender helped to present to British readers. He both wrote about Spanish writers and translated poems by Manuel Altolaguirre and Miguel Hernández, although none of his other activities were as comprehensive as his Lorca translations. Neither did this other activity occur until after the outbreak of the Civil War and it was thus complicated by his relationship to the conflict and the issues it appeared to raise for him and the whole of Europe. Historians of the Civil War have written of its aetiology as being clearly visible within the internal history of Spain, yet at the time most people saw it as part of the general European polarization into Right and Left which had been taking place during the 1920s and 1930s. It was not merely detached sympathy which drove

people to fight or otherwise concern themselves with the fate of Spain. It was the feeling that Spain was the front-line in the battle to shape the future of Western, or world, society. Spender's interest, once it had been "revealed" that the line was to be drawn in Spain, was real and sincere.

Spender's involvement with Spanish writing came to be closely linked to his personal acquaintance with several Spanish authors, although as we have seen there were hints in his letters to Isherwood that even before the Civil War he was reading more than just Lorca. In March 1936 he related to Isherwood that:

> Spanish literature is so alive that there are special counters for new books in Castilian and Catalan, a great many of which are poetry, very nicely produced! The book you see on every kiosk —even the smallest— is a new *Anthologia de la Poesia Cataluña*. (1980: 105)

Before this, however, there was definitely nothing to suggest that Spender had read any Spanish literature or taken any particular interest in Spain; indeed, the tone of these comments in his letters reveals that he was discovering something new to him. The title story from Spender's volume of short stories, *The Burning Cactus* (1936), was first published in 1933 and does take place in Barcelona but it has little connection with the place. The story deals rather with social disintegration as mirrored in the aimless, neurotic set of personal relationships in which the narrator finds himself. The story's characters are in Barcelona as they have had to decamp from Berlin, so the city serves not so much as "itself" as "somewhere else".

In the case of Miguel Hernández, "Hear this Voice" was the first of his poems to be published in England, in 1938 (not that he has ever aroused much enthusiasm in the English-speaking world). He was, however, one of the Spanish writers whose reputation owes most to the recognition he achieved during the Civil War. It was unusual for anything by a Spanish writer to be translated into English so soon after his initial appearance, his first volume having been published only in 1933, a rapidity directly ascribable to the Civil War. We can gauge reasons for his failure in England by looking at this poem ("The Winds of the People") and comparing it not only to the poems Spender was writing but to those of the majority of English writers who dealt with the war. Where the two poems by Hernández are strident, urgent and populistic, Spender's are intimate, questioning and afraid. Hernández was quite capable of writing poems in a similar vein to Spender, as he demonstrated in the work he wrote between 1938-1941, later collected and published posthumously as *Cancionero y romancero de ausencias y Últimos poemas* (1958). In terms of Spanish writing during the Civil War the two poems by Hernández which were translated were admittedly more typical, yet it is a type of war poetry which had not found favour in British literary circles since before the success of First World War poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon.

43

Poetry is the Response

This leads us to Spender's poetic reaction to his Spanish experiences, for it was a process in which his travels, friendships and readings all played a part. What we see, however, is principally the solidifying of his beliefs about the nature of poetry and the role of the poet. The Spanish Civil War did not occasion any radical change in Spender's activities or work for he had clearly formulated what he felt to be his poetic precepts at numerous times during his as yet short career. In 1933 he wrote in "Poetry and Revolution":

> Of human activities, writing poetry is one of the least revolutionary [...] the writing of a poem in itself solves the poem's problem [...] Poetry is certainly "counter-revolutionary" in the sense that it contains an element of pity. (1933b: 62 and 69)

In *The Destructive Element* we find him saying that "it seems likely, then, that the Communist explanation of our society is not adequate to produce considerable art" (1935: 254). It was this sort of sentiment which led him to experience some discomfort while in Spain: "I myself, because I am not a writer of heroics, have felt rather isolated", he records in "Spain Invites the World's Writers" (250). He mentions having spoken to Alberti, Altolaguirre and Bergamín about his disquiet and discovering that they felt the same way. It was thus consistent that he should have translated Altolaguirre, and praised the subtlety and warmth of his mind, for like Spender's own poems Altolaguirre's enact the responses of an undogmatic voice for whom individual suffering and survival are central, caught up in the violent processes of history.

Altolaguirre's "I Demand the Ultimate Death", for example, seems to articulate in its title the bombastic polarisation and hostility of the rhetoric of war, only to deny our expectations by opposing not any named enemy of human beings but the abstract enemy describable as all violence. All of the four poems by Altolaguirre which Spender translated were personal ones which do not glorify war or the Republic and which involve metaphorical subtleties not present in the poems by Miguel Hernández, nor in the bulk of Civil War verse by Spaniards published in Britain. They were probably the best Civil War poems from a Spanish writer to be printed in England during the conflict, yet there is no evidence that anyone other than Spender was impressed by Altolaguirre.

When it comes to deciding whether Spender's reading of the Spanish poets has left any clear traces in his work the answer would have to be that it has not. Spender's poetic diction and his techniques did not change markedly during the 1930s, nor did they afterwards. Just as he formulated early in his career the relationship of personal poetry to public events, so also did he early light upon that mixture of lyricism, compassion, the deliberately prosaic and the startling image which

characterize his poetry. As early as Edwin Muir's *The Present Age From 1914*, Spender's evenly consistent output led Muir to suggest that "his work shows less sign of external influence than that of any other poet of his time, except for the unavoidable influence of the contemporary world" (1939: 127). And in the most comprehensive modern study of Spender's work of this period, A.K. Weatherhead, in *Stephen Spender and the Thirties*, also concludes that "few poets have changed their styles less", and that "Spender has been largely unswayed by passing planetary figures and fashions" (1975: 221).

Muir and Weatherhead's claims can generally be borne out by examination of Spender's poetry. However, there *are* subtle changes in his poetry in this period, principally alterations in the weight he gives to the surrounding signs of industrial, urbanising and material life and to the human beings who have to negotiate them. While the linguistic manoeuvres might be similar, they come to be used for slightly different ends between the poems of the early 1930s and those of the later years of the decade.

To take a representative poem from Spender's early phase, "The Landscape Near an Aerodrome" (published in *Poems* in 1933c: 45-46), we can see a distinctive movement from the objects and surfaces of modern life into a concern with what they might be obscuring and distorting in the lives of the people who work them. As the airliner, a monument to human creativity and vision, glides over the suburbs, we experience first a sense of wonder followed by an awareness of our numbed inability to deal with precisely those objects which we are restlessly bringing into being. An ambiguous tenderness for the capacity of human beings to create, even when what they create is inexorably enslaving and baffling them, permeates Spender's poems of this type. The initial fascination launches off from these artefacts, a fascination patent in "The Express" or "Pylons"(43-44, 47-48), a recovery of the industrial present over against the sentimentalising of the past or of nature.

By the latter part of the 1930s, however, the poems no longer make conciliatory gestures towards the icons of material progress. The already ambivalent treatment of urbanising Britain comes down more and more on the side of the unheroic and uncertain inhabitant of a constrained and compromised era. Even so, this is not so much a change of direction as a change in emphasis among elements which were already present and significant in Spender's poetry from the outset of his career. For apart from those poems mentioned above, we can also find in his early work a poem such as the much-praised "I Think Continually" (37-38) in which modern life metonymically appears as "traffic" which threatens to "smother/ With noise and fog the flowering of the Spirit". The poem recalls those who have retained some sense of integrity and urgency of desire in the face of attempts to suppress

them, although it is still a poem which appears to borrow most of its rhetoric and imagery from the less than urgent conventionalities of Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian paeans to love, imagination, the ideal or the spiritual. Here, the "truly great", of whom the speaker thinks continually, are vague and generalized (albeit perhaps befitting their anonymity), and the supposed integrity they have retained is couched in such a woolly mixture of abstractions and "poetic" vocabulary —they "wore at their hearts the fire's centre"— that, notwithstanding partial success, the poem's sentimental archness scarcely convinces us of what this true greatness really consists. Despite the fact that this poem, in fellow poet Gavin Ewart's disapproving observation, "has had the sort of following that Byron's 'Corsair' had in his lifetime" (1971: 10), Nicholas Jenkins probably sums up the present assessment of Spender's work when he observes that: "Readers in the 1930s and since have complained that Spender's language is vague and abstract" (2004: 4).

Where there is an attempt to rescue the true heroism of the ceaseless yet anonymous struggle for love and personal worth in "I Think Continually", the more concrete and urgent aggressions of "modern life" which Spender was to experience in Germany, Vienna and, especially, the Spanish Civil War, saw that this impulse became more focused and specific as the decade progressed. Instead of shapeless battles for "light", "desire" or "the essential delight of the blood", as in "I Think Continually", the battles become more particular and the gains and losses more tangible. Spender has been especially scrupulous in ensuring that his tendency to use the specific circumstance as the occasion for a meaningful generalization does not overwhelm and belittle the particular deaths and griefs of which he was writing, which can be seen in poems such as "Ultima Ratio Regum" and "A Stopwatch and an Ordinance Map" (1939: 57-58; 61). In this he seems very close to Altolaguirre, certainly to those poems of Altolaguirre's he chose to translate. Altolaguirre's "Madrid" and Spender's "Till Death Completes Their Arc", for instance, both retreat from the language of heroics common in the discourses approved of by officials on either side, so that security or conviction can only find refuge beyond the text in a realm gestured to but absent. For Altolaguirre "my narrow heart keeps hidden/ a love which grieves me which I cannot/ even reveal to this night". Spender, in turn, is "pressed into the inside of a mask/ At the back of love, the back of air, the back of light". The intensity of the war demands the response of a committed presence, an integral relation to the issues and the events of the conflict which admits no seams between the observer and the actor. Both writers, however, find that the messiness of the struggle and a concern for the pain and suffering they observe dilute the possibilities of certainty. Accordingly they must deal with their relation to the light, that medium by which we are seen and distinguished, placed in relation to what exists around us. Spender "watches through a sky/ And is deceived by mirrors"; his

> self-image
> Lifted in light against the lens
> Stares back with my dumb wall of eyes:
> The seen and seeing softly mutually strike
> Their glass barrier that arrests the sight.

The opposition between appearance and identity is distorted even in the act of self-observation, so that it is hardly surprising that when it comes to observing others, "The other lives revolve around my sight/ Scratching a distant eyelid like the stars". As the successive unfoldings of the act of perception reveal the increasingly powerful distortion of the perceiver the further away from the self he gets, the inevitable completion of the arc is the awareness that, as far as others are concerned, so also must the speaker be a distantly unreadable distortion of the self he approaches in himself. The immediacies of others, the enormity of their attempt to survive "the foul history" of "the world's being", all that which the poet should be able to see and to show, prove both impossible to perceive authentically and impossible to present poetically. In this, of course, Spender is also participating in that acknowledged literary manoeuvre in which the distance between the writing subject and the object referred to is lamented and thereby made the moment of the work.

In Altolaguirre's poem, the idea of light has been distorted by the violent explosive flashes of the war, away from its metaphorical function as the medium by which we may see and know. The light of an explosion promises and indicates here only the place of death. Faced by "the glorious circle of fire" the speaker "can evoke nothing", and the night which the flashes of light illuminate, just as they spotlight imagined moments and acts of "heroism", becomes the ground in which the invisibility of the poet is made manifest.

Both poems, then, bear the weight of the "determinate absence" in not dealing directly with the heroism and suffering of the war along with what is felt as a retreat (a surrender?) into the experience of precisely that evasion. The pressure of the public insistence on an "appropriate" writerly response collapses their very real concern for the public into a record of their ultimately belonging somewhere else. The reality of their fellow-feeling is predicated upon their capacity for feeling in those absent realms indicated above. Unsurprisingly, this was a register that did not serve the ends defined by the stern ideologues of the struggle in that polarised decade, and still today it can rouse the ire of a Marxist analyst such as Adrian Caesar in his *Dividing lines: poetry, class and ideology in the 1930s*, where he is scathing in his assessment of Spender's work, suggesting that "Spender's 'pity' for the working class too often tends to result in self-pity" (1991: 83).

Spender and Lorca

Spender's first response to Lorca's poetry was in terms of its "beauty". However, Lorca, like Altolaguirre, can also be seen to relate to Spender's interest in the marginalised or defenceless as opposed to rhetorical gestures assimilating the individual to large social abstractions. Spender was consistent throughout his career in indicating that the "truly great" are not the conventionally heroic or famous but the anonymous who preserve decency despite the forces that would enlist us under the banner of violence or the oppression of others. Accordingly, he responded to that element in Lorca's poetry that concentrates on the unequal struggle between the marginal individual or way of life and the actions of varying levels of authority —whether official on the part of social institutions or unofficial but nevertheless powerful on the part of convention and tradition.

Spender tried to specify what it was about Lorca's poetry which was valuable when he wrote in 1937 in *Life and Letters To-Day* on A. L. Lloyd's translations of Lorca, the first selection to be translated into English:

> The virtues of Lorca's poetry lie in its beautiful music, its strong and original imagery, the poet's mastery of a simple narrative style, and above all in a magic which is perhaps the rarest of all qualities in lyric poetry. (1937c: 144)

Of these qualities Spender pointed to the "music" as the one really untranslatable feature; however, in his letters to Isherwood he did not separate out even the vaguely denominated qualities indicated above. Instead, he merely repeated that Lorca's poetry was "very beautiful".[3] Unfortunately, Spender was not specific about what poems or what volume of Lorca's he was reading, and the only concrete clue we have is the fragment quoted from the "Romance de la Guardia Civil española", a poem contained in Lorca's *Romancero gitano*. Spender's claim to Isherwood, however, that Lorca's poetry "is quite easy to understand" (1980: 108) would seem to indicate that he was not reading the more demanding New York poems, which is not surprising as at this time only a few of them had been published in literary magazines and Spender still didn't know the Spanish poets who could have directed him to this material. By the time Spender came to collaborate in the translation of a volume of Lorca's selected poetry, poems were included from all of the Spaniard's published volumes as well as poems that had only been published in magazines and anthologies. As the selection of poems to be translated was officially made not by Spender but by Martínez Nadal, we are unable to point to the particular selection of poems in the volume of translations as necessarily representative of Spender's reading of Lorca or indicative of those aspects of the Spaniard's work he found rewarding.

We may still, however, return to the fact that Spender and Lorca find related ground in their opposition to the dehumanizing forces which thwart the possibility

of self-realization and dignified freedom. It may not be pushing this too far to suggest that there is also a common locus in the ambiguous sexuality which lies behind some of their poems and which certainly informed their lives in this period. Even Lorca's "gypsy" poems, with which it appears Spender first came into contact, often refer to occasions of forbidden sexuality which can be read as analogues in some way for the more expressly forbidden homosexuality. And moreover when they are not dealing with an event, they often refer to a less focused but acute sensation of emotional frustration, blockage, restriction and incompletion (see, for example, many of the shorter poems in *Poema del Cante Jondo*, such as those which make up the "Poema de la Soleá"). In Spender's early work this vein could be said to be represented by many of the oracular and enigmatic poems in *Poems* (1933), expressive of a series of thirties anxieties, of which ambivalent sexuality was one.[4]

Spender, however, also knew, certainly by the time he came to translate Lorca, those of Lorca's New York poems which had become available (given that the first, albeit imperfect, edition of *Poeta en Nueva York* was not published until 1940). We can see that they too can be read in terms of two of Spender's consistent concerns: those large inhuman forces crushing the emotional connections between people which are worthwhile (rendered more specifically and less surrealistically by Spender in, for example, "An Elementary School Class Room in a Slum", 1939: 28-29), and, contained within this perhaps, the gap that separates homosexual love from its poetic expression. Certain aspects of Spender's personal life at the period he was reading Lorca and responding to the Spanish Civil War contribute to the possibility that this facet of Lorca's poetry might have articulated the confused sexual drama he was living at the time. Spender's presence in Spain during the war was an ironically grim encapsulation of the discontinuities he felt between the public and the private, given that his real support for the Republic and feeling for the Spanish people overlaid his efforts to get his former male companion T. A. R. Hyndman out of the conflict and back home. When the relationship with Spender had ended, Hyndman enrolled for the fighting in Spain as a gesture of independence as well as an attempt to arouse sympathy in Spender, for he was temperamentally unsuited to military life and soon became desperate to leave. Spender was thus concerned about rescuing Hyndman, while at the same time deeply involved in a new relationship with a woman, Inez Pearn, whom he had met at an Aid for Spain meeting, and who soon became his wife.[5]

This intrusion of personal and sexual complications into Spender's relationship to a public conflict, in which, moreover, the public stance of writers became not only of propaganda value but a necessary item in the confirmation of the writer's identity, ironically turned the war for Spender into a site of the affirmation of the personal, the hidden, the unknown, the insignificant and the overlooked: "that wreath of incommunicable grief/ Which is all mystery or nothing", as he writes

in "Thoughts During an Air Raid" (1939: 45). The proliferation of references to wasted and anonymous young men in Spender's Spanish Civil War poetry is not specific to him, however, for it can be seen in much of the poetry written by English people during the war. Further, it continues the rhetoric and stances of the type of anti-heroic English First World War poetry popularized by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Indeed, this First World War writing is, in some ways, a translation of the closeness and intensity of public school life into related qualities in the armed forces, in which the camaraderie of male proximity shades into varying degrees of homosociality. There is thus a more likely native tradition or context for Spender's writing of this type than that provided by his exposure to Lorca. Having said that, however, it is still possible to see in this aspect of Lorca something that might have attracted Spender, even when it has not given rise to identifiable verbal echoes or traces of influence.

It is possible that Spender knew of Lorca's sexual orientation, given his familiarity with many of the Spanish literary figures of the day, including Martínez Nadal, a good friend of Lorca's since 1923 and well aware of this side of Lorca. While it is not a subject on which Lorca's friends were likely to speak lightly, Spender's own relatively well-known sexual ambivalence at the time of the Spanish Civil War would presumably have made it more probable that such information would have come his way. Although repressed under Franco, knowledge of Lorca's homosexuality was apparently widespread; Ian Gibson, for example, states bluntly in *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca* that in Granada Lorca "was considered to be a homosexual" (1983: 22), and in his extensive biography of Lorca more circumspectly: "Many of the poet's former companions at the Residencia have been extremely reticent about his homosexuality, often denying that they were ever aware of the poet's 'problem' […] None the less his homosexuality was immediately apparent to many people" (1989: 94-95). At the same time, there exists in Spain a counter-current, both biographical and critical, which claims that Lorca's homosexuality was by no means an open secret, and in any case that the immense majority of his poems can be read in the ageless tradition of love poems in which it is not so much the sexuality which is at stake but the attaining, retaining or loss of the love of the other. Eulalia-Dolores de la Higuera Rojas, for instance, and with the approval of Ian Gibson, presents in her *Mujeres en la vida de García Lorca* a series of outlines of several women who featured in Lorca's life. These women —relatives, acquaintances and friends— appear to have concurred in finding Lorca extremely attractive and masculine (1980: 17); almost all of them suspected nothing of his homosexuality. Further, the influential Spanish critic Blas Matamoro, to take one example, was terse in his denial of explicit homosexuality even in those posthumously published poems putatively more revelatory of Lorca's sexuality than any others, the *Sonetos del amor oscuro*:

> La homosexualidad aparece escasamente en Lorca, salvo que se hiciera de su obra una lectura basada en cierto difuso folkore gay y en sus tics, llevados a rasgos de estilo [...] en vano se buscará en estos sonetos la menor referencia a un acto sexual de esa especie ni, mucho menos, a sentimientos pretendidamente homosexuales, ya que estos no existen [...] Estos sonetos de Lorca confirman una larga tradición de la poesía amatoria, a saber: que se canta a un objeto imaginario que se imagina, a su vez, lejano e inalcanzable. (1984: 189-90)

And indeed, one wonders to what extent Lorca's sexuality was perceived in English literary circles when one notes that the poem of his chosen by Herbert Read for his anthology of poems for soldiers to carry with them to the Second World War was the "Ode to Walt Whitman". Although a poem in which a certain type of what the poem sees as decadent homosexuality is linked with the dehumanizing forces Lorca encountered in New York, with the reduction of all relationships to networks of power and material exchange, it is also a poem which has been taken as a clearer statement than most in Lorca of the positive, life-affirming facet of homosexual love. That a poem which begins "Por el East River y el Bronx/ Los muchachos cantaban enseñando sus cinturas" (*Poeta en Nueva York. Tierra y luna*, 231) should have been considered suitable for the British Army leads back not only to the relation of upper-middle-class army life and unexamined homoeroticism, but also to the emasculation, as it were, of Lorca's poetry in England. This was not an emasculation, however, which can be blamed entirely on the English, for in the version of the "Ode to Walt Whitman" published by Martínez Nadal in his selection of Lorca's poetry, translated by Spender, the version Read was to include in his anthology, 61 of its 137 lines have been left out.[6] Nevertheless, it may be that the reading of the poem in the manner which has now become accepted was simply unavailable to the English literary world of the time, to the extent that it was instead easily assimilated to native traditions of masculine relationships which fed on a public school education, heavy emotional investment in a model of patrician male friendship derived from the Classics, and the idealised images of male companionship in late Victorian and Edwardian poetry. It was this tradition which, according to poet and well-known Spanish Civil War veteran Tom Wintringham writing in *Life and Letters To-Day*, lay behind Spender's translations of Lorca in the first place and which had diluted much of their power.[7] When Spender and Gili's translations of Lorca appeared, their association with Spender had a bearing on the content of one evaluation at least, that of Ralph Abercrombie (son of Georgian poet and man-of-letters Lascelles Abercrombie) in *Time and Tide*. He admitted to no knowledge of Spanish but suggested that Spender's versions were more accurate than those of Australian A. L. Lloyd, while being less rhythmical. He went on: "And in some of these versions there are signs of that peculiar sogginess (and sagging) which seems to be Mr. Spender's specialty nowadays" (1939: 961).

However, as Wintringham suggests, the sogginess seems more likely to be Spender's rather than Lorca's, something Spender has imposed on Lorca.

Paul Binding, in his *Lorca: The Gay Imagination*, despite the brief of his book, does not claim direct links between Lorca and Spender's sexuality. What he does find is that:

> what first impressed [Spender] was the Spanish poet's "grammar of images". Of that grammar *El poema del cante jondo* is the first primer. Here we encounter that aggregate of figures and features which at once evoke Lorca's own land and are of wide psychic address: olive trees; orange and lemon groves; mountains with hemlocks and nettles growing on their slopes; oleanders; poplars; prospects of old cities, and of three cities in particular, Sevilla, Granada, Córdoba; rivers and their sluggish backwaters; the phallic-shaped rushes that grow by their banks; the wind; the tantalisingly apprehendable sea; the moon —especially when shining over uninhabited countryside; riders and their horses; white villages; forges; children in the squares of little towns; the *cantaores* and the ordinary Gypsies, old women, young boys, gentle girls. (1985: 51)

Thus it is that throughout much of Lorca's poetry desire becomes something dangerous or oppressed, often unable to be satisfied and connected with the threat or the actuality of death or at the least frustration. This is not a register present in Spender's poetry at all, but it does relate to something present in the work of Spender's friends W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood and associated with the 1930s in general —a sense of impending threat, of relationships as moral tests or as emotional drama, the need to locate an edge or border beyond authority and the significance of the road whose destination is mysterious as a location for intense experience. Nonetheless, despite this general thematic or emotional resonance between 1930s England and Lorca's Andalusia, Spender's poetry is nowhere as similar to Lorca's as it is to Altolaguirre's. Even the more urban work in *Poeta en Nueva York* partakes of a degree of fragmentation and surrealism that Spender never approached. Indeed, Spender's most enigmatic and at the same time concrete poems, those displaying more vivid metaphors drawn from the natural world, occur before he had visited Spain. Before he had begun reading Lorca Spender's poetry revealed what *Scrutiny*'s reviewer E. S. Huelin called "the false glitter of the many startling and curious metaphors with which it is heavily decorated" (1936: 119).

What seems probable then is that Spender intuited certain themes important to him within the superficially exotic set of Lorca's Andalusian symbols and images. While the locally exotic possesses its own estranging and colourful attractions for a foreign reader, Lorca was also a poet of his time in European terms. The menace that suffuses many of Lorca's poems and plays possesses an enigmatic and unstoppable power similar to that in Auden and Isherwood's plays or the parables of Kafka, also popularised in the inter-war period in Britain. How closely apposite to Lorca's

poetry seems Robin Skelton's thumbnail sketch of English poetry of the time: "The blurred borderlands between real and unreal, boyhood and manhood, game and ritual, vision and fantasy, fable and history, are the territories in which the poets of the thirties live" (1964: 33). At the same time, it is also possible to see why Spender's poetry did not really change despite his approval of Lorca's work: these general areas of concern and registers for dealing with them were already present and well represented in Spender's poetry. What may be seen as the principal contemporary literary influence on his work had already occurred and, as usual with Spender, it was bound up with a personal relationship he never had with Lorca, his friendship with W. H. Auden.

Spender, then, was important as a mediator of Spanish literature but does not appear to have imported readily identifiable techniques or ideas from Spanish writers in this period. Perhaps indicative of the radical break with the immediate past which the Second World War occasioned for many people, personal loyalties and moral positions having to be adjusted to the more immediate need for physical and ideological survival in the intense period which followed, Spender refers only once to Lorca in his *Journals 1939-1983*. The brief reference, furthermore, occurs in 1955 in answer to a request, when Spender agrees to speak about Spain only to discover that "my memories of Spain, from over twenty years ago, were extremely vague". What he does talk about is "the Spanish poets I had met, and […] translating Lorca" (1985: 154). Notwithstanding the thinness of his later references to Lorca, as a mediator of Spanish writing Spender was highly visible during the years 1936-1939. Through his labours as translator, editor and literary critic he contributed notably to the supply of material and information desired by the reading public at this time, his translations of Lorca being especially important in the transmission of this poet to the English literary world. And Spender's reading of Altolaguirre and Lorca in the crucible of the Spanish Civil War may not have changed his own writing strategies but they certainly became one more significant factor in convincing him of the oblique relationship of personal poetry to public event, even, or perhaps especially, in the extremity of war, revolution and the possible reshaping of the social, political and literary landscape. The results of such reflections can be seen in *Life and the Poet* (1942), which argues, in David Leeming's words: "that poetry cannot be cause-oriented […] that even in times of great political and social stress a poet must be true to his sense of 'satisfactory living'" (1999: 138). After all, Lorca had come to be considered a great poet of the inter-war period without being easily identified with the political rallying points of the age, and it was no accident that Spender placed "To a Spanish Poet (for Manuel Altolaguirre)" last in his 1939 volume, *The Still Centre*, thus constituting, as Sanford Sternlicht says, "an *ave atque vale* to all that the 'idea' of Spain connoted in the 1930s, to the decade itself, and to the poet's youth" (1992: 50).

Notes

1. General contexts for the response to Spanish writing in this period may be seen in Callahan's "Material Conditions for Reception: Spanish Literature in England 1920-1940". *New Comparison* 15 (Spring 1993): 100-109.

2. Spender, as did most commentators on Spain, tended to omit the orthographic accents when writing Spanish names and words; I have not used "sic" as it would have littered the quotations in an untidy and distracting fashion, but it is to be understood in the case of all quotations containing errors of Spanish.

3. Spender uses these words in all of the four letters in *Letters to Christopher* where he refers to Lorca.

4. See, for example, *Poems*: "How strangely this sun reminds me of my love!" (1939a: 31); or "Abrupt and charming mover" (49-50); or "Acts passed beyond the boundary of mere wishing" (15).

5. Despite her name, Inez was not Spanish or half-Spanish as one rumour had it; she had changed her name from Marie Agnes in support of the Republican cause. However, she was working on the poetry of Góngora, which meant she was able to help Spender closely on all of his translations from Spanish during this period. See Sutherland 2004: 196-256 and Spender 1964: 204-210.

6. The lines omitted in the English version of 1939 are 45-72 and 92-126, as per the edition edited by Eutimio Martín.

7. This was the tradition whose "finest" poem, perhaps, was Tennyson's threnody, *In Memoriam*, occasioned by the death of his friend Arthur Hallam. The conjunction of the ideal of male friendship and romantic lyric furnishes us with such unmistakeable lines as, for example, "Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,/ I, falling on his faithful heart,/ Would breathing thro' his lips impart/The life that almost dies in me". Poem XVIII, *In Memoriam* [1850]. Tennyson 1975: 235.

