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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

A NEW LOOK AT JOHN STANLEY RICHARDSON IN SPAIN

Roger Tinnell
University System of New Hampshire

ABSTRACT

Subsequent research, the growth of information on Internet and the discovery in Madrid's Federico García Lorca Foundation of three unpublished documents (a letter from the English poet Stanley Richardson to Federico García Lorca, a telegram sent to Lorca, signed by Richardson and others, and the mention of Richardson in a letter to Lorca sent by Rafael Martínez Nadal) lead to interesting conclusions which could not be formulated by James Valender in his 1983 article "Stanley Richardson and Spain." The present article offers new insights into the relationship of Stanley Richardson with Federico García Lorca and with other Spanish intellectuals in Spain in the 1930's, among them Carlos Morla Lynch and, most particularly, Luis Cernuda.

KEY WORDS: John Stanley Richardson, Federico García Lorca, Luis Cernuda, Spain 1935, unpublished correspondence.

RESUMEN

La investigación posterior a la publicación por James Valender en 1983 del artículo "Stanley Richardson and Spain," junto a la información ahora disponible en Internet y con el descubrimiento de tres documentos en la Fundación Federico García Lorca (una carta inédita de Richardson a Lorca, un telegrama a Lorca firmado por Richardson y otros, y la mención de Richardson en una carta a Lorca de Rafael Martínez Nadal), nos llevan a conclusiones interesantes. El presente artículo ofrece nueva perspectiva sobre la relación entre Richardson y Lorca y entre Richardson y otros intelectuales en España durante los años 30, entre ellos Carlos Morla Lynch y, sobre todo, Luis Cernuda.

PALABRAS CLAVE: John Stanley Richardson, Federico García Lorca, Luis Cernuda, España 1935, correspondencia inédita.

In Madrid's Federico García Lorca Foundation we find an unpublished letter from the English poet John Stanley Richardson (Lincolnshire, 1911-London, 1941) to the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. The undated letter, written on hotel stationery while Richardson was visiting in Madrid in 1935, had not been catalogued when James Valender wrote his definitive essay ("Stanley") on Richardson,

and has remained unpublished until now.[1] Of interest, too, in the same Foundation is an unpublished telegram sent to Lorca and signed by Richardson and others, as well as an unpublished letter from Lorca's close friend Rafael Martínez Nadal which mentions Richardson. Research subsequent to Valender's essay, the growth of information on Internet and the discovery of these three documents lead to interesting conclusions which could not be formulated in 1983. The present article offers new insights into the relationship of Stanley Richardson and Federico García Lorca and with other intellectuals in Spain, among them Carlos Morla Lynch and, most particularly, Luis Cernuda.[2]

The "mysterious English student" (Foster 43), John Stanley Richardson graduated from St. John's College, Cambridge in 1932 with first-class honours in modern languages. At the University he was active as an actor and dancer and poet. He founded the Merry Meeting Poetry Club,[3] edited the student magazine, and published a collection of his verse, *Road to Emmaus* (Cambridge: S.G. Marshall & Son, 1934). He began graduate work on the *Poema de Mío Cid* but did not complete his thesis. *Time Magazine* (Jan. 15, 1940) called him the "young Cambridge poet Stanley Richardson, protégé of the Archbishop of York."[4]

[1] I am indebted to James Valender's work ("Stanley") for much of the biographical information contained in the present article. Of great interest is the information he provides in the footnotes. James Valender is also the editor of the *Epistolario de Cernuda* which has been of great help in the writing of the present article. On Cernuda, see also Antonio Rivero Taravillo's invaluable studies (*Luis*; "París").

[2] My thanks to the staff of the Fundación Federico García Lorca for their help in making these documents available for consultation and to the heirs of the poet for permission to publish them.

[3] *Poems Read at the Merry Meeting* (Spring 1935) was published by Cambridge University Press in 1935. In his essay, "Vida y poesía: cuatro poetas íntimos," Manuel Altolaguirre writes that the Merry Meeting Club at Cambridge sponsored an exhibition of books published by his press and that the exposition was "adornada con tulipanes amarillos" (Altolaguirre, "Vida").

[4] 22 Oct. 2010. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,772319,00>.

In London in late 1933 Richardson met the Spanish poet Manuel Altolaguirre[5] and his wife and fellow poet Concha Méndez.[6] The Spanish couple prepared a bilingual poetry review, *1616* (the review published ten numbers) which counted among its contributors: Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, T.S. Eliot, Federico García Lorca, A.E. Housman, and Ramón Pérez de Ayala. John Stanley Richardson's work appeared in most of the ten issues of the review, with several of his own poems and his translations from the Spanish of poems by Alberti, Altolaguirre, Méndez and García Lorca. He also translated English poems to Spanish (see, for example, the versions of A.E. Housman translated to Spanish by Altolaguirre and Richardson in issue number 3, 1934).[7]

[5] The Malagueñan poet Manuel Altolaguirre Bolín (1905-1959) studied law at the University of Granada but became a poet, publishing some ten books of verse between 1926 and 1955. With his intimate friend and collaborator, the poet Emilio Prados, Altolaguirre published the literary magazine *Litoral*. Federico García Lorca published several poems in the magazine and dedicated to Altolaguirre and Prados his *suite* "Españas del mar" and presented them too in his "dialogue" *La doncella, el marinero y el estudiante* "enharinados por el miedo del mar." Prados, Altolaguirre and José María Hinojosa formed the editorial board of their press, also called Litoral, and were the editors of Lorca's book of poems, *Canciones*. James Valender has edited Altolaguirre's memoirs, *El caballero griego* (Madrid:Visor, 2006) and edited, too, Altolaguirre's *Obras completas* (Madrid: Istmo, 1986). Altolaguirre makes reference to Richardson in the following correspondence: in a letter (25 Nov. 1934) to J.B. Trend (Valender, *Viaje* 298); a letter (Feb.? 1935) to Juan Ramón Jiménez (Valender, *Viaje* 308); and in three letters (March 1935) to Concha Méndez (Valender, *Viaje* 312, 314, 316).