Works Cited

ABERCROMBIE, Ralph. 1939. "New Poetry". *Time and Tide* (15 July): 961.

ALTOLAGUIRRE, Manuel. 1937a. "My Brother Luis". Trans. S. [and Inez] Spender. *New Statesman and Nation* (30 October): 681.

—. 1937b. "Ultimate Death". Trans. S. [and Inez] Spender. *New Statesman and Nation* (9 October): 531.

—. 1938. "I Demand the Ultimate Death". Trans. S. [and Inez] Spender. *New Statesman and Nation* (8 January): 39.

—. 1939. "Madrid". Trans. S. [and Inez] Spender. *New Statesman and Nation* (9 July): 73.

BINDING, Paul. 1985. *Lorca: The Gay Imagination*. London: GMP Press.

CAESAR, Adrian. 1991. *Dividing lines: Poetry, class and ideology in the 1930s*. Manchester: Manchester U. P.

CALLAHAN, David. 1993. "Material Conditions for Reception: Spanish Literature in England 1920-1940". *New Comparison* 15 (Spring): 100-109.

CUNNINGHAM, Valentine. 1988. *British Writers of the Thirties*. Oxford: Oxford U. P.

EWART, Gavin. 1971. *Notes on Literature: Stephen Spender—Selected Poems*. London: British Council.

GARCÍA LORCA, Federico. (1928) 1984. *Romancero gitano*. Ed. A. Josephs and J. Caballero. Madrid: Cátedra.

—. (1931) 1998. *Poema del Cante Jondo* [1931]. Ed. M. Hernández. Madrid: Alianza.

—. 1939a. *Poems*. Trans. S. Spender and J. Gili. London: Dolphin.

—. 1939b. "Ode to Walt Whitman". Trans. J. Gili and S. Spender. In Read, Herbert. (ed.). *The Knapsack*. London: Routledge: 159-61.

—. (1940) 1983. *Poeta en Nueva York/ Tierra y luna* [1940, as, according to Martín, part of the first edition of *Poeta en Nueva York*]. Ed. E. Martín. Barcelona: Ariel.

GIBSON, Ian. 1983. *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca*. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

—. 1989. *Federico García Lorca: A Life*. London: Faber.

HERNÁNDEZ, Miguel. 1938. "Hear this Voice". Trans. I. and S. Spender. *New Writing* 5 (Spring): 56-58.

—. 1939. "The Winds of the People". Trans. A. L. Lloyd. In Spender, Stephen and John Lehmann. (eds.).: 37-39.

—. 1958. *Cancionero y romancero de ausencias y Ultimos poemas*. Buenos Aires: Lautaro.

HIGUERA ROJAS, Eulalia-Dolores de la. 1980. *Mujeres en la vida de García Lorca*. Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada.

HUELIN, E. S. 1936. "*The Burning Cactus*". *Scrutiny* 5: 119.

JENKINS, Nicholas. 2004. "Under-exposure". *TLS* (13 August): 3-6.

LEEMING, David. 1999. *Stephen Spender: A Life in Modernism*. London: Duckworth.

LEHMANN, John. 1940. *New Writing in Europe*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

MATAMORO, Blas. 1984. "Lorca, poeta clandestino". *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 408 (June): 189-90.

MUIR, Edwin. 1939. *The Present Age From 1914*. London: Cresset Press.

SKELTON, Robin. (ed.). 1964. *Poetry of the Thirties*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

SPENDER, Stephen. 1933a. "The Burning Cactus". *New Oxford Outlook* 1: 24-42; also published in *Life and Letters* 10 (1934): 85-96; collected in *The Burning Cactus and Other Stories*. London: Faber, 1937.

—. 1933b. "Poetry and Revolution". In *New Country*. Ed. M. Roberts. London: Hogarth Press: 62 and 69.

—. 1933c. *Poems*. London: Faber.

—. 1935. *The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs*. London: Jonathan Cape.

—. 1937a. "Spain Invites the World's Writers". *New Writing* 4 (Autumn): 245-51.

—. 1937b. "A Communication: The International Writers' Congress". *London Mercury*, 36: 373.

—. 1937c. "*Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter and other poems*". Review of García Lorca, Federico. 1937. *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter and other poems*. Trans. A. L. Lloyd. London: Heinemann. *Life and Letters To-Day*, 17 (Winter): 144-146.

—. 1938. "Till Death Completes Their Arc". *New Writing*. New Series 1 (Autumn): 27.

—. 1939. *The Still Centre*. London: Faber.

—. 1942. *Life and the Poet*. London: Secker and Warburg.

—. (1951) 1964. *World Within World*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

—. 1980. *Letters to Christopher: Stephen Spender's Letters to Christopher Isherwood, 1929-1939*. Ed. L. Bartlett. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press.

—. 1985. *Journals 1939-1983*. London: Faber.

SPENDER, Stephen and John LEHMANN. (eds.). 1939. *Poems for Spain*. London: Hogarth Press.

STERNLICHT, Stanford. 1992. *Stephen Spender*. New York: Twayne.

SUTHERLAND, John. 2004. *Stephen Spender: The Authorised Biography*. London: Viking.

TENNYSON, Alfred. 1975. *Poems and Plays*. Ed. T. H. Warren. Oxford: Oxford U. P.

WEATHERHEAD, A. K. 1975. *Stephen Spender and the Thirties*. Lewisburg: Bucknell U. P.

WINTRINGHAM, Tom. 1939. "*Poems: F.García Lorca*". *Life and Letters To-Day* 22: 488-94.

READING ACROSS CULTURES: TWO STORIES FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA ON ARRANGED MARRIAGES

DANIELA CAVALLARO
University of Auckland

The issue of arranged marriages in a developing country may be a hazardous topic for a European to discuss. In her 1982 essay entitled "White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood", Hazel V. Carby warns that Euro-American feminism often fails to comprehend the concerns of black women, due to its "Eurocentric (and often racist) framework" (1982: 226). In particular, Carby takes arranged marriages as an example of those family structures which the Western World considers "pathologic", as opposed to the "Western nuclear family structure and related ideologies of 'romantic love'" (215-216). The white nuclear family, Carby claims, is the measure by which other family structures are judged and often condemned by Western observers, who on the other hand ignore the actual struggles of women in developing countries (216-217).

As a European woman lecturing in literature in Papua New Guinea, and interested in women's issues, I initially found myself in the position of those Western observers that Carby criticized: faced with the existence in our own university community and in PNG at large of marriage customs I was not familiar with, customs that I considered a violation of women's human rights, I would mainly note their negative consequences as reported in the local papers: low self-esteem on the part of women, abandonment, divorce and domestic violence. I also expected literary works, especially if written by women, to express their concerns with the customs and their desire to eliminate them. In my time in PNG, however,

I had the opportunity to read several literary texts by PNG writers centered on the issue of arranged marriages that challenged my understanding of it. In particular, among the stories and plays on the theme, I searched for those written by women –not an easy search, due to what critic Lolo Houbein in 1982 defined as the "virtual absence of women writers" in the country (1982: 3).[1] I was especially intrigued, however, by two very different stories by Sally-Ann Bagita, a writer from the Central province, who published a considerable number of stories and poems in the 1970s and 80s, first in *Papua New Guinea Writing* and later in *The Times of Papua New Guinea,* a magazine of which she also became editor.[2] These two stories, which I will discuss in this article, on the one hand seem to critique the tradition of arranged marriage, as I would have expected. On the other hand, however, they also appear to reveal that the problems are not so much in the custom itself, as in the modern, Westernized understanding of it.

Marriage in Melanesia: the socio-anthropological background

In Melanesian societies, missionary and anthropologist Ennio Mantovani claims, marriage is not considered so much a union of two individuals, as of two communities: "Traditional marriage is communitarian; two communities are bound together through the couple" (1993: 14). Therefore, marriage, he continues, "is basically a service to the community, establishing relationship and providing continuity. It is not primarily concerned with the couple but with the society that carries the couple" (14). In other words, when the community takes precedence over the individual, the actual choice of partners themselves becomes less important. The reason for the difference between the Western and Melanesian understanding of marriage, Mantovani explains elsewhere, is that until very recently in Melanesian societies biological survival "was found only in the community" (1982: 5), and therefore individuals were willing to give up personal freedom for the sake of the survival and happiness of the society (7).

This communitarian understanding of marriage thus explains the widely accepted practise of arranged marriages, in which two families, or two clans, decide that two people should marry. One example of this practice comes from the life experience of Australian-born Lady Carol Kidu, the only female member of Parliament in PNG and arguably the best-known public female figure in the country. In her autobiography *A Remarkable Journey* she recounts how, in the early stages of their courtship in 1965, her PNG boyfriend learned that his family had arranged a wife for him. Kidu explains that in Motu societies, "marriage was a family matter bringing together two extended families and very often betrothals were arranged

without the involvement or consent of the people involved" (2002: 28). In this particular case, both parties concerned were already involved with somebody else, but that fact "was not really relevant to the families" (28).

In more recent times the custom of arranged marriages may not be practised as widely as in the past, especially in urban areas, since people who live in the city, who have an income and a house provided by their workplace, may consider themselves independent from their kin group for their survival (Schwarz 1983: 4).[3] However, the tradition is still widespread enough to cause concern in the church and in women's groups. In a pastoral letter of 1993, the Catholic Bishops of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands called on the grandparents and the village elders to use "wisdom and integrity" in their decisions about the marriage of young people, making sure that marriage agreements take into consideration "both the good of the young couple and the community", as well as "mature love and the consent of the couple involved" (1993: 14). And a 2002 reportage in the magazine *New@gewoman* quotes recent 'case studies' that confirm the continuation of the practice of arranged marriages, especially in village settings, with or without the consent of the two people who are to marry (Vere 2002).

Two stories by Sally-Ann Bagita

The two stories that I consider in this article, set in the early 1970s, point particularly to the problems arising when parents try to impose the custom of arranged marriages on the younger generation –the first to be educated– who are unwilling to follow them. The protagonists of Sally-Ann Bagita's "Regret Not" (1973) and "The Reluctant Bride" (1974) are young men and women who had no choice but to accept a marriage arranged by their families. The stories, however, focus particularly on the female characters and show how they react to the same initial situation in very different ways.

Kiri, the protagonist of the short story "Regret Not", is a sixteen-year-old girl who has to leave her village in the Marshall Lagoon to marry an unknown young man, Morea, who lives in Hanuabada, an urbanized centre in the vicinity of Port Moresby. "Like most village girls" the narrating voice comments, "she did not question the arrangement of the marriage or the suitability of the husband; she accepted as it was the custom" (1996: 154). Nor did her village sweetheart. He just watched Kiri board the ship that would take her to Port Moresby and sang her a consolatory song: "Regret not that you are leaving behind your childhood dreams…" (154).

Upon arriving at her destination and seeing both the "well built young man" (154) who is to become her husband, and the large house provided with electricity and

running water where she will be living, Kiri feels lucky, and decides to make the most of the situation. The marriage arrangements between Kiri and Morea are an example of customary marriage, without any proper ceremony to mark them. In fact, they are conducted more like a business transaction than a romantic proposal. On their first stroll together, Morea proposes a "bargain": "Look after my parents, and I promise you I'll look after you and make you happy" (155). Kiri consents and settles down happily in her new life as a married woman, assisting her in-laws, going to the market, and discovering such thrills of city life as football and the cinema with her husband. In due time Kiri gives birth to a baby boy, thus strengthening her role in the family, and marking her right to be considered truly married to Morea.

In the meantime Lairi, an ex-girlfriend of Morea's, now a widow, returns to work in the same office as Morea, and their relationship is renewed. After a row with Kiri, who has become suspicious of all his 'overtime', Morea leaves the house. He does not return for weeks. One night a relative confirms that Morea is, indeed, living with Lairi. After shedding "tears of pity for herself and her son" (158), Kiri decides that she must go on with her life. The following day, as she and her child set sail from Port Moresby, she hears a familiar song from a radio: "Regret not", the song reminds her.

In contrast to Kiri, Ikena, the female protagonist of Bagita's "The Reluctant Bride", takes a much more belligerent attitude to the marriage that her family has arranged for her with Boga. Her refusal to consent to the union, however, has gained her nothing but a solid beating from her brothers, who first "belted her" and then "drag[ged] her by the hair" (1994: 12). On her wedding day, when the story begins, Ikena is so obviously unhappy that the planned dance is cancelled, and Boga decides to play the gentleman, letting Ikena have the room to herself while he sleeps on the verandah. Rumors of the arrangement reach Ikena's family who with an excuse call her home, where her brothers beat her again.

Having been expelled by her family, Ikena wanders about until she finds a cave. There she spends a few days, regaining mental and physical strength, until Boga finds her. But instead of dragging her home by the hair, or sending her back to her parents where she would surely be beaten again, he offers to take her to the YWCA, where she will be safe and can start a new life. As for himself, Boga plans to move to Bougainville, never to return to his family, or allow them to force him "into another unhappy marriage" (16). At that point, however, Ikena emerges from her cave and puts a hand into his. "I don't want to go to the Y" (16), she announces, as the narrative comes to an end.

These two stories, although based on the same initial issue –a marriage arranged by parents without their children's consent– and both featuring strong female

characters as their protagonist, also have a number of points of contrast: Kiri initially doesn't want to marry Morea because she is in love with somebody else, while Ikena simply doesn't like Boga but has no previous attachment. Kiri decides to make the best of her situation, however, and at first establishes a good relationship with her husband, whom she has never seen before. Ikena, on the other hand, refuses to have any contact with Boga before her wedding day and, although she helps his mother with chores, she never talks to him. Readers may wonder if physical appeal has anything to do with the two women's different attitudes. After all, Kiri finds herself tied to a "well built young man". While Boga, although never physically described in the story, obviously does not appear attractive to Ikena who defines him as a "clumsy, unattractive pig" and a "wild boar" (11). The importance of physical appearance in "The Reluctant Bride" is underlined by the protagonists' names as well: in Motu, the language spoken in several areas of the Central province, Ikena means "fit", while Boga means "belly".[4]

The protagonists' social class and upbringing may have something to do with their attitudes as well: Kiri is a simple village girl, easily dazzled by and content with the wonders of electricity, running water and city activities. Ikena appears to come from an upper middle-class family, who has planned for a Western-style church wedding, complete with choir and photographer, followed by a reception and a dance. Although no information on her education is given, readers might assume enough Western influence on Ikena for her to dream of marrying for love.[5] At any rate, she hates the idea of being sold "like a prize pig" (12), while Kiri never expresses resentment about the financial arrangements that accompany her marriage.

Nevertheless, although it may contribute to her being an obedient, docile, hardworking, faithful wife, Kiri's village upbringing may also be the cause of her problems. It does not seem casual that her husband Morea should fall for a more sophisticated woman, one who has obviously had enough education to work in the same office as he, one who had previously married a foreigner and lived in Lae, PNG's second city. Moreover, she was an old flame of his, which again seems to imply that he would prefer a city to a village girl. Although the story does not say so, it must have been Morea's parents, now city-dwellers, who sought him out a village girl for a wife. Thus, the failure of the marriage must, in part anyway, be laid at the feet of the parents, since they did not see –nor want to see– that their educated son would not be satisfied with a village girl.

The families in the stories get involved in a different way as well: Kiri's parents seem oblivious to her initial suffering, but care enough to stay with her and her new family for as long as it takes to make sure that she can cope with the new situation, until they are sure that she has "settl[ed] down happily in her new role" (1996: 155). Morea's parents are satisfied with her performance as a wife, and put together a

considerable bride price for her, after she produces a son. Although they do not take an active role in trying to patch up the marriage, when Morea's relationship with Lairi is rekindled, they are obviously distressed at the idea of Kiri leaving with the child.

Ikena's family seems to be reduced to a sympathetic but powerless mother, and a few evil brothers, who, whenever she rebels, resort to beating a bit of sense and obedience into her head. In fact, when her hideout is discovered, Ikena fears that they have come "to murder her" (1994: 15). In other words, Ikena's family does not appear so much concerned about her happiness or marital arrangements, as about gossip and the possibility of losing (or having to return) the bride price.

Apart from his sister's helping Ikena get ready on her wedding day, Boga's family does not receive a mention until the end of the story. It is only at the end, in fact, while Boga is waiting outside the cave for Ikena to change into the clean clothes he has brought for her, that the focus of the story switches away from her and onto him. The readers enter his thoughts and discover that he too was forced into the marriage, and the only way out would be for him to move as far away from his family as possible –to Bougainville, the northern part of the Solomon Islands that now belongs to PNG. At any rate he makes it clear that "he would never return to Hanuabada" (16). Thus Bagita's story stresses the fact that women are not the only victims in arranged marriages, but that this custom may bring unhappiness to both partners. Even in "Regret Not", moreover, although the story and the audience's sympathy were focused on the female protagonist, readers are not allowed to forget that Morea too was forced into a marriage that he did not want, as discussed above.

Although both appear to ask whether happiness is possible in an arranged marriage, the endings of the stories give a different message. Kiri does all that is in her power to make a good life for herself and her husband: she accepts him promptly, works, stays in a good mood, respects and helps his parents, and bears a son. In sum, the story depicts her as a faultless wife, who has kept her part of the initial bargain. Nonetheless, her husband abandons her.

Ikena, on the contrary, does nothing to help the situation: she refuses to get to know her betrothed, avoids intimacy with him after the marriage, and finally runs away from him. All this because she did not have romantic feelings for him.[6] However, as she eventually discovers, it is not physical appearance that counts in a marriage. Boga reveals himself to be gentle, sensitive, caring. He is interested as much in her happiness as in his own. And so, she figures at the end, he may be worth giving a try after all.

In sum, Kiri does everything she can to make her arranged marriage work, yet it doesn't. Ikena does everything she can to stop her arranged marriage, and make it fail once it does happen; yet in the end it seems she may have been fortunate enough to find a suitable match, after all. Lolo Houbein, in her article on the

theme of love in PNG literature, concludes that the author "merely wanted to portray how different individuals reacted and coped with a situation which is dictated to them by custom" (1982: 23).

Houbein's analysis of Bagita's stories, however, does not take into consideration one important episode in "The Reluctant Bride", which would offer an alternative form of life for the female protagonist, and whose significance is underlined by the illustrations in both published versions of the story. As I have already mentioned, after being beaten again by her brothers, Ikena runs away and finds shelter in a cave. But it wasn't just any cave: it was known only to Ikena and her grandmother who used to make her gardens in the vicinity. There, using a net that used to belong to her grandmother, Ikena lives from the fish in the river as well as some forgotten vegetables. Thus the cave offers a secure shelter, and in this safe, secluded space, as she loses track of the passing time, "Ikena's body beg[ins] to heal" (14). The author has marked the cave as a sacred woman's space both from a physical and spiritual point of view. It is a secret female space "covered over with vines and shrubs" (14). Moreover, it comes to Ikena through knowledge inherited from her grandmother, in a sort of female genealogy that may save her, and offer her a role model: a strong grandmother, as opposed to a sympathetic, but still passive, mother. In other words, the cave is depicted as a sort of utopian space, in which time does not exist, and where a woman can be on her own. She has shelter, she has food, she is safe, her body heals, she is content and independent.

In this timeless, safe, healing cave, Ikena has a chance to reflect on the events, and to wonder whether she should finally accept the fact that she is married to Boga. "But it all seemed so difficult and impossible", the narrating voice concludes. "So she decided to forget everything and live as a hermit for the rest of her life" (14-15). Ikena's Utopia, unconstrained by time and society, however, is discovered by Boga, who lifts the vines and finds "to his surprise an entrance to the cave" (15). Actually, it is Ikena who indicates to him the way in, thus allowing him access to her secret space –a prefiguration of the events to come, of her accepting him as a husband and therefore allowing him access to her body.

The happy ending of this reluctant bride finally accepting her husband seems to indicate a mature acceptance of reality on the part of Bagita and her character. For as much as she might relish the timeless, utopian healing experience offered by the cave, Ikena must face her responsibilities. She must find her place in society, which, for a PNG woman at that time, included being married. She seems to have realized that a gentle and caring man like Boga is hard to find (her own brothers have proved that to her) and that she would be a fool to give him up. Just as in the classic Beauty and the Beast story, one has to learn to look beyond appearance. And so Bagita presents her reluctant bride with a fairy tale ending –an ending she

deserves after much suffering, healing, reflection and maturation– while at the same time learning to accept reality.

Coming out of the cave

Readers –at least this European reader for sure– may have expected the two stories that I have considered in this article to openly express their discontent with traditional PNG marriage customs. In her works, Sally-Ann Bagita depicts situations in which their female protagonists find themselves forced, by custom, physical violence, or sense of filial duty, to accept husbands they do not want. Nevertheless, contrary to such an expectation, her works do not so much condemn or call for the elimination of arranged marriages and bride price, as show that a woman can survive in a society where such practices are accepted as customary. In other words, the female protagonists of these works do not so much proclaim their right to marry the man of their choice or not marry at all –but rather prove themselves to be strong enough not to become helpless victims of the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves.

The two stories that I have analysed seem to suggest that arranged marriages need both the good will of the partners and the efforts of their respective families and communities to work –and in fact, in some cases they do work. But they also point out that differences in upbringing and education do not help establish a good, solid relationship between the spouses. Above all, both works indicate that it is Western influence, which comes with having grown up in an urbanized environment (like Ikena, Boga, and Morea) that will make one reject, or fail to adapt to, the custom. In addition, since an increasing number of PNG citizens tend to move away from villages, the custom of arranged marriages, instead of strengthening a bond between communities, instead of being the logical choice of two clans who bind in marriage two people with similar background and education, becomes more and more a constraint on those involved. In such an event, the consequences will be abandonment, unhappiness, and divorce. Finally, the two stories imply that the meaning of traditional customs is changing, that the traditional bonding of communities in the exchange is decreasing.

While arranged marriages involve both partners as well as the families and communities, and while the husbands' unhappiness is part of the plots, the works that I have chosen especially focus on the women's experience, to show how Melanesian marriage practices specifically affect them. Bagita has both her female protagonists choose to abandon a situation of misery created by arranged marriages –Kiri by returning to her village after her husband deserted her, Ikena by taking refuge in a hidden cave. Kiri is reminded that she should have no regrets, but to

move on with life, away from a city where she would live without her husband, and without the support of her own family. The conventional happy ending of "The Reluctant Bride" leaves readers with the feeling that Bagita –a reluctant realist?– decided to renounce the utopian "cave of her own" and make her protagonist Ikena accept the reality of married life. At least, however, the husband for whom Ikena leaves her happy solitude has demonstrated by his actions to be the sort of non-abusive man one may wish for – a rare gem in PNG, it would appear, where 70% of women are subject to domestic violence.[7]

In neither of these works by a PNG woman writer, in sum, is there ever an open criticism of traditional marriage customs that, from a Western point of view, oppress women and often deny their human rights. There may be several reasons for this. One should first consider that the period 1973-75, when these works were written, was a time when literary production in the country was much more preoccupied with the relationship between previous colonizers and the newly acquired independence than with women's conditions. And in those times even the description of women's condition would probably be more immediately useful by limiting one's scope to what can be achieved in real life. Is it better to picture oneself in a utopian cave or with a utopian career far from family constraints and obligations in a fantastic story with no possible realization, one might ask, or to admit reality, and be content in an arranged marriage with a husband who may not have been one's choice, might not be attractive or educated, but at least doesn't bash one up?[8] But readers could go one step further, and wonder whether Kiri and Ikena, in accepting their arranged marriages, are in fact demonstrating wisdom and maturity by recognizing that the traditional value of community in Melanesian culture is at the very least equally as important as the imported Western values of individual freedom and rights.

Sally-Ann Bagita has shown great courage in writing her fictional works about marriage in Melanesian society. She has given her readers typical scenarios of marriages arranged by families between two people who hardly know each other, who come from different backgrounds, or who may have other attachments. She has demonstrated how different personal or societal constraints compel women into accepting unwanted marital arrangements. She has conceived female characters who refuse to become victims, but take responsibility for the situation in which they find themselves. And finally, although her works affirm the acceptance of a hard reality, she has hinted creatively toward a different, more positive destiny for women. Not all men bash their wives; not every divorce means the end of a woman's life. And, should one wish for an even more utopian escape, one could always go in search of Ikena's grandmother's cave. For surely it is still there, as a source of strength and self-reliance, waiting for another woman to dare to question traditional marriage customs in Papua New Guinea.

Notes

1. In fact, Sally Ann Pipi (Bagita) is the only woman writer whose work Houbein mentions. Other works by PNG women writers that touch on the same topic include Agnes Luke's story "The Botaras", Sister Jane Ainauga's story "Modern Girl", Rita Mavavi's story "Blackskin, Redskin", Magdalene Wagum's story "An Educated Girl Faces a Problem", Pauline Hau'ofa's play *Brief Candle,* and Christine Mateaku's play *An Educated Girl.*

The task of finding works by PNG women writers was later made easier by a 1996 anthology, edited by Adeola James, which in addition to literary works includes information on, and interviews with, some of the women writers. Most of the anthologised works are originally from the 1980s.

2. A brief biographical note on and an interview with Sally-Ann Bagita can be found in James 135-141. Before 1981, the writer published under her married name, Pipi.

3. For a discussion of the changes in marriage in a number of traditional societies and urban settings in PNG, see Marksbury 1993.

4. I am grateful to my students Jean Kapi, who translated the names for me, and Ignatius Hamal, who suggested that the name "Ikena" sounds very similar to the words "I can", thus stressing the strength and will power (obstinacy?) of the protagonist. "Boga", he added, sounded a lot like "boar", an animal to which the groom is actually compared in the story.

5. A slight difference between the two published versions of the story may give a clue to the reasons for Ikena's unhappiness. In the original publication, Ikena's mother wonders "if it was the new way of life, not the customary way, that was eating the girl's heart" (1974: 4). In this passage, the "new way of life" would be the Western way of thinking (marriage for love), as opposed to the "customary" (marriage as a bond with a different clan). In the 1994 version, on the contrary, the mother asks herself "if it was the thought of a new way of life, of leaving her customary way, that was eating at the girl's heart" (1994: 12). In this later version, the cause of Ikena's misery would be traced to the sadness of leaving the life that she is used to ("her customary way") for the life of a married woman ("a new way of life"). There is no indication in the 1994 anthology *Moments in Melanesia* as to the reason for the change in the story, or whether it was the author or the editor who changed it.

6. The 1974 version is more explicit than the later one on this point. During her time in the cave, while thinking about her situation, Ikena realizes that "there was nothing wrong except that she found it difficult to love Boga" (1974: 5). This line is missing from the 1994 anthologized version. It seems, however, to be quite essential, in as much as it confirms Ikena's desire to marry for love and clarifies the reasons for her final decision to stay with Boga: she has accepted the fact that patience and understanding in a marriage partner approved by the community are probably more important that waiting for a possible love, away from human society.

7. "The *Gender Analysis in Papua New Guinea* commissioned by the World Bank states that 70% of women in PNG experience domestic violence", quotes Yawa (2002). Other studies put the figure higher. The Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission Report 1992 stated in some areas 100% of women were beaten and that one out of six wives living in town had to seek medical treatment for injuries inflicted on them by their husbands.

8. The issue of bashing might have been more real than literary. In a country where women are treated as second-class citizens and frequently submitted to verbal and physical abuse, it may be wise of the author to

have avoided a vocal feminist stance. In an interview of 1992, Bagita recognized the need for women writers to address social issues concerning women, mentioning in particular divorce and wife-bashing. In fact, she added that "only a woman can deal with those problems successfully because only a woman can understand what the other woman feels" (James 1996: 139). However, she explained, "I never used to write about wife-bashing because I knew those men might come and bash me up. I knew a lot of instances but I kept away from writing about that subject. It was not safe" (140).

Works cited

AINAUGA, Sister Jane. 1974. "Modern Girl". *Papua New Guinea Writing* 13: 17.

BAGITA, Sally-Ann. 1996. "Regret Not". In James, Adeola. (ed.).:154-158. [first published in 1973. *Papua New Guinea Writing* 11: 4-6].

CARBY, Hazel V. 1982. "White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood". In Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back. Race and racism in 70s Britain*. London: Hutchinson: 212-235.

Catholic Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. 1993. *The Christian Family in our Changing Society*. Goroka: Wirui Press.

HAU'OFA, Pauline. 1978. *Brief Candle*. *Papua New Guinea Writing* 30: 64-77.

HOUBEIN, Lolo. 1982. "The Theme of Love in Papua New Guinea Literature to 1976". *Bikmaus* 3: 3-39.

JAMES, Adeola. (ed.). 1996. *PNG Women Writers: An Anthology*. Melbourne: Longman.

KIDU, Carol. 2002. *A Remarkable Journey*. Sydney: Longman.

LUKE, Agnes. 1972. "The Botaras". *Papua New Guinea Writing* 5: 14-15.

MANTOVANI, Ennio. 1982. *Marriage in the Modern World*. Goroka: Melanesian Institute.

MANTOVANI, Ennio. 1993. "Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Marriage in Melanesia". *Catalyst* 23: 6-16.

MARKSBURY, Richard A. (ed.). 1993. *The Business of Marriage. Transformations in Oceanic Matrimony*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

MATEAKU, Christine. s. d. [after October 1975]. *An Educated Girl*. [Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies].

MAVAVI, Rita. 1996. "Blackskin, Redskin". In James, Adeola. (ed.).: 171-174.

PIPI [BAGITA], Sally Anne. 1994. "The Reluctant Bride". In Regis Stella. (ed.). *Moments in Melanesia*. Melbourne: Oxford U. P.: 11-16 [first published in 1974. *Papua New Guinea Writing* 15: 4-5].

SCHWARZ, Brian. 1983. *An Approach to Pastoral Care for Marriage in Urban Melanesia*. Goroka: Melanesian Institute.

VERE, Vavine. 2002. "Marriage in Changing Times". *New@gewoman*, December: 4.

WAGUM, Magdalene. 1974. "An Educated Girl Faces a Problem". *Papua New Guinea Writing* 16: 11.

YAWA, Miriam. 2002. "Gender and Violence". Available online <http://www.aic.gov.au/confe rences/policewomen3/yawa.pdf.> (retrieved January 2006)

THE HUMAN MOMENT: SELF, OTHER AND SUSPENSION IN JOHN BANVILLE'S *GHOSTS*

BRENDAN McNAMEE
University of Ulster, Coleraine

> She was the single artificer of the world
> In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
> Whatever self it had, became the self
> That was her song, for she was the maker.
>
> Wallace Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West"

> Love is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than one's self is real.
>
> Iris Murdoch

In the course of his narrative in *The Book of Evidence*, Freddie Montgomery poses the question of morality: "I am merely asking, with all respect, whether it is feasible to hold on to the principle of moral culpability once the notion of free will has been abandoned" (16). Thematically speaking, *Ghosts* presents a tentative answer to this question. One part of this answer is that the question itself is wrongly formulated. The question arises out of a Socratic vision of knowledge –i.e., a vision that presupposes the world to be an answerable question– the rejection of which, along with the inability to get beyond, led to the impasse that resulted in Freddie's crime in that novel. The question presupposes the individual as a fundamental psychic unit with an innate capacity for moral judgement, a being wholly adequate to the task of holding on to, or letting go of, principles (which themselves are regarded as having the same fundamental, definite existence), on the basis of whether one

possesses this other clearly-defined substance called "free will". Such a vision of life was shattered by Nietzsche and *The Book of Evidence* hinted at a more ancient vision, espoused by the pre-Socratics and by mystics of various persuasions. This vision took humankind to be more integrated into the scheme of nature, and 'sin', in such a view, meant breaking off from that integration. Integration with nature should not be taken to imply a featureless blending of all life, humanity included, into one great undifferentiated whole. Individuals are still aware of themselves as individuals, and still suffer the same sorrows, joys and –most pertinently for this discussion– guilts as people always have. It is a vision of unity that encompasses multiplicity because it recognises the reality of things other than one's self, while simultaneously recognising that it is the human imagination that conveys that reality, or creates it by giving it form, by, to quote from an earlier Banville novel, "disposing the commonplace, the names, in a beautiful and orderly fashion" (1976: 240). It is a vision that is both centred and decentred: centred in the imagination, and decentred in the recognition that this imagination lays down no laws and knows itself to be only one half of a whole –multifarious phenomena being the other half. This vision may today only exist as an absence, but it is no less vibrant and essential for that. This is the story that is hinted at throughout *Ghosts*, and it gains its power from the extent of Freddie's guilt, and the pain of the psychic exile he suffers because of that guilt. His crime, as he has admitted, was a failure of imagination, a failure to realise that something –or in this case, someone– other than himself was real.[1] Now he must use the powers of his imagination to try and put that right. It is no longer a case of 'principles' or notions of 'free will'. These are concepts, linguistic constructs, and belong intrinsically to a view of life that separates humankind fundamentally from its environment. Freddie's torment is a fundamental, pre-linguistic yearning to be part of the world; his tragedy is that what has brought him to such an acute awareness of this condition –the act of murder– has virtually guaranteed the permanence of his exile.

At first sight, the pain of this exile seems to present a contradiction. If Banville's novels take the view that the centred self of the Enlightenment is an illusion, what –or who– is feeling such pain? Freddie, at one point, refers to himself as a pack of cards, a whole selection of selves (26-27). His pain, however, would seem to underlie all this. Is this pain not evidence of an essential self? Similarly, on a broad philosophical front, if the idea of the decentred self is to be anything more than an abstract notion, then it must be *felt* by individuals. As Freddie himself puts it, "True, there is no getting away from the passionate attachment to self, that I-beam set down in the dead centre of the world and holding the whole rickety edifice in place" (26). But for Freddie, this 'self' is no more than a site of pain. In its intense awareness of its own isolation from the world, it is the very opposite of a true sense of self, one that is *present* in the world, an integral part of the world in the pre-

Socratic sense. The paradox is that the lack of reality felt so intensely by Freddie manifests itself in an acutely painful self-obsession, an obsession that in fact prevents him from seeing the reality of the world. Language, that solid Cartesian arbiter of the real, is useless to him: "To choose one word was to exclude countless others, they thronged out there in the darkness, heaving and humming. When I tried to mean one thing the buzz of a myriad other possible meanings mocked my efforts" (27). This is why the novel, as its title suggests, is a book full of absences, longings, *ghosts*. And this, in turn, highlights one of the work's most intriguing suggestions: that imagination and ethics may be inseparable, and that both may be intrinsic, perhaps even anterior, to the self;[2] may, in fact, be the essential criteria for the creation of the self, the self that belongs, integrally, to the world, the self that Freddie longs for. Seen thus, Freddie's vivid imagination is both his curse and his only possibility of salvation. His dilemma is a heightened and concentrated version of the existential dilemma that is common to modern Western civilisation: what does it mean to live authentically, and how is this authenticity to be achieved? The sin of living inauthentically that has troubled philosophers down through the ages, is the eternal displacement of humanity between imagination, which occasionally affords glimpses of an impossible wholeness, a lost home that we never had, and the isolated ego stranded in the desert of self-importance.[3] By exploring this dilemma through the mind of a murderer with an intense interest in such questions (an interest, in fact, largely born of his crime), Banville grounds the metaphysics in felt life and avoids the etiolation that might follow from too obviously postmodern a treatment of such ideas. At the same time, he has constructed a novel that could hardly be further from conventional realism, with its certainties of self and world and language.

The ensuing essay will explore these ideas along four inter-related strands: the interplay between imagination and quotidian reality (always a salient feature of Banville's fiction, and particularly so in *Ghosts*), the use of painting versus narrative as a metaphor for this interplay, the divided self and, arising out of these elements, the idea of anticipation, of suspension, and how this serves as a basis for art and as a tentative bridge between the reality Freddie lives in and the one he longs for.

The narrative mode of *The Book of Evidence* tempted readers to take it as a realistic story while simultaneously undermining such inclinations through Freddie's frequent hints that his tale was largely invention. *Ghosts* takes this ambiguity a stage further. A brief outline of the structure will clarify this. The novel divides into four parts. Part One sees Freddie on an island somewhere off the south coast of Ireland working as an assistant to the art expert, Professor Silas Kreutznaer, and sharing a house with Kreutznaer and his manservant-landlord, Licht. (Freddie is never actually named but it becomes clear who he is when he recounts the murder that occasioned *The Book of Evidence*. The lack of a name only adds to his ghost-like status.) He

invents/ describes a disparate group of day-trippers arriving on the island and proceeds to chart their thoughts and actions throughout the day, concentrating particularly on a young woman named Flora. Part Two consists of a flashback and recounts Freddie's release from prison, his journey south in the company of a fellow ex-convict, Billy (first mentioned in the closing pages of the previous novel), a brief stop-off at Coolgrange, his family home, where he has an accidental encounter with his son, and finally, his arrival on the island. Part Three is a short, in-depth examination of a painting by Vaublin, the fictional painter (modelled on Watteau) whom Freddie is working on with Kreutznaer, and part Four recounts the visitors, minus Flora (and possibly one other), leaving the island.

The chief ambiguity lies in the status of the day-trippers whose doings take up the bulk of Part One, which itself takes up over half the novel. Right from the start, the narrator, Freddie, hints that he is inventing them: "Here they are. There are seven of them. Or better say, half a dozen or so, that gives more leeway" (3). The leeway is needed so that the figures can more adequately perform the task for which they have come into existence: to make Freddie himself real. As the novel proceeds it becomes evident that they have their source in the painting that Freddie is working on, *Le monde d'or*, by Vaublin (a near-anagram of Banville). But, as readers, we find we cannot quite settle comfortably here, either. Part Two of the novel harks back, in style, to the realism of *The Book of Evidence*, where our comfort zone is only vaguely threatened (as, for instance, when Freddie rings his wife from a Dublin pub and remarks, "My wife. What shall I call her this time –Judy?" [160]). This section of the novel ends with the introduction to Kreutznaer and Licht on the island, which thus ties these characters into the realistic strand. In Part One, however, these 'realistic' figures interact 'realistically' with figures who appear to be figments of Freddie's imagination. In one particularly significant passage, Freddie both describes what is happening and gives a sense of the terrible longing that underlies this blending of real and imaginary:

> Worlds within worlds. They bleed into each other. I am at once here and there, then and now, as if by magic. I think of the stillness that lives in the depths of mirrors. It is not our world that is reflected there. It is another place entirely, another universe, cunningly made to mimic ours. Anything is possible there; even the dead may come back to life. Flaws develop in the glass, patches of silvering fall away and reveal the inhabitants of that parallel, inverted world going about their lives all unawares. And sometimes the glass turns to air and they step through it without a sound and walk into *my* world. Here comes Sophie now, barefoot, still with her leather jacket over her shoulders, and time shimmers in its frame. (55)[4]

The effect of all this ambiguity is to heighten the sense of suspension that pervades the book, to make the reader feel, as the painting makes Freddie feel, that it all has

some great significance beyond explanation. If the significance is beyond explanation, then it is beyond the reach of human consciousness, in so far as that term is understood in the Cartesian sense. From where, then, does the significance arise? The sense of suspension, in that it seems a suspension of, and an anticipation of, something *real*, thus calls into question what we mean by reality. Is reality what we perceive in the quotidian sense, or is it what we perceive most intensely? The difference between these two modes of perception is, in one sense, simply one of degree, but it also reflects two fundamentally different outlooks on life: the Cartesian outlook which says the world is simply *there*, and what you see –and label– is what you get; and the pre-Socratic outlook which says in effect that reality is an on-going creation, a bargain between phenomena and imagination. From a rational point of view, this is an indefensible statement, and must call on the poets for justification. It is the gist of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, lines from which are often quoted by Banville as echoing his own artistic project. Wallace Stevens is saying something similar in the lines quoted at the head of this chapter, as he is, too, in the poem, "Large Red Man Reading", the opening line of which Banville uses as an epigraph for *Ghosts*. Mystics may not need art, since the world itself is their plaything, but for lesser mortals, art is, or tries to be, the keeping of this bargain between phenomena and imagination; tries to be, as Stevens puts it elsewhere, "A tune beyond us, yet ourselves" ("The Man with the Blue Guitar" I.8).

Freddie's hunger to partake of this exchange is in direct proportion to the extent of his exile from it. Characters in his life, characters in his imagination –they are all ghosts to Freddie, because Freddie is himself a ghost. But he needs them desperately, they are his only way back to life. As he charts the thoughts and feelings and actions of his little troupe, it becomes clear how they are all projections of his inner demons and longings. Sophie finds a true sense of reality only through her art: "Things for her were not real any longer until they had been filtered through a lens" (56), just as for Freddie things are not real until they are seen through the prism of art. When she muses on lying in a little room at the top of the house, it might be Freddie speaking (it *is* Freddie speaking): "To be there, to be inconsequential; to forget herself, even for a little while; to stop, to be still; to be at peace" (57). This is reminiscent of Freddie speaking of certain blessed moments of forgetfulness: "It is like being new-born. At such moments I glimpse a different self, as yet unblackened, ripe with potential, a sort of radiant big infant swaddled in shining light" (68). Flora's dream of finding safety behind a mask (64) reflects Freddie's own thoughts on the subject (196-98). Licht says to Alice: "'Do you ever think,' he said softly, 'that you are not here? Sometimes I have the feeling that I have floated out of myself, and that what's here, standing, talking, is not me at all'" (107-8). And Freddie says at one point, "I think to myself, *My life is a ruin, an*

abandoned house, a derelict place" (54). Even little Alice reflects a yearning that is pure Freddie: "She is in love with Flora; in her presence she has a sense of something vague and large and bright, a sort of painful rapture that is all the time about to blossom yet never does" (102).

As mentioned, the purpose of these creations is to make Freddie real. But what can this possibly mean? How can creating imaginary characters help give him a sense of reality? Again, this is the wrong question. One effect of the ambiguities that pervade *Ghosts* is a suspension of the reader's natural inclination to see Freddie as a 'real' character, and to keep in mind that while telling the story, he is also part of a larger story, and as much a puppet in that story as any of his own characters are to him. A brief look at one of the novel's recurring motifs may bring this into focus. The sense of suspension created by the ambiguity as to what is real and what imaginary finds a thematic corollary in Freddie's sense of himself as being important, of being in some sense needed, despite his self-loathing. This feeling is a life-line for him throughout. First, there is his memory of a room in the house in which he was born, which Freddie refers to as a "recurring image" and, significantly, "one of a handful of emblematic fragments from the deep past that seem mysteriously to constitute something of the very stuff of which I am made" (39). What follows is a description of a quiet summer's afternoon where,

> Nothing happens, nothing will happen, yet everything is poised, waiting, a chair in the corner crouching with its arms braced, the coiled fronds of a fern, that copper pot with the streaming sunspot on its rim. This is what holds it all together and yet apart, this sense of expectancy, like a spring tensed in mid-air and sustained by its own force, exerting an equal pressure everywhere. And I, I am there and not there: I am the pretext of things, though I sport no thick gold wing or pale halo. Without me there would be no moment, no separable event, only the brute, blind drift of things. That seems true; important, too. (Yes, it would appear that after all I am indeed required.) (40)

When he takes up gardening, he finds something similar, if more tangible:

> I have the notion, foolish, I know, that it is because of me that they cling on, that my ministrations, no, simply my presence gives them heart somehow, and makes them live. Who or what would there be to notice their struggles if I did not come out and walk among them every day? It must mean something, being here. I am the agent of individuation: in me they find their singularity. (98)

Finally, at the end of Part 2, he imagines the arrival of the band of castaways and then segues into a short musing on the painting with which they are intimately connected: "The figures move, if they move, as in a moving scene, one that they define, by being there, its arbiters. Without them only the wilderness, green riot,

tumult of wind and the crazy sun. They formulate the tale and people it and give it substance. They are the human moment" (222).

A progression of sorts can be discerned here. The first instance involves a distant memory; the second, tangible phenomena; the third, people. And in the third, significantly, it is not he himself holding the wilderness and green riot together, but others, albeit others as imagined by Freddie. These others are figures in a painting which he then proceeds to describe, and this description provides the strongest indication yet that the 'real' figures with whom we have been engaged in Part One are figments of Freddie's imagination drawn from this painting. Then we recall that the memory of the sunlit room recounted in the passage above is prompted by his first coming into physical contact with the castaways (who don't exist, so how can he…?– the mind would boggle, were it not suspended). Worlds within worlds, bleeding into each other –memory, imagination, perception– indicating that the true source, the *reality* of things, can never be pinpointed, or settled into a safe hierarchy, by virtue of the fact that there must always be someone, or something, doing the pinpointing, arranging the hierarchy, which leaves us always back in the world of self-division. "What you are looking for is what is looking", as St. Francis has it (Smoley 2002: v), and, like a dog chasing its tail, as long as one is looking for this essential thing, one is never going to find it because what it is, is one's self *in relation with* the world. It is to be lived in rather than looked for. We are the "pretext of things", the pre-text –we sing the world into being, like Stevens's woman singing the sea's reality. "The unexamined life is not worth living", Socrates said. By contrast, Banville's fictional heart would seem to lie with the pre-Socratics, and might reply, The unexamined life is the *only* life worth living. But living and writing as he is in a Socratic/ Cartesian world, this unexamined state is one that can be attained to only through intense examination, the futility of which must be fully lived to be fully realised. This describes a trajectory familiar to Banville protagonists from *Birchwood*'s Gabriel Godkin to *Mefisto*'s Gabriel Swan. Eliot catches the idea in these lines from "Little Gidding": "We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time" (239-42).

This question of knowledge and its shortcomings brings us to what is perhaps the most pervasive motif of *Ghosts*: that of mirrors, doubles and copies. The novel abounds in things, in people, that are not quite what they seem to be. Even the painting that so obsesses Freddie turns out in the end to be a fake, a copy. Even Vaublin, it seems, has had a double. What is it, then, that is missing? What would constitute the real thing, and how would one recognise it as such?

At the heart of the question lies the dilemma of self-division. As mentioned, Freddie is self-obsessed to the point of madness, and it is this self-obsession that

prevents him seeing the world as real, from communicating with it; that drains it of colour so that, as for Hamlet, life is "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable". Self-obsession goes hand-in-hand with self-division: a self looking, a self being looked at. The self looking –the Cartesian 'I'– is what prevents the contract between imagination and phenomena taking place. Not surprisingly, Freddie's moment of breakthrough occurs when this normally shrill voice is momentarily lulled –early morning, when the mind is still sleepy, is working, as Freddie says, "on its own terms, as if it were independent of me, as if in the night it had broken free of its moorings and I had not yet hauled it back to shore" (146). The moment occurs at the close of Part One, when Flora and, in her wake, the world, suddenly become real for him:

> And as she talked I found myself looking at her and seeing her as if for the first time, not as a gathering of details, but all of a piece, solid and singular and amazing. No, not amazing. That is the point. She was simply there, an incarnation of herself, no longer a nexus of adjectives but pure and present noun. […] And somehow by being suddenly herself like this she made the things around her be there too. […] It was as if she had dropped a condensed drop of colour into the water of the world and the colour had spread and the outlines of things had sprung into bright relief. As I sat with my mouth open and listened to her I felt everyone and everything shiver and shift, falling into vividest forms, detaching themselves from me and my conception of them and changing themselves instead into what they were, no longer figment, no longer mystery, no longer a part of my imagining. (147)[5]

Intriguingly, however, this hugely significant moment ends on a question mark, with Freddie wondering, "And I, was I there amongst them, at last?" (147)

There can be no answer because here language has reached its limit. Beyond this is where the 'I' finally becomes real by finally disappearing. (This is another thoroughly meaningless statement from the point of view of discursive philosophy. It can be justified, though, if seen as a reflection of the paradoxes that suffuse Banville's work, and also, in light of the mystical slant of this essay, of the *modus operandi* of apophatic language, the mode of writing with which mystics attempt to say the unsayable. As with such language, the statement is not so much an expression of a presence, as an echo of an absence. Anne-Marie Priest paraphrasing Shira Wolosky may be helpful here: "Wolosky argues that in mystical texts, language is not that which reveals truth but a 'veil' drawn across its face: it does not reveal what is hidden, but it reveals that something is. Like a kind of buoy, it marks the place of submersion" (2000: 8). Interestingly, Priest's essay is on Henry James, a writer close to Banville's heart. This is the absence that Freddie has longed for throughout. He cannot explain it (that is, Banville cannot allow him to explain it) because that would reduce the work to the level of discursive philosophy, a mode

of speech that believes in its own powers of truth-telling. Freddie's question is the last point short of Wittgenstein's "whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent" (this is the phrase with which, it will be remembered, Gabriel Godkin ends his narrative in *Birchwood*). Philosophy must, perhaps, be silent, but art and apophatic discourse are two ways of speaking –the one predominantly secular, the other religious– that can profitably hover around this unsayable but compelling absence. *Ghosts* strongly calls to mind two quotations from the French mystic philosopher, Simone Weil: "God can be present in creation only under the form of absence" (1947: 109) and,

> All the things that I see, hear, breathe, touch, eat; all the beings I meet –I deprive the sum total of all that of contact with God, and I deprive God of contact with all that in so far as something in me says 'I' […] May I disappear in order that those things that I see may become perfect in their beauty from the very fact that they are no longer things that I see. (1947: 41-42)

The disappearance of the 'I', or better say, the disappearance of the 'I' looking at the 'I', is the dissolving of self-division. One of the beauties of Banville's fiction is the oblique and quirky manner in which he manages to convey something of this paradoxically longed-for absence. Think of that moment in *Doctor Copernicus* when Nicolas, after visiting his dying uncle, takes a walk in the garden and describes his sense of the world about him: "An extraordinary stealthy stillness reigned, as if an event of great significance were waiting for him to be gone so that it could occur in perfect solitude" (119). In connection with *Ghosts*, the point about this sentence and the image it evokes, is that it is only through the human imagination that it achieves whatever reality it has. The event may want to occur in perfect solitude (to take it literally for a moment), but if it does, can it be said to occur at all? Does not the word "occur" refer specifically to the human side of this event? (If a tree falls in the forest…) Take that away and what is left is, as Freddie here says, "no moment, no separable event, only the brute, blind drift of things" (40).

So the 'I' is important, but only in so far as it remains suspended ("like a spring tensed in mid-air and sustained by its own force"), only in so far as it can refrain from defining the world around it. We have seen how, at the pivotal point of the novel, when Flora begins to speak and the fog of self-obsession lifts from before Freddie's eyes, the moment is left on a question. It must be, because it is stepping into an absence that descriptive language cannot intrude upon without destroying. The self-division bedevilling Freddie has plagued his life. In *The Book of Evidence*, he recalls a farmhouse where he went as a child to buy apples and relates how the memory is more real than was the actual visit: "In such remembered moments I am there as I never was at Coolgrange, as I seem never to have been, or to be, anywhere, at any time, as I, or some essential part of me, was not there even on

that day I am remembering, the day I went to buy apples from the farmer's wife, at that farm in the midst of the fields" (1989: 56). The problem appears to be an inability of the imagination and reality to co-exist. Marcel, the narrator of Proust's masterpiece, says: "Time after time during the course of my life, reality had disappointed me, because at the moment I perceived it, my imagination, the only organ by which I could enjoy beauty, could not reach it, out of submission to the inevitable law that says that one can imagine only what is absent" (Shattuck 1999: 40). Proust found an answer of sorts in the idea of involuntary memory. Wallace Stevens's aphorism, "In the presence of extraordinary actuality, consciousness takes the place of imagination" (1959: 165), suggests a kind of shock tactic, so to speak, on the part of phenomena. In *Ghosts*, Banville seems to suggest that anticipation, suspension, can have a similar effect.

The idea has its precursors. Jorge Luis Borges has written: "Music, states of happiness, mythology, faces worn by time, certain twilights and certain places, all want to tell us something, or have told us something we shouldn't have lost, or are about to tell us something; that imminence of a revelation as yet unproduced is, perhaps, the aesthetic fact" (1999: 346). Vladimir Nabokov is of a similar mind:

> Literature was born not the day when a boy crying wolf, wolf came running out of the Neanderthal valley with a big gray wolf at his heels: literature was born on the day when a boy came crying wolf, wolf and there was no wolf behind him. […] Between the wolf in the tall grass and the wolf in the tall story there is a shimmering go-between. That go-between, that prism, is the art of literature. (1980: 5)

A state of suspension naturally activates the imagination –what is about to happen?– but it is not revelling in a distant memory separate from the reality taking place in the here and now, as is Freddie's memory of the farmhouse. Proust's involuntary memory overcame this separation between now and then, here and there, in that, being involuntary, it was something that *happened*, not something that was consciously sought. Anything that is consciously sought, whether achieved or not, comes laden with self-division because it is, of its nature, laden with self-awareness. It is what Beckett calls "the mock-reality of experience [which] never can and never will reveal […] the real" (1965: 33). By contrast, something that happens constitutes an *event* in the Lyotardian sense of that word: "To encounter an event is like bordering on nothingness. No event is at all accessible if the self does not renounce the glamour of its culture, its wealth, health, knowledge and memory" (1988: 18). Perhaps Bill Readings's definition of the term may clarify this: "The event disrupts any pre-existing frame within which it might be represented or understood. The eventhood of the event is the radical *singularity* of happening, the 'it happens' as distinct from the sense of 'what is happening' (1991: xxxi). What this event entails is a momentary suspension of self-awareness, a momentary

suspension of the conceptual split between self and world, and thus a momentary healing of self-division.

This healing is what Freddie longs for, and the longing is what powers the creation of his motley group of castaways. In the painting that is their source, Vaublin's *Le monde d'or*, he finds elusive hints telling of that mysterious state of absence that so compels him: "He is the painter of absences, of endings. His scenes all seem to hover on the point of vanishing" (35). This chimes with Freddie's oft-expressed wish not to be, or at least, not to be a self-conscious being: "Not to be. Not to be at all. Deep down, deep beyond dreaming, have I ever desired anything other than that consummation?" (182). (An interesting use of the word 'consummation', this, indicating that the state of nothingness, of oblivion, that he seeks is more rather than less. The Shorter OED defines the word thus: "The action of perfecting; the condition of full development; acme; a desired end or goal".) He wishes he could just blend into the natural world around him: "I thought sometimes at moments such as this that I might simply drift away and become a part of all that out there, drift and dissolve, be a shimmer of light slowly fading into nothing" (38).

This last wish recalls one of those remembered moments from boyhood that remain in Freddie's memory as islands of perfection in a choppy sea of time and self-division. He is on a small boat with his friend, Horse, at a point where the river meets the sea and for a moment they are "halted and held motionless on the unmoving water in the midst of a golden calm":

> Nothing happened. We just stayed there for that minute, poised between sea and sky, suspended somehow as if in air, no, not air, but some other, unearthly element, and it seemed to me I had never known such happiness, and never would again, though happiness is not the word, not the word at all. That is where I would like to live, on some forgotten strip of sandy shore, with my back to the land, facing out into the limitless ocean. That would be freedom, watching in solitude the days pass, marking the seasons, observing the spring tides and the autumn auroras, weathering the summer sun and the storms of winter. Pure existence, pure existence and nothing else. (202)

This is very close to what Freddie finds in the painting; even the language used is similar: "poised", "suspended", "unearthly element". What is absent from these pictures is the flow of time, and this is the source of their attraction for him, as he spells out in the closing passage of Part Three, where he describes the painting in detail:

> What happens does not matter; the moment is all. This is the golden world. The painter has gathered his little group and set them down in this wind-tossed glade, in this delicate, artificial light, and painted them as angels and as clowns. It is a world

> where nothing is lost, where all is accounted for while yet the mystery of things is preserved; a world where they may live, however briefly, however tenuously, in the failing evening of the self, solitary and at the same time together somehow here in this place, dying as they may be and yet fixed forever in a luminous, unending instant. (231)

G. E. Lessing's *Laocoon* argues that poetry, because of the sequential nature of language, is the natural medium for expressing action, which can only occur in the medium of time. Painting, by contrast, through its necessary concentration on a single moment, is the perfect medium for conveying a timeless aesthetic beauty. What Banville manages to convey in *Ghosts* is a fusion (or perhaps a *con*fusion) of these modes. The structure of the novel renders it the most static of Banville's narratives. Numerous commentators have pointed out that the description of the painting as "a masterpiece of pure composition, of the architectonic arrangement of light and shade, of earth and sky, of presence and absence" (227) reflects the structure of the novel itself. On the other hand, the stasis that is fundamental to painting is here shot through with the suggestion of movement. The tension thus created, in both novel and painting, gives rise to something that is neither movement nor stillness, but something in between that seems to partake of both. We have seen that when these figures are brought from their enchanted world of art into the real world of consciousness and self-division, the world of time, they become mere echoes of Freddie's own torments. For the reader, on the other hand, they partake of both states. We realise that they are figments of Freddie's imagination, but nevertheless, they are presented on the page as living, breathing characters with inner lives, pasts and futures, and the conventions of fiction dictate that they must be so taken. William Kelly has remarked, in a review of *Mefisto*, "In fiction […] nothing can ever be struck off the record" (1987: 12). The convention dictating that they are real, and Freddie revealing that they are not, together result in a structural suspension which echoes the thematic suspension pervading the novel. No settled result can ever be accomplished. The suspension is itself the artistic result sought for, just as, within the fictional world of the novel, a suspension from self-division is the result sought by Freddie. And though he can never describe the experience of such a suspension, the mere telling of his story has been a form of healing. He seems to end on a negative note: "Some incarnation this is. I have achieved nothing, nothing. I am what I always was, alone as always, locked in the same old glass prison of myself" (236), and as to Felix, the personification throughout of his dark double, there is to be "[n]o riddance of him" (244). But there are glimmerings of light to be discerned in the gloom. For one thing, there is a distinct improvement in the mood of the castaways from what it had been at the time of their arrival. Then, they were "squabbling, complaining, wanting sympathy, wanting to be elsewhere. That, most of all: to be elsewhere"

(3). Wanting to be elsewhere is, of course, the fundamental characteristic of self-division. They leave, by contrast, with a sense of peace: "A moth reeled out of the gloaming and there was a sense of something falling and failing and I seemed to feel the faint dust of wings sifting down. The god takes many forms" (241).