[6] Concepción (Concha) Méndez Cuesta (1898-1986) had a love affair with Luis Buñuel which lasted for several years, and she was also a great friend of Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda and Federico García Lorca. In 1931, García Lorca introduced her to Manuel Altolaguirre and the two were married one year later (Lorca and Cernuda were two of their witnesses). The couple created the press "La Verónica" and edited there the literary magazine *Héroe*. Between 1933 and 1935 they lived in London where they edited poetry collections and magazines such as *1616*, *Poesía* and *Caballo verde para la poesía*. After the Spanish Civil War they moved to Havana where they published another periodical, "La Verónica," and produced a poetry series, "El ciervo herido." In 1944 they moved to Mexico where their marriage ended.

[7] Richardson's *Way into Life* was to be published as a supplement to *1616*. See <http://www.proyectorosaleda.blogspot.com/2009_02_01_archive.html>.

The telegram sent to García Lorca, dated January 31, 1935, is signed by Concha Méndez, Manuel Altolaguirre, Stanley Richardson and Antonio Pastor:[8]

> [Telegram. January 31, 1935][9]
> García Lorca Alcalá 102 Madrid
> Después exitosa conferencia[10] Rafael [Martínez Nadal] saludamoste como poeta amigo
> Concha [Méndez]
> Manolo [Altolaguirre]
> Stanley [Richardson]
> and
> [Antonio] Pastor

One month later, Richardson went to Spain (February 1935) where he hoped to meet many of the Spanish contemporary poets whose work appeared in *1616*.[11] He carried a letter of introduction from Manuel Altolaguirre to Carlos Morla Lynch, the Chilean consul in Madrid who was a friend of many of the young Spanish poets of the time. In his written memoirs, Morla Lynch recalls that on the 16th of February 1935 he had as a house guest García Lorca, the poet ill with a fever, and that Richardson appeared at the door:

> Pero he aquí que aparece en el umbral de la puerta un jovenzuelo inglés, muy rubio, muy risueño —veintitrés años— con una cara dispareja de *clown*. Viene de Londres provisto de una carta para mí de Manolito Altolaguirre. Sin darme tiempo para imponerme del contenido de la epístola, el muchacho se presenta él mismo 'como el mejor poeta actual de Inglaterra' (así como suena): Stanley Richardson. Inmediatamente se me hace simpático por su franqueza y su espíritu comunicativo, lleno de viveza y no exento de picardía. En su carta, Manolito me dice que, efectivamente, es, además de un excelente amigo, el poeta que más destaca de la nueva generación [...] Stanley ha venido varias veces a almorzar y a cenar—o simplemente a vernos—y se ha hecho, desde el comienzo, amigo de Federico y de Luis Cernuda. Tiene dulzura, suavidad y un físico favorable..., a pesar de que no es guapo. Es un 'feo' con gracia'. (Morla Lynch 457-458).

From Morla Lynch's memoirs, we learn that on March 12 he took Stanley Richardson to a special performance of *Yerma*: "Lo llevo a la función de *Yerma*[12]:

---

[8] Antonio Pastor (b. 1894) held the Cervantes Chair at the University of London. Among his publications, *Breve historia del hispanismo inglés* (1948).

[9] De Paepe, et. al., COA-668. The date taken from the postmark.

[10] See the references to Martínez Nadal's conference in his letter of March 3, 1935, herein transcribed.

[11] In a letter (Feb.? 1935) to Juan Ramón Jiménez, Altolaguirre wrote that Richardson would visit that Spanish poet "en mi nombre, llevándole un poco del buen recuerdo que siempre me viene de usted" (Valender, *Viaje* 308).

[12] *Yerma* premiered with the company of Margarita Xirgu at Madrid's Teatro Español on the 29th of December 1934. See Antonina Rodrigo (295-296). The special *Yerma* of which Morla

beneficio de Federico con carácter de homenaje. Al final, el gran actor [Enric] Borrás recita pasajes de su drama *Mariana Pineda*, y por último, declama la elegía a [Ignacio] Sánchez Mejías" (Morla Lynch 458). The next day, accompanied by Cernuda, Richardson attended a lecture recital by Pablo Neruda at the University of Madrid (Olivares Briones 170).

The archives of Madrid's García Lorca Foundation house an unpublished letter sent to Lorca by Rafael Martínez Nadal, an intimate friend of both García Lorca and Luis Cernuda.[13] Dated March 3, 1935, the letter includes a reference to Richardson:

> [Letter. March 3, 1935][14]
> 3-3-35
> Mi querido Federicón:
> Habrás recibido la visita de Stanley Richardson poeta inglés de Cambridge y típico producto de aquella universidad. —Te advierto que tiene gran influencia en Cambridge y sobre [John Brande] Trend.[15] Es "fellow" de la Universidad y ha traducido el poema del Mío Cid, íntegro, al inglés. Creo que te conviene quedar bien con él porque cuento con Stanley para arreglarte unos cursos en Cambridge donde lo pasarás admirablemente.
>
> [Antonio] Pastor va pronto a Madrid y me pide que le dé una carta para ti, porque desea mucho conocerte y ser muy amigo tuyo. —Creo que también lo tengo convencido para traerte.
>
> Hace tres días estuve en Oxford invitado para dar la misma conferencia en King's College. Gustó y me invitan de nuevo en Mayo.
>
> No te digo que me escribas porque no lo harás.
> Un gran abrazo de
> Rafael

In his memoirs, Carlos Morla Lynch writes that Stanley Richardson left Spain in mid March, two days after the special *Yerma* performance:

Lynch writes was in celebration of 100 performances of the play. Ian Gibson finds that among the gay friends at that performance of *Yerma* was the Granadan José (Pepe) García Carrillo, an old friend of Lorca (*Lorca* 323).

[13] After the Spanish Civil War, Martínez Nadal (1904-2001) taught at King's College (University of London). He edited several works by Lorca and published books on the poet and his life and had in his possession the manuscript of *El público*. In his book on Cernuda (1983), Martínez Nadal recalls that he met the blond, almost albino (18) Stanley Richardson in the home of Altolaguirre and Méndez, that Richardson had met the Spanish couple through John B. Trend (19), and that Richardson died in the flaming ruins of London's Café de Paris (20) during a German bombardment. According to Martínez Nadal, Cernuda was put off by Richardson's "exageradas, estudiadas extravagancias del inglés" (21) and that in London Cernuda "rehusó vivir bajo su mismo techo" (25).

[14] De Paepe, et. al., COA-643.