The god takes many forms. One of them, it might be said, is the writing of fiction. We can see here the intimate connection between ethics and imagination (again, understanding ethics here less as a set of strictures than as a sense of reverence towards the world and a recognition of its otherness). In effect, the terms are synonymous. True imagination, seeing things *as they are*, is realising that "something other than one's self is real", and, as Iris Murdoch has it, it is a form of love. Tony Jackson has pointed out (531) how Freddie's realisation of Flora's essential otherness, and the way in which this allows the world to suddenly become real for him, finds its precursor in *Doctor Copernicus*, when the ghost of Nicolas's brother, Andreas, tells him of "that thing which is all that matters, which is the great miracle. [...] Call it acceptance, call it love if you wish, but these are poor words, and express nothing of the enormity" (1976: 241). (Cf. Freddie in *Ghosts*: "happiness is not the word, not the word at all" [202].) Kepler had a similar insight: "What was it the Jew said? Everything is told us, but nothing explained. Yes. We must take it all on trust. That's the secret. How simple!" (Banville 1981: 191).[6]

But such words, alone, "express nothing of the enormity". Like Priest's buoy, they simply "mark the place of submersion". In an essay on Watteau, the painter that Banville's Vaublin is clearly modelled on, Norman Bryson says that "Watteau's form is the *koan* –the question without closure" (74).[7] This is true also of Banville. In *Ghosts*, words have referents, as all words do, but because the status of these referents is seriously called into question –in particular, the status of the characters Freddie invents/describes– the whole is held in an eerie state of suspension, neither one thing nor the other. Eternally undecidable, and perhaps for that very reason, eternally captivating, hinting at "unaccountable significance that is disproportionate to any possible programme or hidden discourse" (227). It is all about asking the questions in the right way. To ask questions in this right way is the job of art, and if done with sufficient skill, the questions will be, not answered –that would be a failure of the wrong kind altogether– but brought to such a pitch of intensity in the reader's mind as to bypass the normal mode of consciousness whereby questions, posed in language, presuppose –and receive– answers, also posed in language, which, of course, are not really answers at all but, as Derrida would have it, endlessly deferred signifiers. This is why painting is such a useful metaphor for Banville, particularly a painting such as *Le monde d'or* is described as being, a painting full of the kind of suspension and anticipation and undecidability that pervade the novel itself. The questioning, when seen eventually to be futile (in the

sense of attaining to answers), gives way to a more meditative frame of mind, and the essence of this meditative frame of mind is an absence of language and, as a corollary of this, a temporary suspension of the sense of self that normally depends on such language for its own sense of being. This is what we saw with Copernicus and Kepler and Gabriel Swan. Their questioning minds, having finally beaten themselves silly, gave in and allowed their owners to see what had been staring them in the face all along –the world, "myriad and profligate" (Banville 1981: 191). So, too, with Freddie as he waits patiently for grace. There is a hint of this when he says, with regard to the castaways: "Company, that was what we wanted, the brute warmth of the presence of others to tell us we were alive after all, despite appearances" (39). The theologian, Martin Buber, has written, "All real living is meeting" (25). Buber's theology sees human experience as expressing two different attitudes to life which he denotes by the word-compounds *I-It* and *I-Thou*. These correspond closely to the conflicting views that form the basic thematic tension in Banville's fiction. The *I-It* attitude is the Enlightenment faith in the supremacy of the individual consciousness to which the world is a place apart, a thing to be known and used; the *I-Thou* stance, on the other hand, sees the world as a place consisting of an equal reality to one's self and therefore to be met with on equal terms. This is not something that can simply be decided and then acted upon; it is something that has to *happen*, in the sense that I have used that word earlier in this essay. It happens for Freddie, momentarily, when Flora begins to speak, and this, momentary though it is, constitutes a true advance. Normally, Freddie inhabits a decentred world, but only in the despairing sense that feels this decentredness as a tragedy; what he yearns to reach is the sense of a decentred world that is accepting, one which is perhaps delineated by Pascal's sphere: "God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" (Borges 1999: 352). A hunger for the sense of reality that these words evoke is what drives Freddie Montgomery. In *The Book of Evidence*, it drove him to murder; in *Ghosts*, in the struggles of his "poor, swollen conscience" (22) to come to terms with his act, it teeters on the brink of being assuaged. It never can be, wholly –that is, any description of such a redemption would be an act of artistic bad faith, a shooting beyond the tangible[8]– but in structuring his novel to echo the confusions and yearnings of its protagonist, Banville comes as close as language can get to evoking that nothingness "whereof we cannot speak", and which his Newton of *The Newton Letter* realised "automatically signifie[d] the everything" (31).

Notes

[1]. Elke d'Hoker makes the valid point that Freddie's failure is an ethical rather than an imaginative one, pointing out that just prior to the murder, Josie Bell becomes vividly, astonishingly real to him, and Freddie himself muses over the moment in *Ghosts* (86). It will be part of my purpose in this essay to argue that, in Banville's fiction, and particularly in the art trilogy, ethics and imagination are the same thing; the failure of one is the failure of the other (in both senses of the word 'other').

[2]. I follow the trend in modern ethical criticism in using the term 'ethical' to suggest a generic recognition of, and openness to, the reality of others and otherness, as opposed to 'morality', which implies a particular set of rules and strictures.

[3]. The condition is evocatively described by Flann O'Brien in *At-Swim-Two-Birds* as "a huddle between the earth and heaven" (216), and the character in that novel to whom this condition is ascribed, Sweeny, occupies it for the same reason as Freddie does in *Ghosts* –he has estranged himself from the world through an act of murder. And like Freddie, he assuages his pain through art, in his case, singing.

[4]. Mirrors are a recurring motif in Banville's work. Recall Gabriel Godkin's words in *Birchwood* about "that second silent world which exists, independent, ordered by unknown laws, in the depths of mirrors" (1973: 21). *The Newton Letter* has a mirror-like construction, with the narrator leaving Ferns in a mirror-image of his arrival: "On the train I travelled into a mirror. There it all was, the backs of the houses, the drainpipes, a cloud out on the bay, just like the first time, only in reverse order" (1982: 88). And *Mefisto* is a book of two halves, one half mirroring the other.

[5]. I will have occasion later in this essay to propose certain similarities between Banville's thinking, as I interpret it here, and the mystic philosophy of the Jewish theologian, Martin Buber. For now, I would simply highlight a remarkable resonance between the passage from *Ghosts* just quoted and the following paragraphs from Buber's *I and Thou*. Buber divines two basic attitudes to life which he defines by the two word-compounds, *I-It* and *I-Thou*. In Banville's passage Freddie, to use these terms, has moved from an *I-It* position to one of *I-Thou*:

> If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I-Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things.

> This human being is not *He* or *She*, bounded from every other *He* and *She*, a specific point in space and time within the net of the world; nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. But with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens. This does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in *his* light. (21)

[6]. Banville's novels frequently allude to their predecessors, but both *Doctor Copernicus* and *Kepler* are echoed with particular clarity in one scene of the present novel, when Flora and Licht go up into Professor Kreutznaer's tower. "Everything tended upwards here", Flora thinks (106); "All tended upward here", is Copernicus's impression as he climbs Canon Wodka's tower (1976: 25). Licht begins to tell her of the Emperor Rudolf, a character who played a significant part in Kepler's life. Alice feels as if she has been given to hold, and to mind, "a sort of bowl or something" (106), which "felt as if it were brimming with some precious, volatile stuff" (109). The imagery and the language recall the opening of *Kepler*, when the astronomer dreams "the solution to the cosmic mystery", and "holds it cupped in his mind as in his hands he would a precious something of unearthly frailty and splendour"

(1981: 3). As if to clinch the matter, Banville ends one paragraph written in the third person and describing this episode with the words, "I have been here before" (109).

7. Tony Jackson points out that Bryson's interpretation of Watteau closely resembles Banville's reading of Vaublin: "If Banville has not actually read Bryson's distinctly postmodern interpretation, he nonetheless writes an interpretation of which Bryson would certainly approve" (1997: 523).

8. I allude to Yeats's "Per Amica Silentia Lunae", wherein he distinguishes between the saint and the artist: "I think that we who are poets and artists, not being permitted to shoot beyond the tangible, must go from desire to weariness and so to desire again, and live but for the moment when vision comes to our weariness like terrible lightening, in the humility of the brutes" (1934: 340).

Works cited

BANVILLE, John. 1993. *Ghosts.* London: Picador.

—. (1973) 1998. *Birchwood.* London: Picador.

—. (1976) 1990. *Doctor Copernicus.* London: Minerva.

—. 1981. *Kepler.* London: Secker and Warburg.

—. (1982) 1984. *The Newton Letter.* London: Panther.

—. (1989) 1990. *The Book of Evidence.* London: Minerva.

BECKETT, Samuel. (1965) 1999. *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit.* London: Calder.

BORGES, Jorge Luis. 1999. *Selected Non-Fictions.* Ed. Eliot Weinberger. Trans. Esther Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine and Eliot Weinberger. New York: Viking.

BRYSON, Norman. 1981. *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancient Regime.* Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

BUBER, Martin. (1958) 2003. *I and Thou.* Trans. Ronald Gregor Smith. London: Clark.

D'HOKER, Elke. 2002. "Portrait of the Other as a Woman with Gloves: Ethical Perspectives in

John Banville's *The Book of Evidence*". *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 44.1: 23-37.

ELIOT, T. S. 1944. *Four Quartets.* London: Faber and Faber.

JACKSON, Tony, E. 1997. "Science, Art and the Shipwreck of Knowledge: The Novels of John Banville". *Contemporary Literature* 38.8: 510-33.

KELLY, William. 1987. "John Banville's Great Expectations". Rev. of *Mefisto. The Irish Literary Supplement* 6.1: 12.

LYOTARD, Jean-Francois. 1988. *Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event.* New York: Columbia U.P.

MURDOCH, Iris. 1999. *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature.* Ed. Peter Conradi. New York: Penguin.

NABOKOV, Vladimir. 1982. *Lectures on Literature.* San Diego: Harcourt.

O'BRIEN, Flann. (1939) 2001. *At Swim-Two-Birds.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

PRIEST, Ann-Marie. 2000. "'In the Mystic Circle': The Space of the Unspeakable in Henry James's *The Sacred Fount*". *Style* 34.3: 421-443.

Readings, Bill. 1991. *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics.* London: Routledge.

Shattuck, Roger. 1999. *Candor & Perversion: Literature, Education, and the Arts.* New York: Norton.

Smoley, Richard. 2002. *Inner Christianity: A Guide to the Esoteric Tradition.* Boston: Shambala.

Stevens, Wallace. 1953. *Selected Poems.* London: Faber and Faber.

—. 1959. *Opus Posthumous.* London: Faber and Faber.

Weil, Simone. (1952) 2002. *Gravity and Grace.* Trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr. London: Routledge.

Yeats, W. B. (1952) 1982. *Mythologies.* London: Macmillan.

THE OLD ENGLISH POEM "A VAMPYRE OF THE FENS": A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GHOST*

EUGENIO OLIVARES MERINO
University of Jaén

In his book *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982), Hans Robert Jauss (1922-1997) –an important German exponent of the so-called 'reception theory' (*Rezeptionästhetik*)– synthesised his concept of the appreciation and evaluation of a literary work quoting from Paul Valéry: "It is the execution of the poem which is the poem" (1982: 196, n.71). A text –be it a book, movie, or other creative work– is not passively accepted by the audience, but the reader/ viewer interprets the meanings of the text based on his individual cultural background and life experiences. With the phrase *Horizon of expectations*, Jauss defines "the criteria readers use to judge literary texts in any given period" (Selden and Widowson 1993: 53). In essence, the meaning of a text is not inherent within itself, but is re-created in the relationship between the text and the reader.

Similarly to Jauss, his colleague Wolfgang Iser (1926-) has also insisted on the role of the individual reader. At the same time, though, in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978) Iser stresses the power of the text to control the way in which the *actual reader* reads it, *concretises* its meaning. A balance is thus established between the text's potentiality to determine responses and the concretisations of the different actual readers, according to their own *stock of experience*, i.e., their views of the world and, ultimately, reading experience (Selden and Widowson 1993: 55- 57). Opposition, approval, negotiation and (re)adjustment on the part of the actual readers are permanent

mental processes while reading: out of them, the different meanings of the text are conveyed.

This approach to literary works provides a suitable theoretical frame for a case I will now present. One of the central characters in a poem written in a language no longer living (let me not reveal the details at present) was reinterpreted in a very precise way by a certain reader belonging to a different historical and cultural period (the nineteenth century). The new reshaping of the character by the *actual reader* was done according to his existing *stock of experience*. The final outcome of this nineteenth century *concretisation* of the character was the dissolution of his original identity, the adoption of a new one, and his alienation from the poem in which he first appeared. And yet, since there must be a text for every literary character, a *new* poem was recreated for him. Interestingly enough, several twentieth century critics have referred to this *ghostly* text, describing it with adjectives such as *unknown*, *obscure* and *old*.

My initial concern was simply to search for this missing poem. Once I found it, however, I thought it would be equally interesting to show the genesis of this interesting mutation in which the reshaping of a character had led to the reshaping of his poem. Therefore there are two parallel levels of research in this paper. In the first one, I will chase this elusive poem in a network of bibliographic references, tracing the different stages through which it came to be known in a different way; for a while, I will postpone giving any names, so that readers may share my excitement in the discovery. At the second level, I will show how the dialogue established between the strong potentialities of the poem and the *expectations* and literary *experiences* of later generations of readers enabled such a reinterpretation of one of its characters. Reception theory has proved to be a most useful tool when making sense of the whole process. As Iser would claim, the critic's task is not to explain the text as an objective entity but rather the permanent process of adjustment and revision it endures at the hands of readers from all periods.

1. A missing paper

Dudley Wright's book *Vampires and Vampirism* might well be said to be the first serious attempt in English to compile vampire stories and reports from all over the world,[1] as well as to elucidate how far a certain amount of scientific truth might underlie these accounts. However, according to Montague Summers in his now classic treatise *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin* (1928),[2] this "little book" was an "insipid olio", inaccurate, full of inconsistencies and repetitions (xi-xii).[3] A less negative view was held by Anthony Masters, who quoted Wright's text twice in his influential *The Natural History of the Vampire* (1972: 67, 106-7). It is not my task

here to discuss the academic excellence of *Vampires and Vampirism*. Rather I am concerned with a curious statement made by Wright in his book, one that has passed unnoticed for both Anglosaxonists and vampire hunters: "There is an Anglo-Saxon poem with the title *A Vampyre of the Fens*" (1991: 186). The veracity of this claim is demolished by the fact that students and scholars of Old English literature well know that such a poem does not exist.

Besides, the dearth of vampiric literature in England before William of Malmesbury, William of Newburgh or Walter Map[4] is widely attested.[5] Van Helsing, the learned professor in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, reports the presence of vampires almost everywhere, but leaves England out of his picture (excuse his English):

> He is known everywhere that men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourish in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chernesese; and in China, so far from us in all ways, there even he is, and the peoples fear him at this day. He have follow the wake of the berserker Icelander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slav, the Saxon, the Magyar. (Stoker 1978: 266)

It is significant that the term "vampyre" was not used in English until 1734,[6] as reported by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.[7] The evidence that refutes Wright's affirmation is, as we can see, overwhelming, and yet there is some truth in his words.

Wright was not the only author to make reference to this mysterious poem, not recorded in the Old English corpus. Some other writers have reported with different degrees of certainty the existence of this obscure text. Wright's words might be assumed to be behind the beginning of M. Summer's "The Vampire in England and Ireland, and some Latin lands", the second chapter in his *The Vampire in Europe* (1929):

> Although there is some evidence that the Vampire was by no means unknown in England during Anglo-Saxon times, the allusions are accidental and occasional, rather than detailed and direct, that is to say pieces of folk-lore in the remoter countries, half-forgotten oral tradition (now almost entirely dying out). (1929: 78)

I have already shown what a poor concept Summers had of *Vampires and Vampirism*, although in his new book he reports from Wright the case of an Irish "beautiful female vampire" (1929: 117).[8] Summers complains that no "authority is given for this" (a recurrent fault in Wright's text), but manages to clarify from other sources the origins of this legend. Probably Mr Summers had more difficulties in finding out which Anglo-Saxon poem Wright was talking about and so he preferred to make a vague reference to "some evidence that the Vampire was by no means unknown in England during Anglo-Saxon times" (1929: 78).

 Almost seventy years later, some authors (none of them Medievalists) still include references to the mysterious Anglo-Saxon poem. Such is the case of M. Bunson's *The Vampire Encyclopedia*, where we can read: "It has been stated by scholars that the first poem on the undead in the isles was the "Vampyre of the Fens", an Anglo-Saxon work, otherwise unknown" (1993: 85). The poem referred to is said to be *otherwise unknown* and Bunson gives no bibliographical support that might contribute to the elucidation of this matter. Besides, Bunson reports that the "Vampyre of the Fens" was the first poem on the undead ever written in England. A treasure to be discovered or, simply, a mirage?

In 1989 Brian J. Frost published *The Monster with a Thousand Faces: Guises of the Vampire in Myth and Literature*. In the second part of this study he develops a brief introduction of the Vampire Motif into European Literature and he writes:

> However, as every survey must have a starting point, I will stick my neck out and opt for an obscure Anglo-Saxon poem called *A Vampyre of the Fens,* written at the beginning of the eleventh century, as the vampire's probable debut in a work of pure imagination. (1989: 36)

Reviewing the entries in the Non-Fiction bibliographic list (1989: 133),[9] one may fairly infer that Frost's source on this point was a book by Carol A. Senf with the title of *The Vampire in 19th-Century English Literature*. In this text, after stating that England seems to have remained free from the vampiric superstition, the author makes reference to the twelfth-century narrations by William of Newburgh and William of Malmesbury and adds: "an article in an 1855 issue of *Household Words* refers to a third example, an Anglo-Saxon poem on the Vampyre of the Fens" (1988: 19). Senf's reference differed from the three previous accounts in one important aspect: the poem was *on* the Vampyre of the Fens, rather than bearing such a title. Fortunately enough, this time the author gives the reference of the relevant paper –"Vampyres", *Household Words* 11 (1855)–(1988: 169, n. 19),[10] but she does not mention either its author or the pages. *Household Words* was a magazine founded in 1850 by Charles Dickens, who remained its editor until the last issue (1859). The relevant article was nameless but it has been attributed to Edmund Ollier (1827-1886),[11] a well-known English litterateur, who explicitly stated: "There is an old Anglo-Saxon poem on the subject of the Vampyre of the Fens" (1855: 43).[12]

Taking into account the dates of the works mentioned and the information they offer, one may very well trace how Ollier's reference has found its way to our days and also how it has been altered. Ollier (1855) is the source for Wright (1914), who mentions the former's article (not his name) in his bibliography (1991: 220); why he modified Ollier's words –from *on the subject of* to *with the title*, I cannot say. Maybe, there was a third author between these two who altered the information.

Senf (1988) got the reference straight from Ollier's article –she includes it in her bibliography (1988: 203)– not through Wright's, and did not modify it (*on the subject of*). However, although Frost (1989) took it from Senf, oddly enough he writes of *an obscure Anglo-Saxon poem called*. Besides he is the first one to locate the poem in the early eleventh century,[13] a detail that will soon fit in this maze. The last reference to the mysterious poem to date is in Bunson (1993), who follows Frost, Senf and Wright –as stated in the bibliography (1993: 297, 299, 300), and gives the title of the poem between inverted commas, *"Vampyre of the Fens"*.

2. A missing Old English poem

The question now is to identify Edmund Ollier's Anglo-Saxon poem about a vampire who dwelt in the fens. The answer to the puzzle is in the lines of a well-known passage in Old English literature, preserved in an eleventh century manuscript:

> Nē þæt se āglǣca   yldan þōhte,
> ac hē gefēng hraðe   forman sīðe
> slæpendne rinc,   slāt unwearnum,
> *bāt bānlocan,   blod ēdrum dranc,*
> *synsnædum swealh;   sōna hæfde*
> *unlyfigendes   eal gefeormod,*
>
> *fet ond folma.* (the italics are mine. *Beowulf,* ll. 739-45)[14]
>
> Nor did the creature keep him waiting
> but strucked suddenly and started in;
> he grabbed and mauled a man on his bench,
> *bit into his bone-lappings, bolted down his blood*
> *and gorged on him in lumps, leaving the body*
> *utterly lifeless, eaten up*
> *hand and foot.*[15] (the italics are mine)

Most readers will share my certainty that the *otherwise unknown* poem is in fact the most famous work in Old English literature, *Beowulf*, the mysterious vampire being no other than Grendel, the marauder of the fens and the moors (ll. 103-4, 162, 710, 1348), described by the anonymous poet with details that might have led some to view him as a proto-vampiric character. His nightly existence (ll. 193, 274-5, 703), his attacks when the sun is gone (ll. 115, 135, 702ff) or the fact that he is finally beheaded are typical features of the undead (ll. 1588-90). But above all, the gruesome description of Honscioh's death just quoted is particularly inviting. Blood-drinking and cannibalism are the two most characteristic features of the folk-

vampire (who has little or nothing to do with the famous Transylvanian count). There is none of the sensuality or the eroticism of the nineteenth/ twentieth-century vampire, but rather the brutality –more bestial than human– of the primitive creature with claws and red eyes who came in the night to drink the blood of his unwilling victims. Strictly speaking, however, Grendel is not a vampire. Though he might be said to feed on human flesh and blood (ll. 123-5, 448-50, 733-4, 739-45), a most abhorrent practise to the audience of the poem,[16] Beowulf's enemy does not fulfil one of the basic characteristics of these preternatural beings: he is not a living-dead. It is not my concern in this paper to analyse Grendel's affinity with a vampiric creature,[17] but to clarify why he was perceived as one, since to describe *Beowulf* as a poem about a vampire who lived in the fens is an inaccurate simplification. Several possibilities could be proposed.

1. Mr. Ollier might have read/heard about *an old Anglo-Saxon poem on the subject of the Vampyre of the Fens* in/from a source which I have not been able to identify. Whether or not Ollier (a poet himself and a man with literary interests) knew *Beowulf* is not relevant.[18] In any case, he would not know that the *old Anglo-Saxon poem* he wrote about in *Household Words* was in fact *Beowulf*. If this was the case, Edmund Ollier could not be blamed for triggering the confusion, but for transmitting it.

2. Just five years older than Mr. Ollier, Henry Morley (1822-1894) was the university-educated man on the staff of *Household Words* from 1851 to its cessation in 1859. He also held several academic appointments in London, being Lecturer in English Language and Literature in King's College (1857-65), as well as Professor of English Language and Literature in University College (1865-89). His relevance in the present issue is due to the fact that he contributed to nineteenth-century *Beowulfiana* (in Shippey and Haarder, 1998: 340-41, 448-49), publishing his earliest work on the Anglo-Saxon poem ("A Primitive Old Epic") only three years after Ollier's article and precisely in *Household Words*.[19] It is fanciful, but pleasing, to conjecture that Morley told Ollier about an old Anglo-Saxon poem in which a monster from the fens drank the blood of his victims. It cannot be argued that Morley did not mention the name of the poem; by 1833 J.M. Kemble had already published his translation of *The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, The traveller's Song and the Battle of Finnes-burh*. For some reason, however, Ollier did not consider it relevant to mention the title, even when he knew he was writing about *Beowulf*.

3. A third possibility would be that Ollier himself had read *Beowulf* and thought that the best way to describe it was the way he did. I do not know how skilled Mr. Ollier was with Old English, but if he was, he might have read *Beowulf* (or Grendel's episode) in any of the several editions of the poem that were available by 1855.[20] If, however, Old English was not his speciality –a possibility I tend to favour, he might have approached the poem in a translation.[21] A partial reading of

Beowulf (particularly its first part), either in Old English or in a modernised version, might well have left Ollier with the impression that Grendel was indeed a vampire who inhabited the marshes and the fens.

4. I am most inclined to think that Ollier read, not *Beowulf,* but about *Beowulf,* in a secondary source, something that might also explain his reductive description of its plot and, perhaps, why he did not care to identify it as *Beowulf.* Two nineteenth-century works are particularly relevant for my present concern. In his "Editor's Preface" to Thomas Warton's *The History of English Poetry…A New Edition,*[22] Richard Price discusses the Classical concept of the *Lamia*, a myth that is closely connected with that of the vampire.[23] In a footnote, he makes the following reference to *Beowulf*:

> The earliest memorial of them [i.e. male lamias] in European fiction is preserved to us in the Anglo-Saxon poem of Beowulf. In this curious repository of genuine Northern tradition, by far the most interesting portion of the poem is devoted to an account of the hero's combats with a male and female spirit, whose nightly ravages in the hall of Hrothgar are marked by all atrocities of the Grecian fable. (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 174)[24]

The second excerpt that I am putting forward for consideration is by Isaac Disraeli, father of the English Prime Minister, who devoted a section of his *Amenities of Literature, consisting of Sketches and Characters of English Literature* (London, 1841) to "The Exploits of Beowulf". When he comes to explain the hero's purpose in travelling to the Island of Zealand, he describes Beowulf's foe (without ever giving his name) in the following manner:

> A mysterious being –one of the accursed progeny of Cain– *a foul and solitary creature of the morass and the marsh*. In the dead of the night this enemy of man, envious of glory and abhorrent of pleasure, glided into the great hall of state and revelry, *raging athirst for the blood of the brave* there reposing in slumber. […] *This life-devourer, who comes veiled in a mist from the marshes*, may be some mythic being. (the italics are mine; in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 239)

The second, third and fourth possibilities that I have suggested imply a high degree of reshaping both of text and character, of adjustment to his own expectations, on the part of Ollier, the *actual reader.* Either of the last two quotations (the second one in particular),[25] an isolated reading of Grendel's episode or even a casual conversation, might well have suggested a concretisation of Beowulf's semi-human enemy as a vampire. The icon was so powerful that it became the central focus of interest of the whole poem. This has an obvious consequence: *Beowulf* vanishes, it becomes Stanley Fish's "disappearing text" (J. Olivares 2001b: 52); when it comes back to life, it is "an old Anglo-Saxon poem on the subject of the Vampyre

of the Fens" (Ollier 1855: 43). Such a double mutation (of character and poem), as odd as it might seem, was not odd at all. As Iser would argue, it was the result of the negotiation between the rich potentiality of the text and the reader's stock of (reading) experience. This negotiation was particularly easy, especially if we take into account the literary tastes in the milieu I am dealing with. I will try to further illustrate this balance in the last section of this paper.

3. The monster and the readers

During the nineteenth-century, English literature showed a particular interest in vampires. The blood-sucker became not only the most familiar character of popular culture, but also an icon in the writings of "serious" artists and philosophers (Charlotte and Emily Brontë, George Eliot, Dickens or even Marx and Engels). The Romantic mind felt this strange attraction for the vampire as the great transgressor, "a proof of the increased relish among us [the English] for the modern German school of literature", as reported by a late eighteenth-century English reviewer in *The Monthly Review*, July 1796 (Senf 1988: 12).