[15] John Brande Trend (1887-1958), English writer, musicologist and music critic. Profesor of Spanish literature at Cambridge, he published in *1616* 2 (1934) his translation of a "Cantiga" de Gil Vicente. See the correspondence from Trend to García Lorca (Tinnell 129-132).

> 13 de marzo. Despedida de Stanley Richardson, que se marcha mañana y que manifiesta una emoción sin duda sincera. No olvidará jamás—dice—los días que acaba de vivir en España. También lamentamos su partida. Uno se pregunta a qué misterio obedece la facilidad con que algunos seres pasan—en el espacio de breves días—a formar parte de nuestro ambiente, en tanto que otros nunca logran penetrar en él. (Morla Lynch 461)

Was this camaraderie in large part caused by shared homosexuality? On Morla Lynch's sexuality, see Gibson (*Lorca* 378-379. José Teruel suggests that Richardson was gay when he writes that the Englishman had a "pequeño idilio" with Luis Cernuda and Rivero Taravillo calls Richardson Cernuda's "antiguo amor inglés." We do not know if there ever a sexual relationship between García Lorca himself and Cernuda (Gibson, *Lorca* 310-311). The two men had met in 1927 in Seville and stayed close friends until Lorca's untimely death.[16] Both Lorca and Cernuda's homosexuality has never been in doubt and we know that Cernuda briefly had a lover, Serafín Fernández Ferro, whom he met through García Lorca and to whom he dedicated the poem "Como leve sonido" in 1931,[17] while Martínez Nadal (97) hints openly that Cernuda had a sexual relationship with a "joven escocés" in Glasgow. Román Gubern writes about the gay group which surrounded Dalí and Lorca (among them, Luis Cernuda, Benjamín Palencia, Juan Gil-Albert, Vicente Aleixandre, Gustavo Durán y Eduardo Blanco-Amor) men who were "compañeros de [la] constelación cultural de García Lorca" (126).[18]

Soon after returning to England, Richardson published his essay, "Spanish Poetry," in which he praised Cernuda (Cernuda, the "poet of unhappy love," "is his poetry" and "will inevitably reach greatness"[19]) and he offered in his essay translations of, among others, Cernuda, Altolaguirre, Méndez and García Lorca. In 1936 Richardson assisted the Spanish Aid Committee and briefly returned to Spain as a volunteer translator. Testimony by his collaborator Kenneth Sinclair Loutit (1913-2003) is explicit in its reference to Richardson's open homosexuality during that second visit to Spain:

> Stores and staff were beginning to arrive. Among the first new faces were those of Peter Spencer (Viscount Churchill)[20] and of Stanley Richardson [...] it is impossi-

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[16] See the photographs of Lorca with Cernuda in April 1931 and April 1936 (Estrella de Diego, et. al, 216, 217).

[17] See Lorca's letter to Cernuda (Spring 1931?): "Tengo el gusto de presentarte a Serafín Fernández Ferro" (707-708). Cernuda's "amor malagueño" in 1933 was Gerardo Carmona. In exile in Mexico he has a perhaps "platonic" relationship with Salvador Alighieri (See, for example, Antonio Rivero Taravillo's "Cernuda a/en los cincuenta.").

[18] On the sexuality of Lorca's *pandilla*, see, also, Ángel Sahuquillo.

[19] María Teresa León called Cernuda "uno de los más altos poetas" (260).

[20] Victor (Peter) Spencer (1890-1973) and Kenneth Sinclair Loutit established the First British Hospital at Grañén a small town near Huesca on the Aragon Front. "They were helped by Churchill's friend, Stanley Richardson, who had joined him on the way and was a fine interpreter" (Fyrth).

ble to remember these two without remembering also some of their more outrageous goings-on. [...] I had known Stanley at Cambridge. Without question he was a talented poet. He was also wildly gay and oddly innocent. Indeed I believe him to be unique in that he really and truly was once afraid that he was going to have a baby after a series of country walks he had been taking with a Rugby blue. [...] Stanley Richardson I had not seen since Cambridge where he had been a brilliant Spanish scholar and had since become a superb interpreter. Despite their talents I doubted whether, either separately or together, they were suited to the current atmosphere of Barcelona. I was not entirely right, as I later found that Stanley went down surprisingly well with macho types, especially big, ferocious, pistol-toting anarchists [...] For someone of Stanley's temperament it was not possible to be in a city like Barcelona and to go to bed early [...] he and Peter Spencer went out one evening [...] it seems that they had discovered a Café with a night life that suited them [...] Stanley went back alone to the Café in question, which turned out to be a resort of the Partida Obrera Unificada Marxista [sic], the Trotskist grouping (POUM). Stanley told me that he had had a wonderful evening and had heard a lot of "terribly naughty conversation." It seems that the people in that place made fun of absolutely everybody and everything. He had met with great success in that café "because you see I know Llorca [sic] by heart and they were making spontaneous poetry, each table contributing a line with me throwing in a line of Llorca [sic] or one of my own." It was clear that this was the safe harbour of a broad anti-Stalinist wedge of the population, as well as being the meeting place of left-wing gays and other non-conformists. But fun though it may have been this second visit allowed Stanley to smell danger and he drew back. Soon after this Stanley took fright; in Barcelona the noise and the killings became too much for him and he went home.

On his return to London, Richardson became the press attaché for the Spanish ambassador and was one of the founders of the Arden Society for Artists and Writers Exiled in England. During the Spanish civil war, he continued to publish in Spain, for example in *Hora de España*, the Republican journal founded in Valencia by Rafael Alberti, Juan Gil Albert and others. Richardson's work appeared in that magazine's number 13 (January 1938) which contained also Antonio Machado, Jacinto Benavente, Emilio Prados and others. Richardson's work also appeared in Stephen Spender and John Lehmann, eds., *Poems for Spain* (London, The Hogarth Press, 1939). In 1938 Richardson published a 4-pp-leaflet, "Air-Raid over Barcelona."[21]

Richardson helped his intimate friend Luis Cernuda leave Spain[22] for England by providing him with a visa and organizing for him a series of talks on the

[21] Among Richardson's other published work: "Un nuevo romance del Cid," *Revista de Filología* 2 (1935): 246; "Christmas 1937, A Christmas Poem for Spain"; the broadside "The Calpe Hunt" (1937), "Dark Blue Sunlight" (1938); "To a Certain Priest" (*Spain at War* 3 (June 1938)), a translation of José Moreno Villa's poem "Madrid Front" in *New Writing* 1 (Autumn 1938), and "The Heart's Renewal" (1940).