This interest had already become manifest in the English literary scenario at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. As early as 1800, "Wake Not the Dead", a vampire story by the German Johan Ludwig Tieck, was published in England.[26] It was followed by Robert Southey's "Thalaba the Destroyer" (1801). Soon after, in 1810, *The Travels of the Three English Gentlemen* appeared in the *Harleian Miscellany*, as well as John Stagg's "The Vampyre". By this time the blood-sucker had gradually made its place in English literature. Lord Byron wrote "The Giaour" in 1813 and three years later he was working on a vampire tale which he would never finish. It was his sometime friend Dr. John Polidori who completed "The Vampyre: A Tale" (1819). Shortly after, Keats wrote "Lamia", a poem in which this ancient female demon was endowed with a clearly allegorical dimension. In 1845 James Malcolm Rhymer started publishing his weekly novel, *Varney the Vampyre, or, The Feast of Blood*. The tale was so popular that it was reprinted in 1853. One last vampiric story appeared before the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872).[27] Like all monsters, the vampire was not only a horrifying creature, but a metaphor of everything that was feared, repressed or desired. For Victorians the interest in the vampire was never openly confessed.

My view is that Edmund Ollier (or his unknown informant), sharing the taste of his age for vampiric literature, viewed Grendel according to his own *horizon of expectations* and *experience*, in other words, necessarily as a remote predecessor of the undead blood-sucker. There was a will to find traces of this myth in medieval literature. In the same *Household Words* article on vampires, Ollier refers to other

early manifestations of this superstition in Western Europe. After providing a detailed account of Thorolf Baegifot, Thorgunna, Thorer and Thorulf, three *draugar* (Norse walking-dead) in the *Eyrbyggja-Saga*, he concludes: "[in these cases] we miss the blood-sucking propensities of the genuine Vampyre; but in all other respects the resemblance is complete" (1855: 41).[28] In the case of Beowulf's foe, the propensities are made explicit (Grendel drinks human blood), though it is the preternatural existence that seems to be missing. The monster's drinking and eating habits, as well as his nightly exploits were "familiar territory" (Iser 1978: 87) for the reader. Beyond that however, the land is unknown: Grendel is not a revenant, an un-dead. It is time for negotiation, since the text presents a *gap* or *blank* (Iser's key terms) that must be filled, written on, if a meaning (one of the many) is to be conveyed. The reader offers his familiarity with what the text has already shown (*Grendel looks like a vampire to me*), and also his expectations (*He might very well be a vampire*). The poem offers its potentiality and calls for such concretisation. Grendel's condition is by no means clear, his titles providing a plurality of (at times contradictory) aspects. Although, generally speaking, the monster is perceived as "a fleshly denizen of this world" (Tolkien 1983: 35), there are phrases that might suggest his otherworldly existence: "fēond on helle" ("fiend in hell", l. 101), "gæst" ("ghost", l. 102), "dēaþscua" ("death-shadow", l. 160) or "scynscaþa" ("spectral foe", l. 707). This unfinished or ambiguous nature of the monster impelled the reader to make certain internal adjustments in order to process the antique alien being according to his own pre-existing mental patterns and complete the picture: *Grendel is a vampire*. Walter Scott, himself seduced by the morbid charm of this character, seemed to go as far as he could in the clarification of Grendel's dubious status, when he wrote about "an evil being called Grendel, who, except in his being subject to death, seems a creature of a supernatural description" (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 177).[29]

4. Conclusion

Interestingly enough, it is in Germany (the country where the fashion of the vampire as a literary character started), that I have found an explicit description of Grendel as a vampire. Jacob Grimm said little about *Beowulf* in the first edition of his influential *Deutsche Mythologie* (Göttingen 1835), but still he referred to the dweller of the fens in a very precise way. A philologist, so deeply versed in mythology and folk-lore, Grimm was also filling the gaps:

> *Grendels* teuflische art gemahnt and blutdürstige wasergeister (s. 280.) auch wohnt er in *moor* und *sumpf* und sucht bei nächtlicher weile die schlafenden menschen heim: com of môre gongan. Beov. 1413, flieht 'under fenhleodhu' (1632.) er *trinkt* das

blut aus den adern (das. 1478) und gleicht vampyren, deren lippen von frischen blut benetzt sind. In einer altn. Saga findet sich ein ähnlicher dämon, *Grímr oegir* genannt, weil er im wasser wie auf dem lande gehen kann, er speit gift und feuer, *trinkt* das *blut* aus menschen und thieren. (fornald. Sög. 3, 241. 242) (570)[30]

It is a remote possibility that this work was Ollier's source. I cannot conclude that he knew German, and James Stallybrass' translation of *Deutsche Mythologie* (the first in English) was not completed until 1888. At this point, I would like to call the attention of the reader to an interesting coincidence. John M. Kemble, the author of the first English complete edition of *Beowulf* (1833), as well as of its first rendering into English (1837), was working at Göttingen (1831) under Jacob Grimm, to whom he dedicated both works. Kemble ranked Jacob, as well as his brother, among his friends, keeping confidential correspondence with the first (Kemble 1837: liii-liv) from 1832 to 1852 (Wiley 1971). We also know that Grimm's references to *Beowulf* were taken from Kemble's edition (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 200). The possibility that Kemble was Ollier's unknown informant is indeed attractive, especially taking into account that in the "copious glossary" that he included after his translation of *Beowulf*, Kemble gave in the entry for Grendel "spiritus quivis infernalis". Is there a better definition of a vampire than a hellish spirit who drinks blood?

After 200 years now of *Beowulfiana*, readers and literary critics have constantly recreated Grendel, adding new aspects to him, depending on the different cultural contexts. And so Grendel is no longer only loaded with God's anger (l. 711) but with multiple connotations that range from his supposed affinities with the Norse deity Loki (Shippey and Haarder 1998: 15-16) to his nihilism in John Gardner's ecologist *Grendel* (1971). To this we might add more recent concretisations of the character as the embodiment of the "Anglo-Saxon fascination with *extimité*" (Cohen 1999: 25), or his aggressive brutality in the comic character created by Matt Wagner in the early eighties.

In an ambiance where the vampire was a fashionable being, Grendel was inevitably perceived in this new light. As Marijane Osborn concludes in her introduction to her "Annotated List of *Beowulf* Translations", it "is fascinating to see how certain misunderstandings of those nineteenth-century scholars, corrected long ago, are perpetuated in popular accounts of *Beowulf* a century or more later". The misunderstanding I have shown here had not been corrected before. It has been (still is) perpetuated, not only in popular accounts,[31] but also in more serious and academic works such as the ones referred to at the beginning of this paper.

Reader-oriented approaches to literature have proved to be especially suitable when trying to understand why Beowulf's foe was assimilated to a blood-sucker. In Ollier's account, Grendel lost his name and mutated into a vampire. A new identity was

given to him by his new reader, who (as Dr Frankenstein) assembled his body with pieces from the old text and other texts he had in mind. *Beowulf* vanished, for the blood-thirsty monster needed a poem of which he would be the only master, a poem about a vampire; Ollier gave it to him. For over fifty years, the creature remained undisturbed, probably unknown, but Dudley Wright brought him back to life. By then, the canonical status achieved by *Beowulf* would not allow a vampire to challenge the supremacy of its epic hero. And so, unknowingly, Dudley Wright killed *Beowulf* and conjured up the ghostly poem, A *Vampyre of the Fens*. This poem and its creature have been around for a while, spreading the disease of confusion, inflicting a familiar pain on those who do literary research: the pain of not locating a source! From now onwards the Vampyre of the fens lies at rest in his grave. He is Grendel once more, haunting the marshes … but not literary critics.

Notes

1. The book was originally published in 1914, a second edition (with an extra chapter) being published ten years later. I have used a more recent reprint (1991).

2. I have used a new edition of this work with the title *The Vampire* (1995).

3. This author, who converted to Catholicism and claimed to have been ordained a priest, was so hard on *Vampires and Vampirism* not only for the alleged deficiencies of the work, but because he was prejudiced against Mr. Wright for other works he had written: "one must not look for accuracy and research from the author of *Roman Catholicism and Freemasonry*" (Summers 1995: xi).

4. Strictly speaking, only William of Newburg reports cases of vampirism: the revenant from Melrose Abbey and the revenant from Alnwick Castle (Book V, chapter xxiv). The author himself refers to both as *sanguisuga*, "blood-sucker", from Latin *sanguis, -inis* ("blood") and *sugo, suxi, suctum* ("to suck"). For an edition of this text, see William of Newburgh (1884-9).

5. According to the German scholar Ernst Havekost, "Die vampirsage ist also trotz der mancherlei Einflüsse, die sie ausgeübt hat, in der Geschichte der englischen Kultur als ein fremdes Element anzusehen" (1914: 91). Translation: "Therefore, we can consider that the vampiric legend in English culture, despite some influences, is a strange element". See also Masters (1972: 127-28).

6. The origins of this word are obscure and elusive. According to Katharina M. Wilson, there "are four clearly discernible schools of thought on the etymology of vampire, advocating Turkish, Greek, Slavic, and Hungarian roots for the term" (1998: 3).

7. The text that illustrates the use is from *The Travels of Three English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg, Being the Grand Tour of Germany in the Year 1734* (preserved in the *Harleian Miscellany*, 1810, vol. IV, 358): "These Vampyres are supposed to be the Bodies of deceased Persons, animated by evil Spirits,

which come out of the Graves, in the Night-time, suck the Blood of many of the Living, and thereby destroy them". Nevertheless, the *O.E.D.* mistakenly assumes this is the first use of the word. According to Carol A. Senf there is, however, at least one earlier use of the word: "This account, of Vampyres, you'll observe, comes from the Eastern Part of the World, always remarkable for its Allegorical Style" (May 1732, *London Gentleman's Magazine,* quoted in Senf 1988: 22). Katharina M. Wilson has recently shown two more examples: Ricaut's *State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* (1679), where the term is however not actually used, and Forman's *Observations on the Revolution in 1688* (1688). Besides, as she points out, *The Travels of Three English Gentlemen* was not published until 1810 (1988: 6).

[8]. In note 30, he makes reference to Wright's book, 2nd edition, p. 50. (1929: 130).

[9]. Together with Carol A. Senf (1988), he includes Margaret L. Carter (1988) and Vincent Hillyer (1988). Neither Carter nor Hillyer deal with the present issue.

[10]. In his final bibliography (1991: 220), Dudley Wright had also included the relevant reference (*Household Words*, vol. xi), but his words about the "Anglo-Saxon poem with the title *A Vampyre of the Fens*" were not linked to it.

[11]. The article is unsigned and the attribution has been made by A. Lohrli (1973: 389-91). Mr. Ollier contributed to several periodicals, writing many articles for *Household Words* from 1853 to 1858. He was also a poet, highly considered by Leigh Hunt, who praised Ollier's verse contributions to *Household Words*. It is interesting to point out that two of the latter's poems bore familiar titles: "The Lady of the Fen" and "The Goblins of the Marsh. A Masque". He also compiled various works, such as *The Doré Gallery* (1870), *Cassell's Illustrated History of the United States* (1874-1877) and *Cassell's Illustrated History of the Russo-Turkish War* (1877-1879) (Lohrli 1973: 389-919; and Sidney 1895: 157-89).

[12]. This unsigned article (as well as some other interesting early texts on vampirism) can be found at <www.users.net1plus.com/vyrdolak/household.htm>

[13]. I do not know where Frost got this reference to the eleventh century. He may have used another source that he does not include in his bibliography.

[14]. I have used Mitchell and Robinson's edition of *Beowulf* (1998).

[15]. The translation is by Seamus Heaney (1999: 24-25).

[16]. The Christian Anglo-Saxons were quite aware both of the prohibitions against blood drinking and of the connection between human blood and the soul in Biblical writings. An excellent account of this is given by Fred C. Robinson (1993: 143-46).

[17]. This possibility is analysed in by E. Olivares Merino (1999: 123-36). The issue was partially anticipated by Nicholas K. Kiessling (1968: 191-201).

[18]. Beowulf was a well known subject of literary scholarship already by the middle of the nineteenth-century. Sharon Turner had first referred to this poem with the name of its hero in 1807. In the index to the second edition of his *The History of the Anglo-Saxons* (London), Turner included "*Beowulf*, a narrative poem" (in Stanley 1994: 27, n. 55).

[19]. The piece is unsigned but A. Lohrli attributes it to Morley. Traditionally, this paper has been said to be by John Earle: see, for example, Shippey and Haarder (1998: 56). Marijane Osborn in her "Annotated List of *Beowulf* Translations" mentions both authors but is not conclusive.

[20]. Grim. Johnson Thorkelin's *De Danorum rebus gestis secul. III & IV. Poëma danicum dialecto anglosaxonica* (Havniae, 1815); J.M. Kemble's *The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, The traveller's Song and the Battle of Finnes-burh* (London, 1833), of which only 100 copies were printed; and Benjamin Thorpe's *The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf,*

The Scop or Gleeman's Tale and the Fight at Finnesburg (London, 1855), which also included a translation.

[21]. In his third edition of *The History of the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1820), Sharon Turner paid some attention to *Beowulf*, translating or paraphrasing its earlier part, where the fight with Grendel is described. Three years later, Turner published *The History of the Manners, Landed Property, Government, Laws, Poetry Literature, Religion, and Language of the Anglo-Saxons*. Vol. IV (London), the first considerable though still partial English prose translation of the poem. J.J. Connybare published in 1826 his *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London), containing a summary of the poem as well as a blank verse translation. Nine years later, Thomas Wright wrote "On Anglo-Saxon Poetry" (*Fraser's Magazine* 12: 76-92), translated several passages (up to l. 569 and ll. 499-606), providing a summary of the rest. In 1837, Kemble published the first complete translation of *Beowulf* into English, *A Translation of the Anglo-Saxon Poem of Beowulf...*(London). A.D. Wackerbarth's *Beowulf: An Epic Poem. Translated from the Anglo-Saxon into English Verse* was published in 1849 (London). Finally, Thorpe's 1855 edition should also be taken into account (see note 21).

[22]. 4 vols. London, 1824.

[23]. As recorded in the *O.E.D.*, the Latin term *lamia* designated "a witch who was supposed to suck children's blood".

[24]. For an analysis of Grendel's dam as a lamia, see Kiessling (1974: 30-31).

[25]. I would also like to quote another passage from the above-mentioned *The Travels of the Three English Gentlemen*, one that describes the vampire's nightly ravages and very well fits Grendel's onslaught on Hondscioh: "The Vampyres, which come out of the graves in the night-time, rush upon people sleeping in their beds, suck out all their blood, and destroy them" (Wilson 1998: 7).

[26]. Coleridge, possibly under the influence of Burger's vampire-fantasy *Lenore* (1773), had written "Christabel" in two parts (1797 and 1800).

[27]. For a detailed study of these and other nineteenth-century English vampiric texts, see Julio A. Olivares Merino (2001a: 192-229, 246-346); Senf (1988) and Twitchell (1981).

[28]. It seems to me that this author had a taste for horror topics. He also published in *Household Words* an article titled "Wehrwolves" (1857: 405-08).

[29]. Article on "Romance" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1824 edition), vol 6. Walter Scott himself made a passing reference to a female vampire in *Rockeby* (1813): "For like the bat of Indian brakes,/ Her pinions fan the womb she makes,/ And soothing thus the dreamer's pains,/ She drinks the life-blood from his veins" (in Masters 1972: 197).

[30]. The following translation is included in Shippey and Haarder (1998: 201): "*Grendel*'s devilish nature reminds one of the bloodthirsty water-spirits (p. 463) [sic]. He too lives in *moor* and *swamp* and seeks out sleeping humans by night: com of more gongan, Beo. 1413, flies under fenhleo∂u (1632), he *drinks* the *blood* from veins (1478), and is like vampires, whose lips are moistened with fresh blood" (the italics are Grimm's, the underlining is mine). Grimm seems to have been highly impressed by Grendel's drinking habits. In the second edition of *Deutsche Mythologie* (1844) he added an extra paragraph on p. 464, where he once more emphasizes that "Grendel ist grausam und blutdürstig: wenn er nachts aus seinen moor steigt und in die halle der schlafenden helden gelangt, ergreift er einen und trinkt das blut aus den adern (1478)". Translation: "Grendel is cruel and bloodthirsty: when he rises by night out of his moor and gets into the hall of the sleeping heroes, he seizes one and drinks the blood from his veins (1478)" (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 252).

[31]. It is interesting to trace the echo of these statements in the Internet. Eleven web sites make reference to the "Vampyre of the

99

Fens". Four of them provide the same text: "Although the first English language reference to vampires occurred in the 1734 poem, The Vampyre of the Fens..."(<www.conservation. mongabay.com/files/Fens.htm>;<www.dayton dailynews.com/life/content/life/daily/1031vamp ire.html>;<www.literature.surfwax.com/files/Br am_Stoker_Book>;<www.news.shopeasier.co m/files/shopeasier_Bram_Stoker>). A fifth one (<www.fortunecity.com/rosewell/wells/ 954/vamp-triv.html>) presents a slightly modified text: "The word 'vampire' did not appear in English until 1734, when it was used in an Anglo-Saxon poem titled 'The Vampyre of the Fens'...". The same could be said about <www.geocities.com/Area51/Zone/7981/two.ht ml>: "The first published-vampire story is from 1734 and is an Anglo-Saxon poem called The Vampyre of the Fens". Two Portuguese translations of this quotation can be found at <www.organon.hpg.ig.com.br/vamp-cren.htm> and <www.geocities.yahoo.com.br/ typeo_br/vampiros.htm>. Finally, Senf's quotation is included at <www.uoregon.edu/ nateich/Vampire_Backgrounds.html>.

Works cited

BUNSON, M. 1993. *The Vampire Encyclopedia*. New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks.

100 CARTER, Margaret L. 1988. *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press.

COHEN, J. J. 1999. *Of Giants. Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

FROST, Brian J. 1989. *The Monster with a Thousand Faces: Guises of the Vampire in Myth and Literature*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

GARDNER, J. 1971. *Grendel*. New York: Knopf.

GRIMM, J. 1835. *Deutsche Mythologie*. Göttingen: In der dieterichschen Buchhandlung.

—. 1844. *Deutsche Mythologie*. Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung.

—. 1882-1888. *Teutonic Mythology*. 3 vols. Trans. from the 4th ed., with notes and appendix by James Steven Stallybrass. London: G. Bell.

HAVEKOST, E. 1914. *Die Vampirsage in England*. Halle: Buchdruckerei Hohmann.

HEANEY, S. 1999. *Beowulf. A New Translation*. London: Faber and Faber.

HILLYER, Vincent. 1988. *Vampires*. California: Loose Change Publications.

ISER, Wolfgang. 1978. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P.

JAUSS, Hans R. 1982. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Introd. by Paul de Mann. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

KEMBLE, John M. 1837. *A Translation of the Anglo-Saxon Poem of Beowulf with a Copious Glossary, Preface and Philological Notes*. London: William Pickering.

KIESSLING, Nicholas K. 1968. "Grendel: a new aspect". *Modern Philology* 65.3: 191-201.

—. 1974. "Demonic Dread: The Incubus Figure in British Literature". In G.R. Thompson. (ed.). *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism*. Pullman, Wa: Washington State U. P.: 23-42.

LOHRLI, A. 1973. *Household Words. A Weekly Journal Conducted by Charles Dickens*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

The Old English Poem "A vampyre of the Fens": A Bibliographical Ghost*

MASTERS, A. 1972. *The natural History of the Vampire*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis.

MORLEY, Henry. 1858. "A Primitive Old Epic". *Household Words* 17: 459-64.

NEWBURGH, William of. 1884-9. *Historia rerum anglicarum usque ad annum 1198*. In R. Howlett. (ed.). *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*. 4 vols. London. Roll Series nº 82. London. [Books 1-4 of William's history appear in volume 1, book 5 in volume 2]

OLLIER, Edmund. 1853. "The Lady of the Fen". *Household Words* 8: 370-73.

—. 1854. "The Goblins of the Marsh. A Masque". *Household Words* 8: 491-92.

—. 1855. "Vampyres". *Household Words* 11 (February 10): 39-43.

—.1857. "Wehrwolves". *Household Words* 15: 405-08.

MITCHELL, B. and F. C. ROBINSON. 1998. *Beowulf. An Edition*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

OLIVARES MERINO, Eugenio M. 1999. "Patterns of a Myth: Vampires in *Beowulf*?". In Ana Bringas *et al.* (eds.). *'Woonderous Lytterature'. SELIM Studies in Medieval English Literature.* Vigo: Servicio de Publicacións: 123-36.

OLIVARES MERINO, Julio A. 2001a. *Cenizas del Plenilunio Alado*. Jaén: Servicio de Publicaciones.

—. 2001b. "Murnau's *Nosferatu*: Taming Flames, Pitch Black, Sleepwalking Serpents and the Words of Ice that Came from Within". *Kinema* 16 (2001): 49-62.

OSBORN, M. <www.asu.edu/clas/acmrs/web_pages/online_resources/ online_resources_beowulf_annotated_trans.html>

ROBINSON, F. C. (1970) 1993. "Lexicography and literary criticism: A caveat". In Fred C. Robinson. (ed.). *The Tomb of Beowulf*. Oxford: Blackwell: 140-52.

SELDEN, R. and P. WIDOWSON. 1993. *A Reader's guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 3rd edition. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall/ Harvester Wheatsheaf.

SENF, Carol A. 1988. *The Vampire in 19th-Century English Literature*. Bowling Green: State University Popular Press.

SHIPPEY, T.A. and A. HAARDER. (eds.). 1998. Beowulf. *The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge.

SIDNEY, L. (ed.). 1895. *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. XIII. New York: Macmillan and Co./ London: Smith, Elder and Co.

STANLEY, E. G. 1994. *In The Foreground*: Beowulf. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer.

STOKER, Bram. (1897). 1978. *Dracula*. New York: Dell Publishing Co.

SUMMERS, M. 1995. *The Vampire*. London: Senate.[Originally published in 1928 as *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.].

—. 1929. The Vampire in Europe. New York: University books.

TOLKIEN, J. R. R. (1936). 1983. "The Monsters and the Critics". In Tolkien. (ed.). *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. London: Allen & Unwin: 5-48.

TWITCHELL, James B. 1981. *The Living Dead. A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature*. Durham, N.C.: Duke U. P.

WILEY, R. A. (ed.). 1971. *John Mitchell Kemble and Jakob Grimm: A Correspondence 1832-52*. Brill: Leiden.

WILSON, Katharina M. 1998. "The History of the Word *Vampire*". In A. Dundes. (ed.). *The Vampire. A Casebook*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press: 3-11.

WRIGHT, D. (1914) 1991. *Vampires and Vampirism*. Dumfriesshire: Tynron Press.

STRICTLY BALLROOM (1992): DEPARTURE FROM TRADITIONAL ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN DISCOURSES OR VEILED CONFIRMATION OF OLD NATIONAL-ENCOURAGEMENT MECHANISMS?[1]

OLGA SECO SALVADOR
University of Zaragoza

The search for an original and well-defined identity appears to be a recurrent topic throughout Australian history. Always in flux, the question of 'Australianness' has been of remarkable relevance and, especially since the 1980s, it has triggered a non-stop process of encouragement of national values, ideals and experiences. In 1988 the country celebrated its Bicentennial,[2] a commemorative tribute where great effort was directed towards the extolling of an authentic, common and strong Australian national identity. At present, nonetheless, the components of this 'identity' still remain uncertain. Although official discourses have insisted on a predominantly white, male and western character as defining features of 'the' Australian type,[3] the truth is that Australia has become a multicultural country, a kind of 'melting pot' where diversity and plurality shape a society marked by constant diasporic movements between the continent and the rest of the world. In this sense, Australia can no longer be perceived as the exclusive site of Anglo-Saxon white heterosexual men. Women, Aborigines, homosexuals and migrants of non-western origin do constitute a reality as Australian as any other, and they play a fundamental role in the constitution and public acknowledgment of the nation's cultural identity. To give but one example, Sydney is well-known for having become the annual venue of the Mardi Gras Festival, taken over by gay and lesbian groups to publicly present themselves and their culture to the so called 'straight' community, both in Australia and all over the world (O'Regan 1996: 271).

Moreover, Aboriginality and its more or less recent conversion into an object of tourist attraction constitutes an important source of revenue for the country, which is most willing to export worldwide a profitable and exotic, but also stereotyped, image of Australia and its 'oldest' community.

Nonetheless, despite their legitimate condition of Australian citizens, these 'Other' identities have been for long forced to remain silent, and have been denied any single or appropriate locus of self-affirmation within official Australian discourses. They have suffered the disdain of their own country and have been rejected as potential subjects of representation within the social, cultural, and artistic national panorama. However, if as Kay Schaffer affirms, "national identity is a cultural construction" (1990: 8), then it seems obvious that official notions of 'Australianness' are nothing but a myth, a mystification, a falsification. Some of the implications of this official discourse have been simply taken for granted, thus ignoring the fact that they are part of a constructed and imagined representation of Australian nationalist culture. Unfortunately, these very same meanings have been relentlessly reproduced in the field of the arts and the media, Australian cinema being no exception, since it has also become an accomplice to these convictions and a clear exponent of the evolution that the question 'what is it to be an Australian?' underwent in the last decades of the twentieth century.

Since its very beginnings,[4] the Australian film industry has experienced a set of cultural, political and financial changes that have redefined its position within the world market. The commencements of Australian cinema were complicated. As was the case of other national industries, the Australian film industry had to compete with the almighty American market and resign itself to occupying a rather underdeveloped and marginal position with respect to it. E.G. Whitlam marks the years between the two World Wars as the weakest period of national production; although there was a quantitative peak in 1911, when 51 Australian feature films were produced, in 1913 the local production suffered another decline from which it did not recover until the late 1960s (in Murray 1994: 1). During this 50-year period, almost no national feature films were produced and Hollywood and British products covered the empty space. The national market was especially damaged by the arrival of the Hollywood talkies —e.g. *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927), the 'brain-drain' of Australian actors and technicians, the birth of commercial radio in the 20s and the introduction of TV in the 1950s. Hollywood's influence continued during the 1940s and 1950s; as a matter of fact, Charles Chauvel's films were the only indigenous productions made in that decade by the Australian film industry (Matthews 1984: 6-7). At the end of the 1960s, the unfavourable situation that the national film industry was undergoing, made the Australians aware of the need to awaken and encourage the Australian national market. As Sue Matthews explains, during the 1970s there was a re-examination of the nation's

extreme dependence on the so-called 'mother country' in almost every cultural aspect. Out of a sense of patriotic duty that Australia should concern itself with international recognition and its own self-respect, and after 18 years of conservative rule by Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, the Liberal Prime Minister John Gorton established the Australian Film Development Corporation in 1970 "to promote all aspects of art in Australia as well as the birth of the new film industry" (1984: 2-3). With the help of government funding, a new creative phase in Australian filmmaking started in the early 1970s. The 'New Wave' Australian films of this period set out to provide audiences (both local and foreign) with a new sense of national identity.[5] The encouragement of an indigenous cinema implied, as Whitlam suggests, the rebirth and reinforcement of national pride and self-confidence in a country until then silenced both in foreign and domestic policies (in Murray 1994: 3). Australia was thus reclaiming its voice, its independence from the metropolis, and cinema seemed to be one of the best vehicles to demonstrate its distinctiveness, to Australians and to the rest of the world.

The national filmic trend in Australia changed direction at the end of the 1980s. As Rayner explains, the Australian government established in 1988 the so-called Film Finance Corporation (FFC) in an attempt to make local productions profitable. This new support to the national film industry was however conditioned by the criteria of popular and commercial success, both within and outside national frontiers (2000: 131-132). The AFFC was also conscious that, in order to achieve this popularity, a re-orientation in the perception of the country was needed. As a result, the cinema of the 1990s obliterated the monolithic version of 'Australianness' characteristic of the first years of the revival, and centred instead on the multicultural reality of the country. Consequently, most 1990s films reflected the diversity and plurality of Australian society, demonstrating that minorities also had their place in the country and that they could be represented too.

In the early 1990s, three films in particular were noteworthy for the impact they had both on Australian and foreign audiences: *Strictly Ballroom* (Baz Luhrmann, 1992), *Muriel's Wedding* (P.J Hogan, 1994) and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliott, 1994). The three of them may be seen as inaugurating a new commercial and aesthetic Australian style. Some critics (Quinn 1994-5, Craven 1999) agreed that fantasy was one of the main features that these films presented both in their narratives and visual forms. They were "young, funky and irreverent films" (Quinn 1994-5: 23) whereby a different and challenging attitude towards questions of identity and nationhood was clearly favoured.

Nevertheless, what was clearly distinctive of these productions with respect to the local cinema of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was, over and above everything else,

the new type of 'Australianness' they endorsed. Generally speaking, these films presented characters who, for one reason or another, did not fit into the dominant Australian pattern but rather challenged it, thus revealing an ideology that these and other Australian films of the 1990s, such as *Proof* (Jocelyn Moorhouse, 1991), *Bad Boy Bubby* (Rolf de Heer, 1994) or *The Sum of Us* (Geoff Burton and Kevin Dowling, 1994), wanted to convey. Not only did they emphasise the individual and his/her individuality and personal concerns but, above all, they disclosed the existence and relevance of alternative Australian identities and the need to celebrate the diversity of the nation.

Strictly Ballroom's plot centres around Scott (Paul Mercurio), a young dancer who dreams of winning the Australian Pan Pacifics ballroom dance competition with the performance of his own creative steps. The film thus portrays the protagonist's personal and artistic rebellion against the repressive prescriptions of the Australian Dance Federation and, metaphorically, his inner search for freedom both in the public and the domestic spheres of his life. Aware of the on-going re-definition of Australia as a fresh, plural and multicultural country, the film relies on the potential of a new participant —the Spanish community, whose presence not only satisfies the popular expectations of the 1990s, but also envisions the phenomenon of diasporic communities within Australia and the integrity of the various ethnic groups within the country.

The film's approach to the non-Australian community in general and the Spanish girl (Francisca) does not come to terms satisfactorily with Francisca's marginalised status, as a woman and as a member of an ethnic minority. Such inadequacies can be perceived, not only in the film itself, but also in the filmmaker's own words, as expressed just after the release of *Strictly Ballroom* in 1992. Asked in an interview about the main features of the film, Baz Luhrmann affirmed then that its "telling" style, together with the use of a particular narrative structure, should be identified as the key elements (Taylor 1992:8). No doubt, Luhrmann's personal style, based on the use of bright distinct colours and fast-pace editing, became one of his most personal distinguishing marks and one of the reasons why, not only this film, but also his more recent features such as *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and, above all, *Moulin Rouge* (2001) became so successful. In *Strictly Ballroom*, nevertheless, the novelty of Luhrmann's technique is undermined by the conventionality and formulaic character of the story, which retells the classical myth of "a[n] outsider trying to overcome a repressive regime" (Taylor 1992: 8). As is expected, the male protagonist will achieve his objective, but only with the help of Francisca (Tara Morice), the Spanish immigrant girl displaced to the margins of Australian society. However, not a single word is devoted to this character in the above-mentioned interview, even though she plays a co-leading role of substantial importance for the development and resolution of the film's main conflicts. No direct allusion is made

to the topic of ethnicity either. The purpose of this paper is accordingly to fill the gap in Luhrmann's interview and emphasise the relevance of such a character, analysing the meanings of the sexual/ethnic minority it represents in order to demonstrate the ambivalent treatment that the film offers of such social variables. The point of departure of my analysis will be the fact that, despite the utopian multicultural ending that the film celebrates, *Strictly Ballroom* ends up by exclusively supporting the dominant ideology of the country where the narrative is set, that is, by enhancing over and above everything else the English and Irish white male values that have traditionally defined the 'national type' of Australian culture (Schaffer 1990: 12, 20).

The character of Fran represents difference with respect to the official 'unmarked' Australian male protagonist; she is 'marked' both sexually and ethnically, and therefore stands for a discordant position that destabilises and threatens the site of the male protagonist and, to a large extent, that of the official Australian discourse, based on the aforementioned 'white-heterosexual-male' axis. It is true that one of the basic sexual restrictions she has to endure comes precisely from her own community, and most specifically from her father Rico (Antonio Vargas), constructed under Latino male stereotyped parameters of chauvinism, male violence and strict parenting. Significantly enough though, she will be able to 'escape' this oppressive environment, but only thanks to the masculine 'protection' of yet another male character, Scott, who eventually convinces Rico of his good intentions regarding Fran. As a matter of fact, the basic structural element around which the film develops elevates once and again hegemonic masculinity as its defining feature. Ballroom dancing reaffirms the position of man as leader with the maxim, as the character Liz Holt (Gia Carides) explains at one point in the film, "where the man goes the lady must follow". It thus privileges male initiative and centrality with respect to the female partner, who is relegated to a secondary level under the man's guidance. Fran's commitment to following Scott's steps and his innovative way of dancing —"I wanna dance with you, *your way*" (emphasis added)— consequently reinforces the male character's superior position, not only within the narrative, but also within the dominant Australian discourse that favours male values.

It is nonetheless Fran's ethnicity in particular that opens up the debate with respect to the way in which such a topic is addressed in Luhrmann's film. The inter-ethnic relationship established between Scott and Fran does not apparently constitute a problem in itself; the film tries to persuade the audience that Fran is not rejected by Scott's family because of her different nationality, but because she is not the dance partner he needs. In this sense, one of Fran's most important signs of authenticity, i.e. her ethnic identity, is clearly underestimated and, above all, misrepresented, thus proving what Shohat and Stam affirm when they say that

issues of race and ethnicity are, in films, as in real life, "submerged" (1994: 220). In this connection, David Callahan also notes that, precisely within the context of Australian films, "'obviously' ethnic characters often exist uneasily on the edge of their ethnicity" (in Craven 2001: 96). The representation of ethnic conflicts on the screen thus tends to be vague and diffuse or, what is even worse, repressed. Consequently, by camouflaging inter-ethnic frictions beneath the plot's main surface and avoiding any explicit reference to conflict, the film places itself within a secure territory that ensures and reinforces its privileged position within power structures.

Fran's position as an alienated and diasporic subject is nonetheless emphasised both formally and narratively: she is literally pushed into the fringes of Australian society, inhabiting a poor and filthy house beside the rail tracks where she lives a life of Spanish customs and traditions. In her effort to get integrated within the local community, she attends lessons at the Hastings dance academy. Nevertheless, unable to make herself noticeable among the rest of the dancers, Fran remains relegated to the everlasting "beginner" category where she must resign herself to dancing alone. Scott's remark, "a beginner has no right to approach an Open Amateur" after Fran's insistence on being his dance partner underlines the position she occupies as marginalised subject, and re-writes Spanish presence in terms of the unknown 'Other' that threatens the Australian official order. Accordingly, Fran reproaches Scott for his refusal to accept her as a partner: "You're just really *scared*! You are scared to give someone new a go because they might be better than you are! Vivir con miedo es como vivir a medias!" (emphasis added). These words reveal the hidden fears of the white Anglo-Saxon Australian male when faced with something or someone he does not entirely comprehend or, as Bhabha puts it,

> the image of post-Enlightment man tethered to, not confronted by, his dark reflection, the shadow of colonised [wo]man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries, repeats his actions at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being. (1994: 44)

Fran's interest in contributing with her own steps is perceived by Scott as a perilous audacity for, seeing in her the 'mimic woman' who is at once resemblance and menace, "white but not quite" (Young 1990: 147-148), he dreads the collapse of the values he stands for. Fran not only follows and repeats Scott's movements, but introduces as well a Spanish initiative through her dance. In the process, the masculine and national Australian 'essence' becomes hybridised and its authority, challenged. The artistic couple that both protagonists constitute is therefore re-read as a dangerous sexual and inter-ethnic union, which provokes new fears and anxieties in the rest of the local community. This is the reason why Francisca cannot be the appropriate suitor, and must therefore be replaced by a less menacing

partner. Tina Sparkle (Sonia Kruger), with the white blonde Australian beauty her very surname implies, appears to be the perfect partner for Scott, since she is willing, as orthodox ballroom dancing requires, to merely follow and accept the man's guidance.

However, the passionate power inherent in Spanish music and the energy *flamenco* transmits to the tedious Australian dancing style makes Scott discover that it is precisely Fran's difference that attracts him and, consequently, he ends up by choosing her as his dance partner. Spanish dance is perceived by the male character as fresh, original, unconventional and, above all, liberating. *Flamenco* therefore represents the sort of freedom Scott dreams of and, Fran, the means to achieve it.

As a matter of fact, music plays an important function in *Strictly Ballroom*. Yet, it is surprising that within the eclecticism that, according to Luhrmann, distinguishes the film's soundtrack, there is no allusion at all to any of the Spanish or Latin styles that proliferate in the narrative (Taylor 1992: 9). *Rumba, samba, cha-cha-cha, tango*, and *paso doble* are, to mention but a few, compulsory dances of the Australian Ballroom competition, and some of the styles Scott must perform in order to succeed. Moreover, Latin and Spanish rhythms determine some of the most important moments of the film, since they contribute to the instigation and evolution of most of the attitudes of the characters. To give an example, Scott's decision to exhibit for the first time his 'eccentric' and personal way of dancing takes place only after hearing *Samba* tunes on the ballroom's loudspeakers at the Southern District's Waratah Championship. At the same time, the type of music employed can be very telling as regards the kind of message the narrative intends to communicate at any given moment. Thus, the rhythm that can be heard when Scott performs his sinful solo conjures up notions of freedom, individuality and movement. The kettledrum sounds inevitably remind the spectator of Aboriginal tribal rhythms, that is, of the colonial 'other', thus allowing for yet another interpretation of the music in binary terms that alludes both to its threatening and appealing nature. On the one hand, this new rhythm represents Scott's progress towards the menacing unknown: his decision to perform his own steps is a dangerous adventure (as is his choice of Spanish Francisca), since it may entail his elimination from the official competition. On the other hand, he cannot help feeling strongly attracted towards the difference and 'uncanniness' of his own new style.

As was said before, the Spanish musical and artistic tradition becomes fully represented by the world of *flamenco* _called *paso doble* in the film. *Strictly Ballroom* thus resorts to the stereotyped images which, for many decades, characterised Spain abroad. As José Álvarez Junco observes, during the mid-nineteenth century Andalusian images and references such as bullfighting or flamenco made Spain

fashionable for travellers (1996: 95). Later on, as Laura Kumin explains, "*flamenco* was used by the Franco regime to promote an image of Spain associated with bullfights, wine, sun and sand" (1999: 300). *Strictly Ballroom* 'obscures' this happy and luminous scenery and presents instead a dark atmosphere where things associated with the Spanish world are once and again perceived in negative terms. Intimidating *flamenco* guitar notes are played every time the camera frames Fran's house, thus making the spectator aware of the danger that the Spanish community represents. Similarly, the same notes are associated with Australian characters that represent a menace for the male protagonist, as is the case of Barry Fife (Bill Hunter), the president of the Australian Dance Federation. However, Spanish art is at times conceived in positive terms as well. *Flamenco* denotes passion, authenticity and individual temperament, attitudes of fundamental importance since they help the Australian protagonist to re-affirm his own 'identity'. Lacking much of the Spanish 'true spirit', Scott learns from Fran's *yaya* (Armonia Benedito) the need to 'feel the rhythm' from the very heart, and assimilate "the dichotomy of the flamenco essence, as eloquent an expression of intense sorrow as it is of uncomplicated, sheer love of life and joy" (Kumin 1999: 298). As a result, Spanish characters contribute in an efficient way to the formation and development of Scott's personality; in more practical terms, they make the Australian male protagonist's eventual triumph possible.

Spanish culture thus represents that without which the Australian 'I' cannot be possibly defined. The film seems to become stylistically aware of this and strives to demonstrate it by centring on whatever is related to Spanishness. The closure of the film is the clearest example, since it openly celebrates social harmony between different ethnic groups, thus doing away with former conflicts and supremacist intentions on the part of some Australian characters. The scenes preceding the film's climax concentrate, in a rather unnatural way, on specific motifs that somehow 'guide' Scott in his future election of a female partner. Thus, the overture from *Carmen*, together with flashes of shots where a dancer puts a *toreador* jacket on or where a white boy is playing with an Aboriginal girl are obvious narrative mechanisms that necessarily point to the final union of the inter-ethnic couple.

The performance of the last number at the Pan Pacific's final links Scott and Fran in a final union that apparently implies, as O'Regan says, a multicultural resolution where "the worlds of the Spanish migrant and the older Australian [are] brought together" (1996: 319). For O'Regan, the film seems to advocate tolerance and respect for different ethnicities, while at the same time openly celebrating the inter-ethnic romance of the protagonists. However the latter ingredient contradicts in a way the traditional conventions of contemporary Australian cinema, which rarely explores heterosexual relationships. As Debi Enker explains, "Australian cinema seems sceptical about the capacity of love, and particularly passion, to endure. And

even when it flickers for a while, it generally dies" (1994: 220). The explanation for such a celebratory and romantic ending may lie, once more, in the film's insistence on concealing colonialist viewpoints under 'politically correct' discourses. In my opinion, differing from O'Regan's view, *Strictly Ballroom*'s ending must not be understood as the exaltation of ethnic integration, but rather in terms of support and promotion of nationalist Australian ideas. On the whole, the film clearly advocates the white Australian man as the supreme figure who dominates over gender and ethnic minorities, and Scott Hastings appears as the only 'winner' of this artistic and cultural competition. The perception of Fran as an equal victor is wrong, since her only function throughout the film has been that of contributing to Scott's eventual triumph at the Pan Pacific's final. Her flamenco steps provide him with the self-assertive enthusiasm he formerly lacked. Now, he reappears on the dance floor, stronger and determined, willing to let everybody know that he is the best. Fran consequently constitutes a mere instrument at the service of Australian official values, for she remains on the fringes of the narrative and nobody knows for sure whether she is finally welcomed into the local community or not. Scott thus benefits from Spanish music, steps, gestures, clothes and spirit in what could be considered to be a cultural appropriation of the 'Other' since, as bell hooks explains, "it is by eating the Other that one asserts power and privilege" (1992: 36). Scott does not simply 'appreciate' the positive values of Fran's culture but makes it his, thus showing his capacity to master and conquer, not only the world of ballroom dancing, but the world of the Spanish 'other' as well.

Scott finally learns that he must not live in fear but stick to his dreams. Once resolved to do so, and disregarding official ballroom norms, he performs the last *paso-doble* triumphally, receiving the eventual acknowledgement of both Australian and Spanish audiences. More importantly, this triumph unveils in a way the truth about his parents' past, brings them together once again, and makes Scott's father re-emerge from a subjugated and silenced past. Since family conflicts are finally resolved and openly displayed and celebrated, the film demonstrates again that Scott and Scott's story are its exclusive concerns. The film's closure can be consequently regarded as a 'happy ending' only as far as Australian official values are refurbished and reinforced, while non-Australian ones are left aside.

The social, cultural and political changes in Australia during the 1990s showed the need for an immediate re-definition of official assumptions of race, class, ethnicity and gender discourses. Some decades before, the need to find an appropriate way to express the local cultural values and to promote matters concerned with national identity had led arts in general and the Australian film industry in particular to make a substantial revision of the forms and contents of its existing policy. The result was the commercialisation of 'official' representations of the country through different features, which conveyed a rather stereotyped image of Australia, and which were

111

perceived as cultural flagships of the nation. Although the filmic scene that emerged in the 1990s saw a continuation of these national-encouragement mechanisms, several transformations affected the novel productions that started to fill the Australian cinemas by that time. The diversity that now characterised the country had to be apprehended, and Australian cinema tried to reflect this new situation on screen. As O'Regan explains, "a national cinema is obliged to enact, express and represent the *national lifeways and aspirations* of people in Australia" (1996: 176, emphasis added). Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom* undoubtedly accomodates to the new situation —which tacitly recognises the weight that minorities have— by incorporating a non-Australian woman as the partner of the central male character. Nevertheless, the happy ending vanishes the moment we remove the superficial layer that the 'official' and 'culturally appropriate' narrative constitutes and discover the subtly hidden agenda which places non-Australian characters as second-class citizens. As was said before, the film essentially focuses on the Australian storyline while the Spanish one is 'marketed' as a mere instrument for the local male protagonist to triumph. Spanish art is conceived in terms of commodification, since *flamenco* appears as fashionable and profit-making precisely in an age where 'lo latino' seems to be all the rage. In this sense, it could be questioned up to what point *Strictly Ballroom*, as a 1990s film, constitutes an actual departure from traditional older Anglo-Australian discourses. Although the film does go beyond the 'local', the Spanish ethnic minority in Luhrmann's movie emerges as a sort of valuable mechanism which reassures the popularity of the film, not only among a white Australia attracted by the Spanish joyful spirit, but also among those on the fringe who see themselves represented in a mainstream Australian production, something that, until the 90s, one could have never imagined.

Notes

2. The Bicentenary commemorates the 200th anniversary of permanent European settlement in Australia. It marks the events of 26 January 1788, when the eleven ships of Captain Arthur Phillip's First Fleet arrived from Britain and gathered in Port Jackson to found the colony of New South Wales (2001: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/ABS@.nsf/947 13ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/9ce698f1be8 1bcb7ca2569de0025c18d!OpenDocument).

3. As far as gender issues are concerned, Australian culture has traditionally been constructed as an essentially masculine one. One of the formulated discourses that has definitely contributed to the creation of the Australian myth has been that of hegemonic masculinity. Within this domain, woman has generally been relegated to a marginalised

position where she has been given neither place nor voice. She has been excluded as subject of representation, and has been instead spoken for to the point of becoming, as Schaffer puts it, "the colonised sex" (1990: 8) in a predominantly phallocentric culture. Accordingly, official discourses based on ideals such as masculinity and mateship have traditionally placed the white, heterosexual man of Anglo-Irish origin as the Australian type *par excellence.*

⁴. The starting point of Australian cinema is usually located at the end of the 19ᵗʰ century. The well-known *Cahiers* critic Serge Grünberg affirms that the first fiction film to be made in the whole history of cinema was precisely an 1899 Australian film, directed by Joseph Henry Perry and entitled *Soldiers of The Cross* (1994-5: 27). Jonathan Rayner, however, points out that this production was a mere combination of filmed reconstructions, and that the first narrative feature film of considerable length was *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906), also an Australian production by Charles Tait (2000: 3-8).

⁵. One of the emblematic symbols that came to fully epitomise this domain was the landscape. As Gibson says, "in trying to differentiate itself from the Old World, Australian society began to define itself with essentialist myths of land" (in Murray 1994: 52).The main reason for the dominant role ascribed to the male character lies precisely in the special relationship that he maintains with this *leitmotiv* of the Australian tradition. Much of the Australian myth responds to the male desire to control and possess an alien land to reaffirm his position as master and conqueror. Meanwhile, the western conception of the land as something female (the so-called 'mother earth'), places woman both outside and within the Australian bush tradition. As Schaffer indicates, she functions as a metaphoric sign for the Australian landscape: being the fetishist 'Other', the land-as-woman is represented as the negative component that man must appropriate in order to re-assert his identity. She is, in Schaffer's words, the "harsh, cruel, threatening, fickle, castrating mother. She is dangerous, non-nurturing and not to be trusted" (1990: 62).

113

Works cited

Álvarez Junco, José. 1996. "The Nation-Building Process in Nineteenth-Century Spain". In Marmolinero, C. and A. Smith. (eds.). *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula: Competing and Conflicting Identities*. Oxford: Berg: 89-106.

Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Callahan, David. 2001. "His Natural Whiteness: Modes of Ethnic Presence and Absence in Some Recent Australian Films". In Craven, Ian (ed.). *Australian Cinema in the 1990s*. London and Portland, Or: Frank Cass: 95-114.

Enker, Debi. 1994. "Australia and Australians". In Murray, Scott. (ed.).: 211-225.

Gibson, Ross. 1994. "Formative Landscapes". In Murray, Scott. (ed.).: 45-61.

hooks, bell. 1992. *Black Looks. Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press.

Kumin, Laura. 1999. "To Live is to Dance". In Thatcher Gies, David. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. New York: Cambridge U. P.: 298-309.

Matthews, Sue. 1984. *35 mm Dreams. Conversations with Five Directors about the Australian Film Revival.* Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books.

Murray, Scott. (ed.). 1994. *Australian Cinema*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

O'REGAN, Tom. 1996. *Australian National Cinema*. London and New York: Routledge.

QUINN, Karl. 1994-5. "Drag, Dags and The Suburban Surreal". *Metro Magazine* 100: 23-26.

RAYNER, Jonathan. 2000. *Contemporary Australian Cinema*. Manchester and New York: Manchester U. P.

SCHAFFER, Kay. 1990. *Women and the Bush. Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.

SHOHAT, Ella and Robert STAM. 1994. *Unthinking Eurocentrism. Multiculturalism and the Media.* London and New York: Routledge.

TAYLOR, Ronnie. 1992. "Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom*". *Cinema Papers* 88: 8-10.

WHITLAM, E.G. 1994. "Introduction". In Murray, Scott. (ed.).: 1-5.

YOUNG, Robert J.C. 1990. *White Mythologies. Writing History and the West*. London: Routledge.

Websites

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/ABS@.nsf/94713ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/9ce698f1be81bcb7ca2569de0025c18d!OpenDocument (retrieved 25/01/2001).

A COMPANION TO HEMINGWAY'S *DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON*

Miriam B. Mandel (ed.)
Rochester, NY and Suffolk, UK: Camden House, 2004.
(by Micaela Muñoz Calvo. Universidad de Zaragoza)

Hemingway's fiction has been the subject of several collections of scholarly essays, but the study of his nonfiction has been neglected by most Hemingway scholars. A major contribution to filling that gap is now offered in this book published by Camden House. One of the factors that makes this *Companion* especially valuable and rare is that it is the first specialist book to examine in very close detail the narrative complexities of Hemingway's nonfiction as exemplified in his 1932 long narrative text *Death in the Afternoon (DIA)*. *Death in the Afternoon* is Hemingway's longest nonfiction narrative and the one that took him longest to produce, about ten years. It is a complex and intriguing 518 page long book in which Hemingway mixes genres and offers a complicated array of themes and techniques. It is set up in seven sections, the first section –278 pages long– is divided into twenty chapters which have been considered the main body of the *DIA* text and a treatise on Spanish bullfighting. For some of his most assiduous readers it is also the best non-Spanish contemporary writing on the bullfight. For instance, Carlos Baker said about *Death in the Afternoon* (1973:143): "It was primarily a Baedeker of the bullfight, and it sought to do in graphic prose something like what Goya's "Tauromaquia" had achieved on canvas".

The remaining sections are devoted to a glossary of bullfight terms and several appendices including a profile of the American matador Sidney Franklin, a section of illustrations, an appendix that describes diverse viewers' reactions to the bullfight,

a calendar of bullfights throughout the world, and a Bibliographical note. It is these latter sections that have been mostly overlooked by all critics, who have tended to view them as secondary irrelevant elements within a marginal kind of text, non-fiction, within the Hemingway mainstream fiction production. *Death in the Afternoon* is a great deal more than that. It is certainly a book on the Spanish bullfight and about bullfighting, but it is also Hemingway's first authorial public expression of his views on a host of canonical writers and their work as well as on the craft of writing. It may also be considered to be a guidebook to the traditional culture of Spain, a text in which Ernest Hemingway gives expression to what he had learned about Spain and in which he shows and declares his love for Spain and its culture, especially as expressed in the art of bullfighting. The universality of Hemingway's interpretation of the worlds of fact and fiction through the bullfight text gives *Death in the Afternoon* the standing of a great manifesto.

It is very significant that, in 1925, Hemingway wrote to his friend Fitzgerald about Spain telling him that "his idea of heaven would be a big bullring in which he owned two barrera seats, with a troutstream outside that no one else was allowed to fish" (Carlos Baker, 1973: 143). When John Dos Passos read some of the typescript, before the book was published, he said (1973: 402-403): "the volume is hellishly good […] and the language is so magnificently used".

The twelve original essays collected here by Miriam B. Mandel, the editor –who also writes an illuminating Introduction to the volume, provide a thorough, well-balanced study of a complex, groundbreaking, and hitherto overlooked text. The authors approach this work of nonfiction from a wide and complementary array of theoretical perspectives, by engaging the earlier work, applying a variety of theoretical models and providing new and fresh insights into all sections of this complex Hemingway text. The essays in this *Companion* prove that Hemingway communicated to his readers through every detail, textual and paratextual, through semantic presences and absences. The different contributions help present-day readers to uncover the submerged seven-eighths of the iceberg-text that Hemingway omitted from the linguistic surface, to get the full depth of Hemingway's work. They demonstrate what Hemingway said in 1958, three years before his death, in an interview with George Plimpton published in *Paris Review*:

> I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven eighths of it under water for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show. If a writer omits something because he does not know it then there is a hole in the story. (Plimpton, 1974: 35)

Death in the Afternoon is precisely the book where Hemingway explicitly defines his "iceberg" theory of writing, which involves leaving out of the surface text much of what you know, and stripping away inessentials. The *Companion* begins its

critical and textual analysis by examining *Death in the Afternoon*'s composition, backgrounds and sources. Robert W. Trodgon analyses meticulously the long and various processes of the composition and publication of *Death in the Afternoon,* taking as a basis the Hemingway-Perkins and Hemingway-Dos Passos correspondence and the Scribner's Archive. Trodgon focuses on Hemingway's writing and revisions of the book, schedules for completion and delays in its delivery to his editor, Maxwell Perkins. He traces the editing of the book: format problems (the page size of the book, the number of illustrations, and the way in which they would be reproduced); the great number of emendations made in galley proofs after his extensive revisions (some modifications were substantive, some changes made the prose more accurate and graceful, others were just emendations of punctuation and spelling in the text; the issue of obscene words printed in full whose use was literally illegal). He offers a close description of the extensive advertising campaign for the promotion of the book and he also studies the critical reception (nearly all the reviewers liked the style, the reviews on the whole can be described as good, though not overwhelmingly positive) and the fall in book sales that greatly disappointed Hemingway and Perkins.

The next three articles discuss the influences and sources (both acknowledged and unacknowledged) that can be identified in *Death in the Afternoon.* Lisa Tyler, Linda Wagner-Smith and Miriam B. Mandel take us through the literature on the topic, through the Hemingway critics who pointed out that Hemingway liked to work intertextually, even if he tried to disguise or deny the parent texts, distancing himself or attacking any artist to whom he was or might be compared, minimising and concealing the influence of his vast reading in *DIA.* Lisa Tyler demonstrates with examples taken from *Don Juan* how heavily indebted to Lord Byron *Death in the Afternoon* is. Though unacknowledged by Hemingway, the presence of the nineteenth-century English poet is everywhere in the book. As Tyler says: "It does seem that the more Hemingway was indebted to a writer, the more likely he was to obscure his sources" (2004:43). She builds on the previous work of scholars (Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes, Richard K. Peterson, Mark Spilka, Steven M. Lane, Robert Paul Lamb, Manning, Edward John Trelawny, Carlos Baker, Warren, Grosskurth), critics like Clifton Fadiman who branded Hemingway "An American Byron" and biographers like Jeffrey Meyers, Michael Reynolds –who suggested that Byron was a personal role model for Hemingway, Peter Griffin –who said that Hemingway was fascinated by Byron, all of whom have detected the byronic influence in Hemingway's career. Through her erudite study Lisa Tyler leads us to see the importance of Hemingway's reading to his writing and his use of literary sources. She highlights the parallels and resemblances between the works of these two writers: in terms of tone, of the so-called Hemingway code, of the list of similarities and critical comments regarding Byron's work that apply equally well

to Hemingway's –both authors indulge in metatextual commentary and attack contemporary writers, of the resemblance between the structures of their work and character, both men sharing excessive moodiness and volatility "which now probably [would] be diagnosed as bipolar affective disorder (manic depression)" (2004: 54).

Linda Wagner-Martin centres on Gertrude Stein, the female twentieth-century American prose stylist and Hemingway mentor in his Paris years, who makes her appearance on the first page of *Death in the Afternoon* but whose name never appears again, even though we know of her presence in the later sections of *DIA*, which attack and scorn her. Wagner-Martin analyses the various layers to Hemingway's treatment of the Stein figure in this book. She takes us through the different chapters of *DIA* pointing out where the presence of Gertrude Stein is, giving insights of Hemingway's work and detecting Stein's influence on his art, showing us how critics continually linked Hemingway with Gertrude Stein and how the discourse of this book is the discourse of pupil to mentor. Hemingway always repudiated any suggestion of literary indebtedness to Gertrude Stein, but he was considered one of her "chief pupils" (Harold Acton, 1948) when he dropped in to talk literature at Stein's apartment in the rue de Fleurus. They had met in 1922 in Paris and they were friends at that time, when he considered her a warm and affectionate friend. Wagner-Martin reveals that the role Hemingway created for Gertrude Stein, while insulting her by relegating her to the category of the unidentified Old Lady, is an angry answer to Stein's criticisms of Hemingway as a writer and of his writing, which he had taken as insults. The *Companion* author shows how the craft of writing is the subtext of the writer's antagonism toward the Old lady, who in *DIA* has been made into a docile pupil, ready to learn attentively from anything author-Hemingway cared to say. Wagner-Martin considers that it is not surprising that "once Stein had read Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, there would be no turning back into even a tentative friendship" (2004:62).