[22] Federico García Lorca had been assassinated in August of 1936, friends of the openly gay Cernuda had been arrested and he was quite obviously in danger in his own country. Of interest is

topic of the Spanish civil war. However the "relación sentimental" (Rivero Taravillo, "París" 11) between the two men apparently had gone sour. Cernuda wrote to his friend Rafael Martínez Nadal in August of 1938 that Richardson had come to see him in Paris but that he had not wanted to see him: "Esa criatura es incorregible. Es un ejemplo del vicio como lo pintan en los libros morales para niños: repulsivo y de una pieza" (Letter of 6 August in Martínez Nadal, 42, and in Valender, *Luis* 246). Rivero Taravillo writes that Cernuda fled England not only because he did not fit in there but that he also fled from Richardson: "No quería estar pegado a las faldas de Richardson , con el que la amistad se ha convertido en desapego, cuando no en abierta enemistad (sólo por parte del sevillano)" (Rivero Taravillo, "París" 10). By all accounts Cernuda was a difficult person,[23] but after a brief return to Spain he again came to England, and Richardson helped him find a teaching position in the Granleigh School, Surrey. In 1938 Richardson and Cernuda translated the Wordsworth sonnets "El roble de Guernica" and "Cólera de un español altanero." They worked on an (unpublished) anthology of Spanish poetry translated to English. Cernuda and Richardson had become very intimate, Richardson dedicating to Cernuda the poem "Swan Lake" and Cernuda to Richardson his "Por unos tulipanes amarillos" (*Invocaciones*).[24]

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the play "La realidad es otra" by José Maestro which includes Stanley Richardson as a character who urges Cernuda to leave Spain and come live with him in his London home: <http://www.cervantes-virtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/ 12475074233470495654657/004200.pdf>.

[23] In his review of Rivero Taravillo's *Luis Cernuda* book, Luis Antonio de Villena writes: "El propio Rivero Taravillo insiste a menudo (aunque no sin benevolencia) en la dificultad psicológica de Cernuda, que le hizo tener siempre muy pocos amigos, y aún esos—como Aleixandre o Stanley Richardson—siempre en riesgo de caída."

[24] Cernuda's passion for the young Englishman is apparent in his verses. Derek Harris (61, footnote) refers to the obvious phallic symbol of the tulips in Cernuda's poem: "Por unos tulipanes amarillos": Tragando sueño tras un vidrio impalpable / Entre las dobles fauces, / Tuyas, pereza, de ti / también, costumbre, / Vivía en un país del claro sur / Cuando a mí vino, alegre mensaje de algún / dios, / No sé qué aroma joven, / Hálito henchido de tibieza prematura. [...] Con gesto enamorado / Me adelantó los tiernos fulgores vegetales, / Sosteniendo su goteante claridad, / Forma llena de seducción terrestre, / En unos densos tulipanes amarillos /Erguidos como dichas entre verdes espadas. [...] Tendido en la yacija del mortal más sombrío / Tuve tus alas, rubio mensajero, / En transporte de ternura y rencor entremezclado; / Y mordí duramente la verdad del amor para que no pasara /Y palpitara fija / En la memoria de alguien, / Amante, dios o la muerte en su día.[...] Tú, lluvia que entierras este día primero de la / ausencia, / Como si nada ni nadie hubiera de amar más, / Dame tierra, una llama, que traguen puramente /Esas flores borrosas, /Y con ellas / El peso de una dicha hurtada al rígido destino. Cernuda returns to the yellow tulips in his poem "Impresión de destierro" in which he also refers to the young man with foreign accent, surely Richardson: Fué la pasada primavera, /Hace ahora casi un año, /En un salón del viejo Temple, en Londres, [...] Un hombre silencioso estaba / Cerca de mí. Veía / La sombra de su largo perfil algunas veces / Asomarse abstraído al borde de la taza, / Con la misma fatiga / Del muerto que volviera / Desde la tumba a una fiesta mundana. [....] Tras largas escaleras casi a oscuras, /Me hallé luego en la calle, / Y a mi lado, al volverme, / Vi otra vez aquel hombre silencioso, / Que habló indistinto algo /Con acento extranjero, / Un acento de niño en voz envejecida.

When the Spanish Republic fell in 1939, Richardson lost his post at the Spanish Embassy but continued his work with the Arden Society. He began an autobiography (he was only 27 years old) and another collection of poems but was killed in a bombardment in London in 1941. Among his papers in the archives of St. John's Library: the manuscript of the poem "Be Blind My Soul," the short story "The Prodigal Brother," the announcement of his memorial service (of 8 March 1941) and nine letters.

It is unfortunate that Luis Cernuda destroyed the letters he received from Richardson[25] and that we have no letters from Lorca to the English poet.[26] The previously unpublished, handwritten letter to Federico García Lorca now housed in the García Lorca Foundation is a welcome addition to the Richardson legacy. In the salutation, he addresses the Spanish poet as his "Admirado amigo," indicating that he has already met Lorca. Perhaps he wrote the letter to Lorca on the 12th or 13th of March, immediately after seeing *Yerma* with Morla Lynch and in the letter was written to express his hopes of seeing Lorca once again before leaving Spain:

[Handwritten letter[27] on hotel stationery:]

Gredos-Hotel
Madrid
Eduardo Dato, 8 (Gran Vía)
Teléfono 22,843

[February-March 1935][28]

Admirado amigo,
He visto a su obra *Yerma* que me entusiasma. Le saludo con toda apreciación.

¿Cuándo le veo cara a cara para decirle cuanto me gusta?

Sinceramente,
Stanley Richardson

These recently discovered documents offer new information on Stanley Richardson and his sojourns in Spain and shed new light on Anglo-Spanish literary

[25] In exile, Cernuda had left his books and papers in Madrid. See the letter (of October 27, 1956) to his friend José Luis Cano there: "debes romper las cartas de Concha de Albornoz y de Stanley Richardson" (Cernuda correspondence edited by Valender, *Luis Cernuda* 603).

[26] Richardson's translation of Lorca, "Bells of Cordoba" was set to music (for voice and piano) by Lennox Berkeley (London, Chester, 1940).

[27] The letter is Number COA-844 (De Paepe et. al.).

[28] De Paepe and his collaborators date this letter December 1934. I correct the date to fall between Richardson's arrival in Spain in February 1935 and his departure on the 13th of March and I conjecture here that he wrote the letter immediately after the March performance of *Yerma* which he attended with Carlos Morla Lynch.

relations in the mid twentieth century and on the Spanish literary circles that to an extent centered on Federico García Lorca and his close-knit group of fellow writers and intellectuals.

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DISSOLVING THE FALSE DIVIDE: LITERARY STRATEGIES FOR RE-SITUATING HUMANS ECOLOGICALLY AND NON-HUMANS ETHICALLY*

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ABSTRACT

Dualistic thinking has led Western civilization to a logic of domination which justifies the exploitation over those perceived as others, among which is nature. Following primarily philosopher Val Plumwood's analysis of dualisms, this article takes up her call for developing counter-hegemonic strategies to change this logic, adopting a new cultural paradigm that would grant non-human others ethical consideration. The article explores diverse literary strategies, with examples in contemporary American literature, that dismantle the false dichotomies human/non-human and mind/matter, allowing readers to re-situate humans within the biosphere and develop a dialogical and communicative relationship with earth others that would provide an adequate ethical response to the non-human world.

KEY WORDS: Dualisms, hyper-separation, ecological embeddedness, dialogism, human/non-human, otherization of nature, nature's agency, biophilia, giving voice to nature, ethics of care.

RESUMEN

El pensamiento dualístico ha llevado a la civilización occidental a desarrollar una lógica de dominación que justifica la explotación de aquellos percibidos como el otro, entre ellos la naturaleza. Basado principalmente en el análisis de dichos dualismos realizado por la filósofa Val Plumwood, este artículo responde a su llamamiento de desarrollar estrategias contrahegemónicas para cambiar esta lógica y adoptar un nuevo paradigma cultural que concediera una consideración ética a los seres no-humanos. El artículo explora diversas estrategias literarias, con ejemplos extraídos de la literatura norteamericana contemporánea, que desmontan las falsas dicotomías, humano/no-humano y mente/materia, permitiendo que los lectores resitúen los seres humanos dentro de su biosfera contextual para así desarrollar una relación dialógica y comunicativa con otros seres naturales con el fin de alcanzar una adecuada respuesta ética al mundo no-humano.

PALABRAS CLAVE: dualismos, hiper-separación, arraigo ecológico, dialogismo, humano/no-humano, la otredad de la naturaleza, "agencialidad" de la naturaleza, biofilia, dar voz a la naturaleza, ética del cuidado.

In our current globalized world everything is defined in terms of economic and political jurisdictions. We are obsessed with the market, an abstract "confidence game" which determines whether countries are rated well or poorly, and whether people have jobs or not, have homes or are forced to leave them. Only the numbers of the stock market, foreign debt, bank capitals and so forth seem to be important. Everything is quantified with numbers, leaving the natural side of events out. While humans have been defined as social beings, our social relationships are increasingly more abstract, dwelling in virtual networks with minimal human contact or face to face interaction. Moreover, we have less and less contact with nature as we live in our sheltered constructed worlds. As philosopher Val Plumwood states in *Environmental Culture*, this contributes to our sense of disembeddedness; we have lost track of our physical place within the world and have ceased to see ourselves as ecologically constrained beings. This self-enclosure as humans denies our material reality as natural beings dependent on the biosphere. We humans cling to our rationality and faith in quick techno-fixes for all problems, including environmental ones, but our decisions concerning our lifestyle and the environment do not appear to be rational at all. We can see and scientifically prove the disaster we are headed for, given the rate of climate change, deforestation, ocean degradation, species extinction, and mounting toxic wastes but we "rationally" decide to continue "full speed ahead" with "business as usual." Even after the major financial crisis, which highlights the flaws in the system, no substantial changes have been made in the financial markets, nor has our system been seriously questioned. What is more, given the concern over the financial crisis, any attempts to address environmental issues have virtually been abandoned. One might do well to question our supposed rationality.

We need to change our course to avoid disaster, to change the way we do business, to change our culture. Although there are scientific and technological solutions which can contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle, we are not applying them consistently. When some aspect of business "goes green" it is usually because there is an underlying profit in it. The values of our culture seem to be based solely on the market. Thus, our environmental crisis, among others, is not a question of technology but rather of values; either we develop a culture that values the environment and other species, or the disaster will not be avoided. We need a culture that acknowledges our ecological embeddedness and dependence on the biosphere and which views non-human others in terms of ethics. Our dominant Western rationalist culture hinges on dualistic thinking, such as mind/body, human/nature or civilized/primitive. It privileges the mind over matter, human over non-human, science and technology over natural systems, and minimizes our dependency on nature. This has led to the logic of domination where colonizing cultures have dominated other smaller, but ecologically-adapted cultures. Our society values success, but we define success by material gain and exploitation. Quality of living is rated on na-

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tional GNP, abstract figures of economical indicators, rather than the measure of the alternative GNH (Gross National Happiness—a measure of well-being and happiness). We need a change of values and discourse, one that would re-situate humans in ecological terms and the non-human in ethical terms. But this requires a major shift of cultural paradigms, one that cannot be dictated by authorities or legislation. The objective of this article is to illustrate how different literary strategies can contribute towards this re-situating of the human and non-human, dissolving the false divide between mind and matter, human and nature. For this purpose, I will first look at some of the consequences of this dualistic thinking to later develop and illustrate how works of fiction can help us to re-assess and re-situate ourselves in this world.