Miriam B. Mandel offers a detailed bibliographical essay which will serve as a useful reference source to scholars and students interested in the bullfight from their various areas of interest like, for instance, folklore studies, transcultural studies, translation studies and travel writing. The author explains how *Death in the Afternoon* constitutes a major advance in the English-language literature of bullfighting and how it still dominates the subsequent literature on the subject, and she attributes the success of the book, which has been translated into eight languages, to the readers' interest in learning about the Spanish bullfight, Hemingway, his art, his crafted style, his literary tenets, his way of approaching the composition process, his strained relationship with other authors, or other matters pertaining to his position as a man of letters. This essay presents two parallel bibliographies that, taking the date of the publication of *Death in the Afternoon* as their cut-off point, offer a wealth of reference materials within the extensive

literature on bullfighting in Spain. The first bibliography lists the many literary and non-literary English-language contributions on Spain and the bullfight that preceded the publication of *Death in the Afternoon* in 1932, and identifies those publications that Hemingway owned by marking them with an asterisk. This list will help researchers interested in related issues to perceive the state of affairs regarding the relevant literary and cultural backgrounds over the last four centuries. The second bibliographical list catalogues Hemingway's ample and updated pre-1932 reading on those topics and it contains journal, newspaper and book entries in Spanish, French and English. Miriam B. Mandel talks of Hemingway's habit of researching his topics carefully. She takes us through the literature Hemingway owned or is known to have read on Spain and the bullfight, a wide selection of old and contemporary books. Mandel highlights that Hemingway's pre-1932 Spanish-language taurine library was "orthodox, scholarly, and remarkably complete" and that he also owned several books of and about taurine drawings and illustrations. She states how scholarly discussion of the influence of all this reading on the writing of *Death in the Afternoon* has barely begun and how a critical study of the particular readings that produced this book remains to be done.

The next five essays address cultural translation, cultural criticism, textual semiotics, and paratextual matters. They focus on the unusual content and form of *Death in the Afternoon*. Peter Messent deals with intercultural transfer matters and with the pecularity of the process of cultural translation. He focuses on Hemingway's role of "translator" who gives us his version of bullfighting, of the way in which the bullfight stands as a ritual at the very heart of Spanish culture. Messent explains how Hemingway's knowledge of Spain and his cultural identification with Spain let him give a less than idealised version of Spain, the foreign culture he describes from an insider perspective, and let Hemingway straddle cultural boundaries and barriers in *Death in the Afternoon,* and understand the *essence* of the "art" and its culture. Hemingway thus acts as a mediator, a translator of cultures, because he is both an outsider, an American English-speaking tourist, judging between cultures, and at the same time very much of an insider, native-like, who understands Spanish life, language and rituals. I think that what Messent says about Hemingway's role as a translator of cultures –explicitly confirmed by Hemingway's inclusion of the "Explanatory Glossary" as an appendix to *DIA*– is reflected in what Komissarov has also recently said about translation:

> Translation from culture to culture means, first and foremost, to bring to the receptors new facts and ideas inherent in the source language culture, to broaden their cultural horizons, to make them aware that other people may have different customs, symbols and beliefs, that other cultures should be known and respected. This cultural and educational role of translation cannot be too much emphasized. (Komissarov 1991: 46)

Messent confirms what Komissarov said, when he states that Hemingway "operates as much as an anthropologist as anything else, explaining a pre-modern society and its rituals to his American audience" (2004:124), and that his book serves "to translate the rituals of one culture for another" (2004:126). He analyses the way in which Hemingway measures Spain against America and its modernised culture throughout *DIA*, the process of cultural comparison and contrast which lies at the heart of his writing project and helps to explain the particular version of Spain that he gives through his particular vision.

Beatriz Penas, a semiotician and a scholar whose doctoral dissertation already explored the semiotics of the bullfight and the taurine aspects of Ernest Hemingway's literature, takes us through the various readings, cultural and allegorical, of *Death in the Afternoon*. She provides very carefully crafted insights into the symbolic value of the different elements of the bullfight within Spanish culture. She then explains Hemingway's allegorical reading of the bullfight in relation to the art of writing, depicting and highlighting the net of abstractions and essential matters which have always permeated Hemingway's vision of life and art and which are present in the book as central concerns: the meaning of life and death, the desire for permanence, the role of art, and hence literature, in this respect. Beatriz Penas works through Hemingway's use of Spanish history and culture, which she finds embedded in the multilayered meanings of the bullfight, as a source of metaphors that are there for Hemingway to use when he reflects on modern imagist writing or when he seeks to enlighten his modern American-English readership by criticising modern America and enhancing their understanding of American history through taurine lenses. Penas highlights the performance aspects of *DIA*, the fact that in writing *DIA* Hemingway is striving to bring literature closer to the bullfight, a visual-image text and a wordless art. She also criticises Hemingway's use of the Spanish bullfight as a metaphor for the ideology and workings of power, as a representation of, for instance, the war between the sexes. Beatriz Penas takes us through the various meanings of Hemingway's literary iceberg metaphor and applies this powerful image to her analysis of *Death in the Afternoon*, which she describes as a "super iceberg-text" (2004:157): "the visible tip, the bullfight, occupies the central textual space; it is exhaustively spoken about in the first nineteen chapters. That tip is supported by Spain, which just manages to appear briefly above the water-line in Chapter 20. Spain's history and institutions […] are kept just below water-level […] And totally submerged below Spain and the historical, social, and philosophical complexities of the bullfight, we can find America and the American literary scene, unvoiced, and invisible but bearing most of the iceberg's weight".

Anthony Brand puts forward two approaches to the about four hundred photographs Hemingway collected for inclusion in *Death in the Afternoon*.

Hemingway originally intended to intersperse the visual materials taken from the archives of leading taurine photojournalists throughout the text and glossary, but finally they were grouped in a section. This important section of the book called "Illustrations" has been so far neglected by most critics. Brand's first original essay focuses on the content, complex organization and reading of the eighty-one illustrations that Hemingway finally chose for publication, after being forced by his editor to cut back on the photographs to make the book affordable. Brand meticulously explains how their content and complex organization reveal the methods and principles Hemingway employed in producing this very personal photographic section that constitutes a guide on how to look at the bull and at the bullfighter as well as the interaction between them, thus linking his writing about bullfighting with the juxtaposed pictures to make the image-text book more vivid and comprehensive. In a very interesting and detailed way he tells us how Hemingway chose the photographs carefully and organised them purposefully, not following traditional organization and not in chronological order, and how their captions expressed his opinions, his criticism on the bullfight and the bullfighters. The captions also reveal or comment on material not directly related to bullfighting and taurine life and culture but highly relevant to the comprehensive portrait of Spain that the text paints. Brand shows us how this photo-essay and the photo captions form an interesting personal subtext with a didactic purpose. Brand's second essay exhibits and analyses thirteen of the unpublished photographs of *Death in the Afternoon* to give the *Companion's* readers "a flavour of the decisions Hemingway made and of the visual "flashes" he had hoped to provide" (2004:190).

123

Nancy Bredendick offers an original essay in which she examines the paratexts of *Death in the Afternoon:* the title, the dust jacket, the frontispiece, the dedication, the table of contents and the "Bibliographical Note" –which she also considers *outside the text*. She analyses the way in which the paratexts relate to the text and how they mediate between book and reader while assuming great significance as they work hard to bring us close to a deeper understanding of the work. Bredendick leads us through the sophisticated and oblique use of paratexts that Hemingway adopts in order to give his reader clues as to how to interpret *DIA* –its being a bullfight manual should not prevent the reader from perceiving other aspects in *DIA* that characterise it as a a text of literary art: the poetic and linguistically indirect choice of title (which accurately defines the central concerns of the text and appeals both to feeling and sensation) is accompanied by visual imagery that alerts us to the poetic quality of the subject matter and becomes a kind of subtitle in the visual mode. In Bredendick's view, the jacket copy links the subject of the book, the author and the craft. The frontispiece presents bullfighting as a fine art, not as a mythic or flolkloristic rite, the portrait offers guidance to the

meaning of the work. The table of contents invites us to read the book for pleasure and for instruction. The "Explanatory Glossary" becomes a sort of mini-Spanish phrasebook or cultural guide that is a pleasure to read. The most arresting feature of the dustjacket is the oil painting by Roberto Domingo: *Toros*. The jacket illustration highlights images of aesthetic pleasure that will be picked up in the main body of the text. The outstanding quality of *DIA*'s paratextual material (the jacket illustration by Roberto Domingo, the photographs by leading photojournalists, the taurine bibliography and so on) sends us a signal of high taurine culture that indexically refers to high literature. Throughout her analysis of *DIA*'s paratexts, Nancy Bredendick shows great erudition and knowledge of the seven sections. Her critique of *Death in the Afternoon* likewise evidences that Hemingway's sound knowledge of existing bullfight literature very much helped him to shape his text.

The two following essays work through the issues of art, authorship, and audience. Hilary Justice discusses the issues of authorship (creative and professional writing) and publication (art production and reception), which she considers to be as central to the core interpretation of *DIA* as bullfighting is, and as applicable to bullfighting as it is to writing. She deals with *DIA*'s complex root analogy between the art and business of bullfighting and the art and business of writing. The business dimension of both literature and bullfighting can endanger both kinds of art and artist, making them susceptible to "decadence" in the sense of "decay". She also analyses in detail how Hemingway structures *DIA*'s chapters so as to underscore the similarities he perceived between the two art forms. Justice works through Hemingway's terminology: *artist* (generic term for a special group of élite bullfighters and writers); *art* (what both kinds of artist do); professional titles: *picador, banderillero, matador, author,* referring to the roles these artists play in bringing their art to the public. She leads us through the ambiguity in *DIA* of the term *author*: its susceptibility to multiple interpretations accounts for much of the difficulty of *Death in the Afternoon*. The term *author* may refer to Hemingway (the private man), Hemingway (the creative writer), also to the public roles the man/writer plays in relation to his work, or to the abstract character in *DIA* that is known only by the generic name "Author". Consequently, criticism of "Hemingway" (his writing) may transform into criticism of "Hemingway" (the person). Hemingway himself warned his readers not to mistake the author for the man, and, most emphatically, not to trust the judgement of any critic who cannot tell the difference. She discusses Hemingway's role as a professional writer (involved with the mechanism of art production and reception) that forms the subtext of the Author/Old lady dialogues and the relative values of the two roles (writer and author) within the process of art production.

Amy Vondrak focuses on Hemingway's treatment of two modernist artistic techniques, *collage* –taken from painting– and *montage* –from film-making.

124

Though more often employed by visual artists, Hemingway used these techniques in *Death in the Afternoon* to build a literary, emotional and coherent whole that would be more than the sum of its parts. Vondrak leads us through Hemingway's specific use of montage and collage and suggests that Hemingway had internalised the consequences of Einsteinian physics: the modern understanding of time and space makes time flexible and allows temporal-spatial sequence to be altered. Hemingway's use of montage breaks up the grid of time and place, allows textual playing with time and brings his work into a fourth dimension. She analyses the juxtaposed distribution of the visual elements in the dust jacket, the painting of the frontispiece, the captioned photographs and the main body of written text as characteristic of collage. Vondrak discloses as well the workings of montage, particularly of filmic montage, in *Death in the Afternoon*. Hemingway's fragmentation of form, his jumbling of times and mixing of genres is a literary version of montage-techniques which juxtaposes diverse styles and registers. The book carefully assembles journalism, short story, dramatic sketch, travel writing, parody, humour, biography, scientific description, and folklore study. She focuses on montage description throughout her analysis of *DIA*, but especially of Chapter 20, which she calls "the most clearly filmic section" in the book. This is *DIA*'s last chapter, where Hemingway describes Spain in a blending of time into space, in a chain of disconnected images without sequence or chronology that remain open to the reader's imaginary association.

The book's last essay deals with the literary legacy of *Death in the Afternoon*. Keneth Kinnamon reflects on the influence of *DIA* on modern American taurine writing and emphasises how quantitatively impressive the English bibliography on bullfighting has become since the publication of *Death in the Afternoon* in 1932. Kinnamon focuses on Norman Mailer and Barnaby Conrad, two American writers fascinated with Hemingway's life and personality who wrote "under the clearly discernible shadow of Ernest Hemingway in general and of *Death in the Afternoon* in particular" (2004: 283). Norman Mailer, a major figure in American literature for the last half century, was very much interested in the *corrida* at least for a brief period. On the other hand, Barnaby Conrad, a freelance writer who makes no pretence of literary depth, has made of the *corrida* a lifelong passion. Kinnamon discusses those literary works of Mailer's in which Hemingway's literary influence is evident either for his adoption of Hemingway's style and subject matter or for his truculence towards critics and fellow writers: *The Deer Park* (1955), a novel which deals with bullfighting; and *The Bullfight: A Photographic Narrative* (1967), a publication in which Mailer includes ninety-one photographs –he had planned to write *the* novel about bullfighting that would go with the photographs, but then he abandoned this part of the project. Kinnamon leads us through the productive and unusually varied writing career of Barnaby Conrad, a less well known author

125

who has written more on bullfighting than any other American or British writer, only Hemingway did it better: his production includes *The Innocent Villa* (1948), another novel, *Matador* (1952), and six nonfiction books: *La Fiesta Brava. The art of the Bull Ring* (1953) –profusely illustrated, *Gates of Fear* (1957), *The Death of Manolete* (1961), *Encyclopedia on Bullfighting* (1961), *How to Fight a Bull* (1968), and *Hemingway's Spain* (1989). According to Kinnamon, Conrad writes knowledgeably and well about both the action in the ring and the larger culture of *toreo* and has the experiential authority of one who has studied, fought, and been injured by bulls, although his style, though fluent and readable, is quite superficial. Throughout his essay, Kinnamon shows not only that he knows that Barnaby Conrad's work and love for Spain derive from Hemingway's writings, but he also shows his own love for Spain, for Hemingway's literature and for bullfighting. His final recommendation is that no aficionado should be without Cossío's *Los toros,* Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, and Conrad's *Encyclopedia of Bullfighting*.

The Works Cited by the different contributors to the present *Companion* to *Death in the Afternoon* are given in the closing section of the volume, and will be of great help to any one interested in continuing research. The biographical data and the nationalities of the contributors to the volume (Spanish, British, American, and Israeli) indicate that even though *Death in the Afternoon* seems to focus on a local form of art (bullfighting), this art form appeals to a wide variety of intellectual interests perhaps because it deals with matters of universal and timeless concern.

The *Companion* may not have been intended as a homage to Hemingway, but it has turned out to be so, even though its title, *A Companion to Hemingway's* Death in the Afternoon, is suggestive of 'a reference book'. The quality of the publication, the careful display of its paratexts, the hard-cover presentation of this publication encourage the reader to perceive the book as due homage to a neglected part of Ernest Hemingway's work, *Death in the Afternoon*, and as an acknowledgement of his love for Spain and the bullfight, which stems from his love for art and literature. The jacket design is an additional invitation to read the book. Juan Gris's painting *The Bullfighter* is used on the front dust jacket as an illustration of warm concern with biographical detail: *The Bullfighter* is a work of analytical cubism that Hemingway personally chose for his frontispiece at the time of original publication. It is significant that the editor, Miriam Mandel, has also chosen the same painting for this *Companion*. The eye-catching black-and-white back jacket design is in the tradition of taurine literature: it is a photograph of a bullfighter and bull facing each other in the bullring. Hence, this nicely printed, well-designed and meticulously referenced book constitutes a major and valuable contribution to Hemingway scholarship and will be an important and indispensable tool and reference for future research on Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*. From now on, *Death in the Afternoon* will no longer be considered a neglected part of the Hemingway canon.

Works cited

ACTON, Harold. 1948. *Memoirs of an Aesthete.* London: Methuen.

BAKER, Carlos. 1973. *Hemingway. The Writer as Artist*. Princeton: Princeton U. P.

DOS PASSOS, John. 1973. *The Fourteenth Chronicle: Letters and Diaries of John Dos Passos.* Ed. Townsend Ludington. Boston: Gambit.

KOMISSAROV, V.N. 1991. "Language and Culture in Translation: Competitors or Collaborators". *TTR,* IV(1): 33-47.

PLIMPTON, George. 1974. "An Interview with Ernest Hemingway". In Welshimer Wagner, Linda. (ed.). *Ernest Hemingway. Five Decades of Criticism*. East Lansing: Michigan State U. P.: 21-38.

THE ANGLO-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION NOVEL: WRITING FROM THE DIASPORA

Mª Lourdes López Ropero
San Vicente del Raspeig: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2004.
(by Bárbara Arizti. University of Zaragoza)[1]

María Lourdes López Ropero's monograph on Caribbean migratory movements and their impact on literature is a noteworthy contribution to the emerging field of diaspora studies. In the opinion of Edward Said, himself a diasporic intellectual, mobility and migration are the markers of our time. This human reality has found an echo in the critical world, particularly in the postcolonial area, where the word diaspora has become a potent critical concept. The different peoples that inhabit the Caribbean region have been affected by experiences of displacement of very varied nature. These include the expeditions of the colonisers, the coming of European settlers, the Middle Passage of African slaves and the more recent journeys to the ex-metropolis that characterised the second half of the twentieth century, to mention a few. López Ropero restricts the focus of her study to the effect of migration in the work of contemporary Anglo-Caribbean authors of African descent. The only exception is Indo-Trinidadian Samuel Selvon, who is included in the work on the grounds that "his upbringing was not particularly Indian" (37), and, perhaps more importantly, because he "considers himself mostly Trinidadian and Caribbean rather than aligning himself with a specific racial group" (37-38). Although perfectly understandable due to the vastness and the complexity of the field, López Ropero's decision to limit her focus precludes the fundamental contributions of authors such as V.S. Naipaul and Jean Rhys, traversed both by Caribbeanness and diaspora. Neither did the latter, incidentally, feel completely at home with her specific racial group, the white Creoles.

The book is divided into five main sections: an Introduction, three central chapters and the Conclusions. Chapter I maps post-war Caribbean migration to Britain and exemplifies it with reference to the London novels of Samuel Selvon and Caryl Phillips. Chapter II focuses on the Caribbean diaspora in the United States and illustrates it with the works of Paule Marshall. Chapter III –perhaps the author's most innovative contribution– deals with Caribbean migration to Canada.

One of the main assets of López Ropero's monograph is its twenty-page introduction. In it the author outlines in a very clear way the different critical approaches to the diasporic phenomenon, first in general terms and then focusing on the Caribbean region. Two maps –of the Anglophone Caribbean and of the Anglo-Caribbean diaspora– offer readers a first insight into the topic. López Ropero explores the connections between a new conception of nations as *imagined communities*, in the words of Benedict Anderson, and the new prominence of the term disapora in the field of postcolonial studies. The author goes beyond classical definitions of the term, which rest on an essentialist conception of the nation and stress the catastrophic side of that phenomenon. She aligns herself with more recent contributions, like Robin Cohen's, which account for more ambiguous cases of diaspora, such as that of the Caribbean peoples, and lay an emphasis on the positive side of diasporic developments. López Ropero is concerned with stressing the ambivalence of diaspora identities, which, she affirms, are "characterised by a constant negotiation between roots and routes" (20). In line with Caribbean diasporic intellectual Stuart Hall, she understands diaspora as intimately connected with the concept of hybridity. López Ropero then moves on to offer a well-documented delineation of the history of the West Indies, particularly of its long-standing migration tradition. She convincingly challenges the arguments against the existence of a specific Caribbean diaspora one by one, points out the multi-centred nature of the phenomenon and briefly analyses its different strands. The last part of the Introduction speaks of the author's intention to study imaginative renderings of Caribbean diaspora experiences and shows her awareness of what is going on in the field by revising a series of recent works written on related topics.

The three chapters that make up the core of the volume follow roughly the same pattern: in the first place, they contextualise in great detail the particular branch of Caribbean diaspora they are concerned with; in the second, they provide valuable analyses of the writers and the novels selected.

Chapter I, entitled "Britannia's Offspring in the Metropolis: the London Novels of Samuel Selvon and Caryl Phillips", starts by expounding the evolution of immigration practices and policies in Great Britain in the post-war years. The large numbers of Caribbean immigrants, sometimes referred to as "colonization in reverse", were increasingly seen as "a reminder of Britain's declining role as a world

power" (35), which led to "the rebirth of English nationalism in the form of racism" (35). López Ropero chooses the novels of Selvon and Phillips to illustrate the development of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in London. Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, published in 1956, is concerned with the growing hostile atmosphere towards Black immigration and its mixed consequences. On the one hand, hostility and racial discrimination brought about personal frustration, but on the other they encouraged the formation of a strong group consciousness in the Caribbean community. *The Lonely Londoners* is above all, López Ropero states, "an affirmation of the value and resilience of Caribbean culture and identity in the diaspora" (51). The novel also reveals the immigrants' mistaken expectations with regard to Britain and debunks powerful myths surrounding the mother country. Far from being "paved with gold", a notion, as López Ropero says, "ironically fostered by colonial indoctrination" (47), the streets of London prove to be a rather hostile environment for the Caribbean immigrant. The idea of 'home' some of the immigrants hold is questioned as well. In the opinion of López Ropero, Moses, the novel's main character, idealises life in Trinidad as simple, natural and peaceful: "The Trinidad he wishes to return to is a fictional construction of his mind, an ahistoric and metaphoric image of the homeland" (60). *Moses Ascending*, published almost two decades later, updates English racial politics, which have now become tighter, and puts emphasis on the progressive creolisation of the metropolis through new diasporas and on the radicalisation of black nationalism in the Black Power Movement. López Ropero provides a very brief analysis of *Moses Migrating* (1983), conceived as a sequel to *Moses Ascending*, mainly concerned with the dialectics of identification with both motherland and homeland. The last section of Chapter I is devoted to Caryl Phillips and his first novel *The Final Passage* (1985), a work that describes the Caribbean disaporic phenomenon of the 1950s through the prism of the second generation of immigrants. This study discloses a continuity of concerns –displacement, rejection, wrong assumptions, and so on– as well as some of the pecularities of the second generation, who usually provide a bleaker outlook. Most pertinent is her analysis of how diaspora experiences differ according to gender. It is Leila, the protagonist's wife, "who appears to suffer more isolation and hardship in London" (91). In the opinion of López Ropero, Phillips is here "touching upon the gender politics of Caribbean society, where women play a 'minimal' role" (92).

In Chapter II, "Caribbean New York in the Works of Paule Marshall", the author explores the formation of a West Indian diaspora in the USA and the different impact of North-American cultures on Caribbean migrants. Some of the distinctive features López Ropero identifies are the preservation of strong familial and cultural links with the homeland due to geographical proximity and a more racially diverse host society with a less rigid class structure. The ambivalent

relationship between the native black community and the Afro-Caribbeans is tackled in great detail. The author sees in the work of Paule Marshall an emblematic portrayal of the black Caribbean community in New York. Marshall, who has a foot in both camps and responds to Black American culture as well as West Indian culture, touches upon the commonalities between the African-American and the West Indian experiences (102). López Ropero, however, highlights the distinctively Caribbean features of her novels, which are, she affirms, "crucially concerned with Caribbean diasporic groups and individuals in the USA" (103). The author is also interested in exploring the connections between Paule Marshall and the black feminist movement, although she opts to detach herself from traditional feminist readings of Marshall's work. Her analysis focuses mainly on two of her novels: *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959) and *Daughters* (1991). She places special emphasis on themes such as social mobility, the cohesion of the Caribbean immigrant community, the development of a materialistic ethic and its destructive impact on human lives, the complex interactions between Afro-Caribbeans and other diasporic communities, mainly African-Americans and Jews, and actual and imaginary returns to the homeland. For the analysis of *Daughters* López Ropero draws upon Edward Said's contrapuntal approach to displacement and diaspora and on the concept of *transnationalism* as defined by Linda Basch.

Chapter III, "Shattering Canadian Myths: The Caribbean-Canadian Encounter in Austin Clarke's Toronto Novels", tackles a branch of the Caribbean diaspora often neglected by critics. This is, López Ropero admits, a smaller and more recent phenomenon than the other two formations analysed in previous chapters. The circumstances that West Indian immigrants find in Canada are somewhat similar to the USA, both being settler multiethnic societies. By and large, West Indian migrants have felt more at ease with North American culture than with British culture. But, what are then the idiosyncrasies of this particular strand? To the particularities of Canadian immigration policies, López Ropero adds the issue of institutional multiculturalism and its malcontents. In 1971, the government adopted multiculturalism as a federal policy and Canada was declared a bilingual and multicultural nation (157). This has proved, nevertheless, a somewhat elusive concept and, as the author puts it, "its public policies have not been enough to eradicate racial discrimination in Canada" (159). Despite the fact that Canadians consider themselves more tolerant than their American neighbours, they are, according to recent surveys, very similar in terms of their treatment of minorities. Significantly enough, the first Canadian literary canon, established in the 1970s, did not reflect the multicultural character of Canadian society. In *The Meeting Point* (1967), his first Toronto novel, Austin Clarke "takes a very critical stance on Canada as a North Star, as well as on its alleged cultural harmony" (173) and reveals the gap between multicultural legislation and everyday practices. In his

second Toronto novel, *The Bigger Light*, published in 1975, Clarke further calls into question the "romanticised idea of Canada as a racial haven" (185). The final pages of this third chapter are devoted to Dionne Brand, a Caribbean-Canadian author who considers herself part of the new wave of Canadian writing and who writes back to the Eurocentric literary tradition from which she finds herself excluded. López Ropero concludes the section on a positive note: "Even though Brand's views on Canadian society are predominantly negative, her fiction does not preclude the possibility of an enriching life in the diaspora" (197).

"Constructing a taxonomy of diasporas is a highly inexact science", admits Robin Cohen in his 1997 book *Global Diasporas*. Cohen's statement makes María Lourdes López Ropero's contribution to the field stand out: a serious, well-documented and conscientious attempt at systematising West Indian migratory movements and their representation in literature. *The Anglo-Caribbean Migration Novel: Writing from the Diaspora* appears as a useful critical tool for the beginner as well as the specialist. Finally, some minor drawbacks must be mentioned: a few misprints, the fact that there is no name index and the fact that the author misses out the original date of publication of some books included in the Bibliography.

133

Notes

**MEMORY, IMAGINATION AND DESIRE IN CONTEMPORARY
ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERATURE AND FILM**
Constanza del Río-Álvaro and Luis Miguel García-Mainar (eds.)
Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2004.
(by Silvia Martínez Falquina. University of Zaragoza)

The main interest of this recently published compilation of articles is its opening of critical dialogues of undeniable relevance in the contemporary scene by a fruitful combination of unity and diversity. Incorporating both a broad approach and a solid background of research, the collection takes a close, innovative look at the connections between memory, imagination and desire, an inclusive way of dealing with time and its narrative articulations into past, present and future. The cultural implications of linear time and its privileging of cause-effect relations are revised, but by no means completely discarded, in the postmodern atmosphere of fragmentation, disruption and circularity, a significant emphasis being the inescapable relation of repetition with a difference, or the dialogue between subversion and reinscription. Accurate and direct, the editors' introduction openly anticipates the main critical viewpoints in the contributions, all within the focus on contemporary Anglo-American literature and film, although —and this points to the difficulty of easy categorization as it becomes one of the strengths of the collection— many articles will inevitably move beyond this specific time and space, stressing relations of revision and a diversity of dialogues with other periods and traditions. All in all, the most desirable answer to the impossibility of true interpretations is the emphasis on multiplicity, an idea that becomes one of the book's strongest points.

Of special relevance in the collection is an emphasis on genre and its relation to time. As the editors state, "[w]hether we inscribe genre history within an organic

evolutionary model, or whether we follow a formalist paradigm, based on ruptures and discontinuities, the truth is that in generic products past and present converge" (14). Significantly, many articles deal with the social and cultural function and effects of genre, and with the texts' relation to audience and readership. Two basic impulses can be identified here, namely, the emphasis on the re/vision of narratives of and from the past, and the imagining of future worlds in relation to technological developments. Any wish to retain a simplistic, one-to-one association of the former with the past, and of the latter with the future is discarded, though, for constant dialogues are emphasized throughout: we are reminded of the way science fiction resorts to myth, or of how traditional narratives can anticipate the future.