Val Plumwood and other scholars such as Karen Warren, Carolyn Merchant and Freya Mathews amply track the development of dualistic thinking and its relationship to the scientific development of Western civilization. This dualistic thinking leads to a logic of domination and the othering of diverse peoples and species. Plumwood in her study, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* outlines the basic characteristics of dualistic thinking which she later develops in what she has called the "ecological crisis of reason" found in *Environmental Culture*. Dualistic thinking dates back to the early times of our culture and human centeredness. Dualism, according to Plumwood is "an emphatic and distancing form of separation (hyper-separation or disassociation) which creates a sharp ontological break or radical discontinuity between groups identified as the privileged "centre" and those subordinated" (101).[1] She points out that most hegemonic centrisms are based on dualisms and that the representations of these, as different from distinctions and dichotomies, have the ability to create their own realities. Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, observes that the vision of the centered group and the material reality of these created realities prop each other up and help sustain themselves, in such a manner that the other is "contained and represented by dominating frameworks" (40-44). These dualistic constructions end up in polarizations and false dichotomies (Plumwood 101) which characterize our perception of realities and others. The consequences of these dualisms have been studied by feminists and postcolonial scholars. Dualism, as Plumwood structures, is characterized by five characteristics: radical exclusion, backgrounding, instrumentalization, incorporation and homogenization.[2] These characteristics have made the others available to the center and have been used to justify and to rationalize their treatment. A brief description of each will illustrate their implication for earth others and constitute the necessary framework for the literary strategies which follow.

Radical exclusion or hyper-separation refers to the fact that we tend to define ourselves by that which we are not, by that which separates ourselves from the other, emphasizing the difference and creating a sharp impermeable boundary. Ra-

[1] All quotes from Plumwood are from *Environmental Culture*.
[2] See chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis.

tionality is one such thing that has been used to define human beings, and initially solely man. The ability to reason has been the defining characteristic as early as Aristotle, who in his *Nicomachean Ethics* affirms that "reason more than anything else is man" (Book X, chapter 7). Feminist, postcolonial and ethnic studies scholars can easily recall historical examples in which women were considered inferior to men because they allegedly were not rational, rather emotional. Likewise, slaves, indigenous peoples and other racialized minorities have a long history of being considered inferior because their skull bone structure was smaller, their skin color darker or because they allegedly could not reason. Hyper-separation implies marking the other as inferior and denying any possibility that the other might have any similar qualities to those of the dominant group. In the case of nature, the fact that animals and other living organisms are not "rational" results in their "clear" inferiority. Their inability to reason is often coupled with other related qualities. Arguments which have often been made to judge animals as inferior are their alleged inability to suffer or to establish affective relationships, show loyalty and so forth. As in the case of women and other marginalized peoples, this has been proven false and science today is demonstrating mental and emotional qualities in many animals. But traditionally, in our culture, reason has been the yardstick by which worth and more importantly, moral value, has been measured and thus nature and non-human others have been considered inferior, with no ethical consideration.

A second characteristic is that which Plumwood calls backgrounding. The potential or contribution of the group which is othered is denied. Similarly with feminist and post-colonial history, the contribution of women and slaves or indigenous peoples has been neglected, omitted and denied. As a result, the center or the dominant hegemony cannot allow itself to be seen as dependent in any way on that other, who has no potential. Thus, the other is not needed and rendered totally unessential. In the case of nature and non-human others, since they have no potential and no ability to contribute, their role is omitted, denied and considered irrelevant. Nature is perceived as passive, an object, never a subject and humans deny our dependence on nature, despite the very obvious reliance on it—simply by thinking about our need of the sun, water or plants for food make the argument totally "irrational," regardless of how "rational" our logic might be.

A third characteristic of dualist thinking is that of homogenization. Differences among the members of the otherized group are disregarded. These members are not individuals but a stereotyped non-entity, easily replaced and members are interchangeable. Thus, the argument goes one slave is the same as the next; all women are the same (emotional, weak, etc) and want to have children, and so forth. Similarly hegemonic centers tend to homogenize other cultures, languages and values, perceiving them as inferior or backwards. Recognizing diversity is unimportant and often viewed more of a problem than a wealth. Needless to say, one type of tree is as good as another, if one species become extinct, there are many more and so natural diversity is completely unimportant. As long as there are those species, both animal and plant, that we use, the rest are irrelevant.

A fourth characteristic of dualist thinking is incorporation or relational identity. The identity of the other is assimilated to that of the center: the melting

pot. The only values that have any worth are those of the hegemonic center. In our day and age, that implies the values associated with the market economy and capitalism. If the otherized group does not have those values, the group is deemed marginal, devalued and irrelevant. The identity of the marginalized group has often hinged on the identity of its "master." For a long time, women's worth and identity (and often that of slaves) depended on the worth of their husband (or master); they had no value or identity of their own. A classic example of the importance of adopting the values of the center is the clash over the concept of land: as private property for the colonizers and communal for indigenous peoples. The other, in order to be recognized, has to assimilate and adapt to the values of the center. The center feels the right to re-make the other in its self-image in order to recognize it. An illustrative example is the Spielberg film *Amistad* (about an 1839 slave mutiny), where, until the protagonist Cinqué starts "reading" the images of the Bible (his initiation to the values of Christianity) and wearing Westernized clothes to court and telling a structured narrative, imbued with values of justice, family and the right to freedom, he is totally ignored in court and not considered a human being. To a large degree women and members of minority groups have had to assimilate to most of the values of the hegemonic center (white Euroamerican patriarchy) in order to be recognized. Those who haven't, remain marginal. In the case of nature, the difficulty is obvious. Because nature does not share our values, its needs are not recognized. Non-human others are only recognized to the degree that they can assimilate our values. For example, pets, in that they live with humans and respond with loyalty to human needs, have received some recognition, at least as sentient beings. To the degree that research is proving the similarities in the social organization of primates, we can see the development of the Great Ape Project which aims to award certain rights to great apes. But the great majority of non-human others are denied any needs or rights, or more importantly, any ethical consideration. The newly developing field of eco-justice is an attempt at redressing this prejudice.[3]

And finally the fifth characteristic is that of instrumentalism, closely linked to the previous. Because the other has no potential, no individuality, its subjecthood, agency and value are downgraded. If there is no agency or value, then the other has no ethical weight nor deserves any ethical consideration. If we owe it no respect, it becomes an object which we can use as we wish and there are no limits to our intrusion upon the other since it has no rights (or they are not recognized). Women were made to serve men, slaves to serve their masters, indigenous peoples to serve the colonizer. The master decided the needs of the other and these could be adapted to serve the needs of the center. This aspect is primarily the means by which the hegemonic center has justified its treatment and abuse of the other. In the case of nature, since the non-human other is clearly perceived as an object and usually non-sentient, any abuse or exploitation to serve the needs of the center are still justified. Obvious examples are animal testing for human products, the destruction of habi-

[3] See Schlosberg and Nussbaum.

tats for housing, overfishing for consumption and so forth. In the case of nature, this abuse is not even considered an ethical issue since nature has no ethical weight, rather the exploitation is perceived as something legitimate, as the means to the needs of the center. Thus, these five characteristics illustrate how dualistic thinking contributes to the oppression and exploitation of those groups perceived as other. These conceptual borders which separate "people from animals, facilitate the indignities we wreak upon them" (Malamud 6). Dualistic thinking has served to create the logic of domination: the center is justified in dominating the other due to its perceived inferiority.

Nevertheless, the purpose of this article is not to denounce these injustices but rather to find and analyze literary strategies which might contribute to effect a change of this state of affairs. As Elizabeth Ammons, in her critique of the role of humanities, states, "If we do not include answers alongside critiques, hope alongside anger, and activism alongside discourse and *talk about both terms* in each of these pairs, what is the point?" (emphasis in original 12). This article discusses both terms and attempts one possible answer. Plumwood's "counter-hegemonic" strategy in order to initiate the change of paradigm could be such a one. She argues that the logic of othering illustrates that it is "not the primitiveness and unworthiness of the other but our own species' arrogance that is the main barrier to forming ethical and responsive relationships with earth others." We need an "alternative self-critical rationality" to find the source of our attitudes towards nature (167). She suggests that this new paradigm be based on a dialogical relationship with earth others which would develop an interspecies ethics. One clear counter-hegemonic strategy Plumwood calls for is the breaking down of the human/nature dualism. Rather than insist on finding out which earth others "deserve" recognition due to their similarity with humans (a strategy of many animal rights advocates, of which Peter Singer and the Great Ape Project are examples), Plumwood suggests that we question what being human means and what anthropocentric prejudices are found in our otherizing stances which impede our relationship with earth others (168). Therefore, by dissolving the false dichotomy of human/nature, one could try to view all species as interdependent and with intrinsic value in themselves. She argues that the task is to adopt an "adequate ethical response to the non-human world:" one that would involve developing "narrative and communicative ethics and responses to the other, developing care and guardianship ethics, [...] [and] alternative conceptions of human virtue that include care for the non-human world..." These responses can be carried out by "developing the stances of openness and attention," needed for "dialogical and communicative relationships of sensitivity, negotiation and mutual adaptation" (169-170). To do so, she argues that we need to change our vocabularies to "eliminate unwarranted and unnecessary rationalism and intellectualism" (174) and substitute these with an intentional stance of recognizing earth others as fellow agents and narrative subjects. This stance of openness would allow us to acknowledge the "agential and dialogical potentialities of earth others" and to "re-animate nature" (177). Precisely an animate nature was common to myth and remains so in many indigenous societies and is something which poets have very frequently represented; Plumwood notes that, ironically, this function of poets has

often distinguished them, negatively, from the prestige awarded to philosophy (N 17, 263). Ammons usefully points out that an essential value of literature (and the humanities in general) "resides in the power of texts to teach us about ourselves, [...] [and also] in the power of words to inspire us, to transform us, to give strength and courage for the difficult task of *re*-creating the world" (emphasis in original 14).

This article therefore seeks to highlight some counter-hegemonic strategies in contemporary literature that would dissolve these false divides created by dualistic thinking and re-animate nature. One counter-hegemonic stance derived from these theories is the recognition of the continuity of the human and non-human and their interdependence. It is a question of focusing on our similarities rather than our differences, while accepting those differences and embracing the value of diversity and the intrinsic value of each species, thus negating our tendency of hyper-separation. It also implies the recognition of our own human animality, striving for a mind-body unity that privileges neither term. Philosopher, Freya Mathews also suggests in her book, *For Love of Matter*, the need for a non-dualistic view of matter which would put the "mind in matter and matter in mind" (27) and find a way to "sing back to life a world that has become so brutally silenced" (8). Adopting this open stance, one of listening, of recognizing the communicative potential of earth others and acknowledging their agency is of dire necessity. The issue of agency in nature is currently undergoing much debate, particularly from the perspective of material feminisms and material ecocriticism. Many philosophers and critics are attempting to divest the concept of agency from the human concept of intentionality in order to understand non-human agency. For example, philosopher and physicist Karen Barad speaks of agential realism where "the universe is agential interactivity in its becoming. The primary ontological units are not "things" but phenomena—dynamic topological reconfiguring /entanglements /relationalities / (re)articulations. [...] Agency is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfiguring of the world" (135). Thus, both human and non-human nature have agency simply by their "doing" or "being" in the world and are inextricably entangled and meshed together. Although I will not dwell on this developing theory,[4] the notion of non-human agency is certainly one that needs to be addressed in any counter-hegemonic strategy. As previously mentioned, poets have "heard" nature speak all along. In his study of animal literature, Malamud defends the concept of an "empathizing imagination," one that "can be enlisted to enhance the awareness of sentient, cognitive, ethical, and emotional *affinities between people and animals*" (emphasis in original 9). Therefore, it is my contention that through diverse literary strategies writers and poets can help us imagine and perceive a different relationship with all earth others. Literature can certainly develop that narrative and communicative response to the other which Plumwood suggested. Fiction, with its imaginative truth, can dissolve the dualism of human/nature and allow us to see that communicative potential and

[4] See S. Alaimo and S. Hekman, eds., *Material Feminisms*.

agency of the non-human and provide an essential step in the re-creation of worldly relationships.

As mentioned, one first strategy would be to affirm the continuity and interdependence between the human and the non-human in an effort to undermine the dualistic hyper-separation. Numerous writers weave this interdependence throughout their work. For example, writer Rudolfo Anaya, long considered the "poet of the llano" and known for the archetypal values to his landscapes, always emphasizes the intimate relationship between his human characters and their environment. He readily acknowledges his dependence on nature when he recalls that his "earliest memories were molded by the forces in [his] landscape: sun, wind, rain, the llano, the river. And all of these forces were working to create the people that walked across [his] plane of vision" ("Writer's" 99). Likewise he affirms the continuity between the human and the non-human when he states that "The landscape changes man, and the man becomes landscape" ("Writer" 46). Moreover, a reciprocal relationship with earth others is emphasized in many of his characters. For example, Antonio, the young protagonist of Anaya's first and best known novel *Bless Me, Ultima*, has his epiphany in landscape when he realizes that he was " a very important part of the teeming life of the llano and the river" (37). This entanglement between different species is also reiterated in his more recent Sonny Baca detective series. In the first of the quartet, *Zia Summer*, Don Eliseo, spiritual mentor for Sonny, explains that "the raices, Sonny, beneath the earth the roots of all these trees stretch far, connecting to other trees, until the entire valley is connected. You can't kill a tree and not kill the past. The trees are like the gente [people] of the valley, sooner or later we're all related....How can I cut down my history? (*Zia* 75). Eliseo clearly exhibits that ethics of care when he refuses to cut down a tree which has been tagged by municipal authorities as dead and decides to nurse it back to health, "his ear pressed against the tree, like a doctor to the heartbeat of a patient" (5). Eliseo feels "like that old tree,...dry, but still alive"(66). Moreover, the final highlight of the novel is not Sonny's victory over Raven, rather the fact that "the viejecitos of the valley would remember it was the summer when Don Eliseo's tree recovered miraculously and offered forth its green leaves" (386). People in Anaya's novels share reactions with animals, and natural phenomenon affect the daily lives of both: "The moods of the city swung to the moods of the weather. The desert people of the high, arid Río Grande plateau were like horny toads, they could go a long time without rain, but they paid the price. The dry electricity in the air created a tension within, a fiery disposition that put nerves on edge" (*Zia* 224). Humans and on-humans coexist on the same level.

In a similar manner, writer Terry Tempest Williams emphasizes the interrelationships between human and non-human in the very structure of her autobiography, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. Each chapter is titled with the name of a bird from the Migratory Bird Refuge, and the rising level of the Great Salt Lake. In each chapter, William's personal story runs parallel to the fate of the birds, where different species are individualized, and the level of the lake—the three elements are inseparable, both in the structure of the book and in the events that take place. The birds, the land and her family are treated with similar care. In the

writing, Williams acknowledges this relationship explicitly: "The birds and I share a natural history. It is a matter of rootedness, of living inside a place for so long that the mind and imagination fuse" (21). The relationship between humans is intermeshed with the relationships to the land: "Our attachment to the land was our [she and her grandmother] attachment to each other" (15). Similarly, Linda Hogan throughout her novels emphasizes the continuity between the human and the non-human. In *Solar Storms*, Angela realized that she "was part of the same equation as birds and rain" (79). As Malamud suggests, the goal of literary texts on animals should be to "situate poet/reader and animal as coterminous; cohabitants; simultaneous, and thus ecologically and experientially equal" (33). I would suggest that this can also apply to all earth others, each with their own characteristics and needs.

Thus, these three writers, among many others, show different ways of emphasizing the continuity and interdependence between humans and non-humans. These passages do not attempt to homogenize the earth others or to judge them by human standards; rather they strive to illustrate points in common. We have already seen examples of placing earth others on the same plane as humans. In some cases, writers stress the common animality of all beings, thus making the point further. This is not only an aspect of a literary imagination. E.O. Wilson, a renowned writer (twice Pulitzer Prize winner) and Harvard Professor of Science provides a possible scientific (and thus "rational") answer. In 1984 Wilson put forth the "biophilia hypothesis." Biophilia, he believes is the "innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms." He further expands: "Innate means hereditary and hence part of ultimate human nature. Biophilia, like other patterns of complex behavior, is likely to be mediated by rules of prepared and counterprepared learning—the tendency to learn or to resist learning certain responses as opposed to others" (31). Thus, biophilia is both a learned and genetically encoded attitude which still persists. However, in Western cultures today this affinity has been weakened and "untaught," remaining, to a large degree encoded in ritual and myth (31), while it remains more active in diverse indigenous cultures, where we can find multiple examples, both in their rituals and beliefs as well as in their literatures.

In Linda Hogan's *People of the Whale*, the traditional song of the tribe emphasizes this shared animality and reciprocity: "Grandmother whale, Grandfather whale. If you come to land we have beautiful leaves and trees. We have warm places. We have babies to feed and we'll let your eyes gaze upon them. We will let your soul become a child again. We'll pray it back into a body. It will enter our bodies. You will be part human. We'll be part whale" (*People* 22-23). This passage reminds us of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming-animal," the fluidity between and among species. Deleuze and Guattari revert to myth as a place where the prevalence of inter-species transformations and transmigrations highlight the continuity and affinity between species. Myth challenges rigid species distinctions; however, Deleuze and Guattari take it further and affirm that "becoming" implies alliance between species (Malamud 11). The importance of myth is not only mentioned by Wilson and Deleuze and Guattari, but Freya Mathews also insists on the need for myths and a cosmological rehabilitation to give our cultures their viability, a workable

worldview which would counter the dead end which Newtonianism has led us to. She proposes panpsychism, a theory in which "all things are included in one all-embracing consciousness in a manner which displays itself as their containment in a single spatiotemporal system" (*For Love* 28). Panpsychism rejects the dualistic thinking of the Cartesian and Newtonian foundations of classic mechanistic science and according to Mathews, can serve to re-animate nature.[5]

One of the elements most used to hyper-separate humans from non-humans is that of language. The human capacity to speak, to construct an abstract system of communication has been considered as a major feature of our rationality, and thus an example of human superiority and an exercise of intellectualism. Earth others are backgrounded by denying their potential to communicate. Thus, a second counter-hegemonic strategy would be to question the superiority of human language for communication. Donna Haraway notes that "Nature may be speechless, without language, in the human sense; but nature is highly articulate. Discourse is only one process of articulation" ("Promises" 324). Human speech, thus, is only one manner of articulating feelings or messages. Haraway continues that "to articulate is to signify." She plays on Descartes' rationalism and clarifies: "We articulate; therefore, we are" ("Promises" 324). Haraway like Plumwood and Mathews, bring us back to the Cartesian attempt to venerate reason and relegate all other ways of knowing as inferior. Although Haraway continues her argument in a different direction, she does question the establishment of distinct boundaries and categories of beings. Her repositioning of subjectivity and perception is important as is her argument against the boundary of science vs. culture and the objectivity of the former. She argues for the need to find a way to perceive nature with a different gaze, other than that of reification and possession ("Promises" 296). Given our tendency to consider rationality as a marker of superiority, and with that language, one literary strategy is precisely to question the role of language. Language may be a form of articulation, and certainly is central to a literary work that relies on language, but literature can