Both the introduction and a good number of the articles appropriately stress the need to attend to the present as the filter through which we interpret past and future. This is the postmodern context from which we perceive and write time, and it should be constantly acknowledged but by no means taken as a privileged standpoint in relation to other times, other places. In the editors' words, "we should avoid denying the specificity and difference of the past and the openness of the future, believing that the present offers the only authoritative source of meaning in an arrogant gesture that would unreasonably assume the superiority of our own time" (10). Although the individual authors, all well trained in the tenets of postmodern thought and critical discourse, will surely agree with this in theory, the truth is that some still sustain an underlying narrative of evolution, according to which today is perceived as better than yesterday —but not necessarily worse than tomorrow, as the prevalence of dystopic views of the future suggests— and our present-day eyes show the greatest capacity for understanding what happened earlier, and to anticipate what is to come. This could be considered an inconsistency were it not a clear reflection of an open debate in the contemporary critical scene: the question of privilege and authority in relation to time, among other narrative and cultural conceptions, although productively questioned and subject to subversion and re/vision, is one of the many issues that remain unresolved, in the sense of not being a closed case that requires no further attention. Surely enough, the recognition of unanswered questions encourages creative thinking, and this the collection certainly does.

As might be expected from the format, the book includes articles of varying depth and relevance, and the literary and filmic texts dealt with also attest to this diversity. The aim is to devise a theoretical background that accounts for the conception of time in the contemporary world as it calls our attention to the need to attend to individual differences, locations, and viewpoints. Whereas some of the essays are mainly specific in scope and center on particular aspects of particular authors or works, most of them provide critical stances that are illustrative of the fundamental

theoretical trends current at the moment, and will thus be of interest to the general student or researcher of postmodern fiction and film.

In the first section, entitled "Maps of the Postmodern", Daniela Carpi's article traces past origins and future uncertainties around the city, a central location and trope in postmodern literary and filmic texts. Carpi's contention is that the city, directly linked to literature and literacy and representative of contemporary people's relation to the surrounding world, represents postmodern displacement, alienation, and order vs. forces of chaos, which is why postmodern narrative, repeating and simultaneously denying the past, becomes a logical site of images of historical and mythic cities, as well as future utopias and dystopias in urban environments. Authors like Ackroyd, Amis, McEwan, Moorcock and films like *Blade Runner* are used as examples of this particularly creative relation of postmodern time and space. The next essay somewhat changes the critical focus to concentrate on the direct relation of literature to the market, a dynamic force that exemplifies the extent to which the rapidly changing nature of the present should be dealt with carefully. In her analysis of Bret Easton Ellis as a typical case of a celebrity writer, Sonia Baelo's analysis underlines the good and bad side of contemporary authors' relation to commercial culture, and calls our attention to the pressing need to take into account the marketing side of literature, without which the more strictly academic one would be incomplete. Heinz Antor's study of Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* cleverly incorporates most of the fundamental themes that apply in the treatment of time in postmodern narrative. He offers a profound reflection on the role of imagination in our approaches to the past, the constructed nature of texts, the inescapability of subjectivity and positionality in any representation of truth, history or memory, and the strategies of fictional writing that go into any attempt at tracking the truth, including the illustrative quilting metaphor of creation and the need to admit a multiplicity of voices in any reconstruction of history. In one of the most clearly dialogic contributions to the collection, Susana Onega undertakes an analysis of Jeanette Winterson's *World of Art*, which "engulfs the literary, pictorial and musical production of all writers and artists in Western culture from 600 BC until the year 2000" (79), by establishing a remarkably rich series of connections with writers and artists, both contemporary and past. Besides the illuminating intertextual dialogue that she offers, showing the way that art defeats time, the idea of the process of rewriting as being mutually transforming for both the writers and their precursors is of special interest here. In contrastive dialogue with the postmodern denial of the ultimate accessibility of truth and history through memory —an inescapable act of reconstruction— stressed in previous papers, Beatriz Penas shows how Nabokov elaborates in his autobiography a narrative of a lost past and thus constructs a consistent identity for himself through memory, understood as a solid bridge between the real world and art. The

possibility of giving shape and continuity to life "means that we should be able to interpret and integrate in the pattern of a more or less grand narrative what otherwise would be monadic sound and fury signifying nothing" (92), which is at the base of Nabokov's conception of the purpose of autobiography. Of special significance in this first section taken as a whole is the suggestion that the conception of memory as a narrative construction engine can give place to two different and contrasted emphases which require contextualization: depending on each author's needs and desires, the consistency and even validity of the resulting identity can be either vindicated or radically deconstructed. In this sense, the beginning of the book very appropriately maps the main lines of dialogic, often contested, thought in postmodernism that follow in the rest of the collection.

Two of the four articles in the second section, "The Postcolonial Experience", deal with the case of Ireland in filmic representation. Rosa González analyses a series of new Northern Ireland films that resort to humor, which is "fully compatible with insighful commentary on sorrowful circumstances" (101), cliché breaking and conducive to a search for common goals for the people of the region. This is particularly significant at a time when the omnipresence of the past proves problematic and traumatic, for it has sustained and fueled violence in the region through its emphasis on trouble and opposition. As it offers the possibility of a different future, this refreshing new look at Northern Ireland highlights "the undesirability of looking backward, of retrieving the past" (101) in this particular context. The contiguity of Maite Padrós' essay, however, proves that this is by no means a generalised possibility: the success of *Circle of Friends*, Padrós shows, is an example of how repetition can be successful, at least in commercial terms. Based on previous, stereotypical images of Ireland and on Hollywood cinematic conventions, this movie becomes another stereotyped version of the country with no critical engagement with the historical period that it represents, the 1950s. The author justifies her criticism by outlining the differences with the original novel, which becomes the authoritative source to which the movie does not adequately respond.

As the book takes us to the other side of the globe, the past remains decisive for approaches and encounters between East and West in the present time in Rüdiger Ahrens' paper on Yasmine Gooneratne. Proving the persistence of colonization in the postcolonial world, and the fact that no fixed ways of understanding the world are acceptable in our intercultural encounters, this international writer, born in Sri Lanka but established in Australia, represents an opening of new and necessary viewpoints and horizons, for she shows that, just as language and loyalty spill over national boundaries, so the past, transplanted, configures a dynamic, complex and not categorizable kind of identity. Dora Sales' essay on Manju Kapur's novel *Difficult Daughters* stresses that the articulation of a future for Indian women, who

suffer from a double marginalization, necessarily has to start from a discovery of the past. The novel offers a postmodern problematizing of history by means of historiographic metafiction that needs to be contextualized in terms of time and space. For Indian women, choice has usually been opposed to tradition, which is basically patriarchal and colonial, but as this novel shows, there is also a tradition of choice to be uncovered. The search for connection through a mother's story transforms colonial and patriarchal disconnection, fragmentation and silences into a new beginning for Indian women in the context of family and politics.

The main focus of the third section, "Stories Revisited", is the contemporary rewriting of myths or texts from the past. John Stotesbury studies the persistence and transformation of the Grendel myth as a reflection of the modern and postmodern desire to explore the ancient cultural trope of the demonic. The main conclusion reached by looking at several examples of the appearances of this opponent to the hero figure in literature and film is that this trope, resuscitated and reinvigorated every time it occurs, mainly functions "as an instance of resistance to the monologic cultural desire to reduce narratives to the familiar. . . . [E]ach new Grendel disturbs tradition, suggests alternative social formations, and renders the demonic both less and, at the same time, also more familiar" (143). Chantal Cornut-Gentille accurately stresses the significance of the cinema in its function as memory, which makes it an invaluable source of knowledge and "an important conveyor of historial messages, simulating as it does the sight and sounds of the past" (145). Besides offering a well-documented study of three filmic adaptations of novels by Dickens in their socio-cultural context that accounts for much of twentieth-century British history, this article is one that illustrates the dialogue between past, present and future most productively and originally: each of these movies represents a historical moment and they simultaneously reflect contemporary artistic trends and ideology, proving that "cultural memory was/is refashioned […] to serve the needs and aspirations of the moment" (153). Hilaria Loyo's paper outlines the more specific dialogue of Arthur Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* and Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, studying the translation of turn-of-the-century Vienna atmosphere of political crisis, feeling of impotence and anxiety into modern New York end-of-millenium cynicism and new narcissism. The underlying narrative linking both times and spaces is an exploration of desire, mainly articulated in the filmic use of the gaze as an element of communication on and off the screen and as an indicator of the complex relation of appearances and reality.
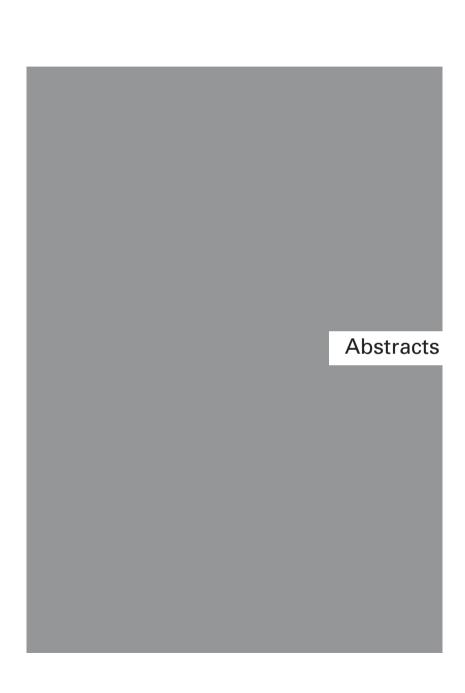
Of the five articles that compose the "Popular Narrative Genres" section, four deal with television and cinema, and one with postmodern detective fiction. Anthony David Barker's close look at the 1950s in popular culture through television and cinema reaches two basic conclusions: "that those 1950s did not exactly happen

in the historical 1950s, and secondly, that they may not have happened at all" (175), that is, that the reductive view of that particular historical moment as a blessed and contented period is a televised construction determined by the particular needs of the conservative context which articulated it. Celestino Deleyto examines the teenpic as another genre besides science fiction which concentrates on the relation between present and future. The teenpic resorts to well-known narrative conventions to illustrate the passing rites from adolescence to maturity, especially as far as individuality and autonomy are concerned, and it does so from the point of view of the future adults the teenagers are expected to become. The significance of *Clueless*, the example that Deleyto deals with in greatest detail, is that, while it sustains creative dialogues of past, present and future in its participation in the teenpic genre and the Jane Austen adaptation tradition, it ultimately parodies the genre's adult slant and its recurrent concern with the future, celebrating the uniqueness of adolescence and the present tense instead. Reynold Humphries offers an original reading of David Cronenberg's horror film *Shivers* and the parasites who liberate the Starline Tower residents "from all social restraints and [open] up the possibility of satisfying extreme, anti-social but highly agreeable forms of sexuality" (202) as a utopian vision of an alternative future that responds to postmodern desire in its rebellion against capitalistic, objectifying and power-stricken culture. María del Mar Azcona studies the evolution of slasher films and their persistent success among adolescents as a result of commercial strategies and the cultural context in which they are located. The basic pleasure slasher films offer, she contends, has to do with predictability by systematic repetition of filmic conventions, which gives these movies a ritualistic quality that, by stressing the weight of a tradition, articulates necessary rites of passage for teenagers. María Jesús Martínez moves on to fiction writing and studies the metaphysical detective story as a typically postmodern genre that is characterized by the recasting of old conventions in new forms, or by dialogic repetition with a difference. Postmodern writers of metaphysical detective stories, of which Martínez provides a well-documented series of illustrative examples, show an awareness of the conventions of traditional detective fiction, and they simultaneously break their rules by posing epistemological questions that are never answered or that subvert the process of detection leading to them, emphasizing plurality and qualifying the postmodern world in their dramatization of epistemological and ontological voids.

The last section of the book, "Views of the Future", offers four examples of science fiction in literature and film. Andreas Kitzmann undertakes a re/vision of transcendence in his challenging analysis of "the faith that Western culture has placed in technology to not only address physical or material needs but also those of morality, ethics, philosophy and spirituality" (238). This, which he calls "the digital divine project" (238) in multimedia communications, opens up creative

dialogues between culture and technology that allow for the expression of cultural diversity as it reinforces pre-existing social patterns. Ignacio Domingo's paper centers on science fiction films that deal with time travel and analyses the possibilities and links to postmodern culture of the three-dimensional conception of time that they offer. Their combination of a physical body temporality that the characters follow plus the temporary loops that they experience not only articulates postmodern escape from time linearity; it also illustrates the collision and dialogue of the different temporalities that participate in the experience of watching a movie. José Ángel García explores the connections between two science fiction works, Olaf Stapledon's 1937 novel *Star Maker*, a utopian dream of the universe becoming an organism with perfect communication, and *The Matrix* (1999), a dystopia about a future robotic takeover. Besides their parallel lines of vision and philosophical bases, García notes how "[i]t is perhaps a relevant coincidence that both narratives of a communicational apocalypse, *Star Maker* and *The Matrix*, use the phenomenal structure of their medium (the book and the film screen) as a metafictional formal device that provides for the reader/spectator an analogue of the virtual reality experienced by the protagonists" (264). Katrina Mann takes a gender approach to the treatment of time in Hollywood postmodern films *Gattaca*, *The Matrix* and *Fight Club* which, she argues, posit a world free of categories but only superficially so, for they ultimately "revitalise, through postmodern attitudes and aesthetics and through the eventual subjection of women and/or minorities, the near-end modern subject" (269), becoming complicit with historical structures of white and male privilege and recuperating modern ideals in the process.

The fact is often pointed out that any selection and ordering is a process of emplotment whereby a story is constructed, and this is true both of this brief account of the main lines of thought offered in this book, and of the content of the articles themselves. The great diversity of these twenty-one essays, whose interconnections are difficult to contain in a fixed pattern, makes the editing task a far from simple mission, and the story could have come out differently, with an alternative ordering of story lines or section titles. As it is, the form reflects content and intention by staying open both to an orderly sequential reading of the whole and to more specific, partial involvement. There is, undoubtedly, an actual dialogue between many different trends of thought taking place around the issue of time and its narrative articulations, and the book's main asset is the successful way in which it reflects a substantial part of this dynamic, ongoing conversation.

Abstracts

MAKING SENSE OF A MULTI-PROTAGONIST FILM: AUDIENCE RESPONSE RESEARCH AND ROBERT ALTMAN'S *SHORT CUTS* (1993)

M. Mar Azcona

This article explores the ways in which some of the unconventional narrative strategies used in multi-protagonist movies, namely, the multiplicity of characters, the abandonment of conventional notions of causality and the restriction of spectator involvement in the film may affect spectators' comprehension of the narrative. My evidence comes from an audience research investigation on Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* (1993). It attempts to show both the potentials and limitations of audience response study, which should not be seen as a substitute but rather as a supplement to scholarly theorization and analysis.

Key words: Audience response studies, structured questionnaire, multi-protagonist film, Robert Altman, *Short Cuts*, the structure of sympathy.

IN THE NAME OF THE PUBLIC: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE TASTES AND HABITS OF FILM AUDIENCES

M. Mar Azcona, Virginia Luzón and Juan Tarancón

Until very recently audience research was a neglected area in film studies. Critics tended to take for granted that they could read the minds of the implied spectator(s). However, cultural studies paved the way for a serious consideration of individual spectators' actual readings. This paper, which is the continuation of a previous study, seeks to foreground the opinions of real spectators in our

particular geographical context. In our previous and current investigation we made use of sociological research methods in order to obtain reliable data about cinema habits and tastes. This paper presents the results obtained through a self-administered questionnaire distributed over a four-month period among three different age groups of the population of Zaragoza.

Key words: Film audience research, response studies, ethnography, cinema-going habits, cinema tastes, cinema genres.

STEPHEN SPENDER, THE 1930S, AND SPANISH WRITING
David Callahan

During the Spanish Civil War, the English literary world constructed important meanings about itself through its response to the conflict, a war in which the future of European Writing itself was being decided. One of the overlooked facets of this response involves the reading of and responding to Spanish writers on the part of the literary worlds for which the war was so significant. At the forefront of this encounter with Spanish writers in Britain was Stephen Spender, whose ensuing processing of what he found constitutes the most significant mediation of Spanish literature during the duration of the Civil War. This article examines Spender's articulation of Spanish writing both in terms of the English literary world of the time and his own poetic development. Particular attention is paid to his response to and translations of Lorca. While Spender's contacts, appreciation and translations of Spanish writers did not occasion noticeable alterations in his own work, but rather the solidifying of his beliefs about the nature of poetry and the role of the poet, the examination of this confluence of the poetry and politics of the 1930s reveals the stress points between a supposedly European politics of literary witness and the difficulties in absorbing literary traditions with which English writers were not familiar.

Key words: Stephen Spender, Spanish Civil War, Spanish literature, Lorca, reception.

READING ACROSS CULTURES: TWO STORIES FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA ON ARRANGED MARRIAGES
Daniela Cavallaro

After providing a brief sociological introduction to the custom of arranged marriages in Papua New Guinea, this article analyzes two stories by PNG writer Sally-Ann Bagita: "Regret Not" (1973) and "The Reluctant Bride" (1974). The

young men and women protagonists of these stories have no choice but to accept a marriage arranged by their families. Focusing particularly on the two female characters, the stories show how each reacts to the same initial situation in very different ways. The article claims that in these two stories Sally-Ann Bagita on the one hand appears to critique the tradition of arranged marriage. On the other hand, however, she also seems to reveal that the problems are not so much in the custom itself, as in the modern, Westernized understanding of it.

Key words: South Pacific literature, Papua New Guinea literature, Papua New Guinea women writers, Sally-Ann Bagita, arranged marriages.

THE HUMAN MOMENT: SELF, OTHER AND SUSPENSION IN JOHN BANVILLE'S *GHOSTS*
Brendan McNamee

The protagonist of *Ghosts* is a man isolated from the world around him, and from his own sense of self, by guilt for the crime of murder, but he is imbued also with a fascination for painting –one painting in particular– that seems occasionally to offer release from this condition. Examining how these two elements are intertwined in the novel, this reading suggests that ethics and imagination may be inseparable, and that both may be intrinsic, perhaps even anterior, to the kind of self that the protagonist here longs for –a self that belongs integrally to the world and feels the reality of otherness. The content of the novel, it is argued, is reflected in the form in a way that allows this theme to be enacted. Exploring the ways in which painting versus narrative can be seen as analogous to imagination versus time, the argument is made that the tension between the two is resolved through the idea of anticipation, of suspension, and that this serves both as a basis for art and as a tentative bridge between the reality the protagonist lives in and the one he longs for.

Key words: Self, other, suspension, ethics, imagination.

THE OLD ENGLISH POEM "A VAMPYRE OF THE FENS": A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GHOST
Eugenio Olivares Merino

Dudley Wrights' book *Vampires and Vampirism* (1914) might well be said to be the first serious attempt in English to compile vampire stories and reports from all over the world, as well as to elucidate how far a certain amount of scientific truth might underlie these accounts. In this work, the author makes a statement that has

passed unnoticed for both Anglosaxonists and vampire hunters: 'There is an Anglo-Saxon poem with the title *A Vampyre of the Fens* (186). The veracity of this claim is demolished by the fact that students and scholars of Old English literature well know that *such a poem does not exist*. Besides, the dearth of vampiric literature in England before William of Malmesbury, William of Newburgh or Walter Map is widely attested. Finally, it is significant that the term 'vampyre' was not used in English until 1734, as reported by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The evidence that refutes Wrights affirmation is, as we can see, overwhelming, and yet there is some truth in his words.

Key words: Vampyre, Theory of Reception, *Beowulf*, Victorian England.

STRICTLY BALLROOM (1992): DEPARTURE FROM TRADITIONAL ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN DISCOURSES OR VEILED CONFIRMATION OF OLD NATIONAL-ENCOURAGEMENT MECHANISMS?
Olga Seco Salvador

This article explores the ways in which the Australian feature *Strictly Ballroom* (Baz Luhrmann, 1992) represents on the screen inter-ethnic conflicts between the dominant Australian culture and the Spanish minority. Although the 1990s represent increased interest in the multicultural reality of the country, Luhrmann's film proves to lack specificity in its treatment of ethnic issues, which remain repressed or submerged under cover of a more 'politically correct' attitude that favours the official 'Austro-centric' discourse. I will try to demonstrate that, despite the importance of the female Spanish character for the development and resolution of the film's main conflicts, *Strictly Ballroom*'s narrative ends up by enhancing over and above everything else, the English and Irish white male values that have traditionally defined the 'national type' of Australian culture.

Key words: Australia, cinema, Baz Luhrmann, inter-ethnic, identity, discourse.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies is published twice a year by the Department of English and German Philology, University of Zaragoza, Spain. In addition to the printed version of the journal, recent issues of *Miscelánea* are available online, at the following web site:

Miscelánea publishes articles on English language and linguistics, on literatures written in English, on thought, cinema and cultural studies from the English-speaking world.

Unsolicited contributions, in English or Spanish, should be unpublished (and not being considered for publication elsewhere). Please send three copies (no diskette) to the Editor, *Miscelánea*, Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Zaragoza, 50009 Zaragoza, Spain. Papers may be published if they receive favourable reports from readers who are specialists in the area. Readers will not be apprised of the authorship of these articles. The authorship of the reports will also be confidential, though their purport may be communicated to the contributors concerned if so desired. Invited (non-refereed) contributions from leading scholars will be acknowledged as such. There will be no restrictions placed on authors' use of their material for reprints or other publications as long as their first publication is acknowledged.

The criteria for selecting unsolicited contributions will be basically: their global interest and originality, their theoretical and methodological rigour, the

development of a well defined thesis, the quality of their style and the general observance of the norms required of work of an academic nature. The papers submitted should evince serious academic work contributing new knowledge or innovative critical perspectives on the subject in question. Articles that are of a merely popularising nature will not be accepted. Readers will be required to weigh up the articles that are sent to them and make out as soon as possible a written report describing the article in terms of the points itemized in an evaluation form. In the case of articles that have not been accepted or need revision, an additional report will be made out indicating the reasons for non-acceptance, or the changes to be made as the case may be. Although every effort will be made to publish contributions that have received favourable reports, the Editor reserves the right to make a further and final selection when the number of contributions with favourable reports is in excess of the number of articles that can be conveniently published in one issue of the Journal. In the case of partially negative reports as well as positive ones on the same article, the final decision will lie with the discretion of the Editor, who will weigh up the reports and the general interest of the subject matter of the article. Additional reports may also be sought.

The recommended length for articles is of 4,000 to 8,000 words. Reviews are also accepted of books that are of general interest in the field of English studies and that have been published within the last four years (recommended length: 1,500 words). Translations of short texts that are of special interest are also accepted. Book reviews and translations will be accepted for publication at the discretion of the Editor, who may require additional reports. The articles submitted should stick to the Publication Guidelines included in this volume. The editors may correct clerical or factual errors and introduce stylistic corrections without further notice. A copy of the papers on disk may be required to prepare proofs once a paper has been accepted for publication. No off-prints are supplied. The authors will receive some copies of the journal.

For additional information, contact the editor, M. Dolores Herrero, at the above address or via e-mail: dherrero@unizar.es

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines will be returned to the authors for revision.

Authors are expected to provide three copies of their manuscript, double-spaced, with wide margins, on plain, standard A4. No disk version is required at this stage. Only when the manuscript has been finally accepted will an e-mailed copy of the final version be asked for (WordPerfect or Word format).

The following information should appear on the first page: full title, author's full name, affiliation, and address (including e-mail).

An abstract of no more than 200 words should also be provided, together with five key words.

Contributors are advised to keep a copy of their MS since originals are only returned when alterations have to be made.

CITATIONS

Double quotation marks should be used for citations. Single quotes may be used to draw attention to a particular item in the text. Italics are used for foreign words, or for emphasis. References in the text to publications should include the author's surname, the year of publication, and, if necessary, page numbers, as in the following examples:

"…narrative to their function" (Labov and Waletzky 1967: 12).

…following Blakemore (1987: 35),…

…perform a distinctive function in discourse (Blakemore 1987).

…this issue has received a lot of attention by relevance theorists (Blakemore 1987, 1992; Wilson and Sperber 1993).

Should part of the original text be omitted, this will be made clear by inserting […], NOT (…).

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bibliographical references should be included in alphabetical order at the end of the manuscript and under the heading WORKS CITED. Authors' full first names should be used unless the authors themselves customarily use only initials. References to two or more works by the same author in a single year should be accompanied by a lower-case a, b, etc. after the year of publication, both in the reference list and in citations in the text. References to books should include the place of publication and the publisher's name, and references to articles in journals should include volume, issue number (if necessary) and page numbers. Titles of books and journals will be written in italics. Titles of articles and of book chapters will be placed in double inverted commas.

Examples

Monographs:

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. *Title in italics*. Place: Publisher.

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). (Year of 1st edition) Year of edition actually used. *Title in italics*. Place: Publisher.

Editor's surname(s), Editor's first name(s). (ed.). Year. *Title in italics*. Place: Publisher.

First author's surname(s), First author's first name(s), Second author's first name(s) Second author's surname(s) and Third author's first name(s) Third author's surname(s). Year. *Title in italics*. Place: Publisher.

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. *Title in italics*. Trans. Translator's initials. Translator's surname(s). Place: Publisher.

Chapter or article in a monograph:

If only one chapter or article has been used:

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". In Editor's surname(s), Editor's first name(s). (ed.). *Title of monograph in italics*. Place: Publisher: 00-00.

If two or more chapters/ articles have been used:

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". In Editor's surname(s), Editor's initials. (ed.): 00-00.

If the book is a compilation of another author's works:

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). (Year of 1st edition) Year of edition actually used. *Title in italics*. Ed. Editor's initials. Editor's surname(s). Trad. Translator's initials. Translator's surname(s). Place: Publisher.

Article in a periodical or journal:

Author's surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". *Name of journal in italics*, number (volume): 00-00.

Examples:

Gerlach, John. 1989. "The Margins of Narrative: The Very Short Story. The Prose Poem and the Lyric". In Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey. (eds.). *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana U.P.: 74-84.

Neale, Steve. 1992. "The Big Romance or Something Wild? Romantic Comedy Today". *Screen* 33 (3) (Autumn 1992): 284-299.

Williams, Tennessee. 1983. *La gata sobre el tejado de zinc caliente*. Trans. A. Diosdado. Madrid: Ediciones MK.

The following norms should also be taken into account:

- Footnotes should be as few and short as possible, and their corresponding numbers in the main text should be typed as superscripts.
- Additional comments should appear in between long dashes: (—) rather than (-); —this is an example—, leaving no spaces in between the dashes and the text within them.
- There should be no full stops after interrogation and exclamation marks.
- Inverted commas should never appear after punctuation marks (eg. "this is correct", but "this isn't.").
- Current (CG Times or Times New Roman) typefaces should be used, and special symbols should be avoided as much as possible.
- "&" should be avoided whenever possible.
- Generally speaking, punctuation and orthography should be coherent (British or American style) all through the article. For example: "emphasise/ recognise" rather than "emphasize/ recognise"; "colour/ colour" rather than "colour/ color".

EXCHANGE POLICY

Miscelánea welcomes exchanges with other scholarly publications. Please write to:

> *Miscelánea* (intercambios)
> Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana
> Universidad de Zaragoza
> 50009 Zaragoza (Spain)

The basic exchange rate for periodical publications is established on the basis of annual volumes. Quaterly, bi-monthly or monthly journals, or book series editors, may agree to establish other rates or complementary exchanges.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Miscelánea is listed in several bibliographical compilations, including the *Bibliography of European Journals for English Studies* (BEJES) published by the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE), *the MLA Directory of Periodicals*, *the Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters, and Academic Discussion Lists* published by the Association of Research Libraries, *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory* and the *Bibliografía Española de Ciencias*

Sociales y Humanidades (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CINDOC). It is also listed in *The Voice of the Shuttle*, in *Bibliografía de Revistas Electrónicas Españolas*, in *El Kiosko Electrónico*, in *WWW Applied Linguistics Virtual Library*, and in several other Internet directories.

Abstracts of *Miscelánea* are published in

Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA).

The journal is regularly submitted to the following bibliographical publications for indexing:

The *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*

published by the Modern Humanities Research Association

The *MLA International Bibliography*

published by the Modern Language Association of America

Complete listings are included in

Literary Theory and Criticism: A Bibliography

(Comp. José Ángel García Landa)

available online at the following website:

http://www.unizar.es/departamentos/filologia_inglesa/garciala/bibliography.html

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS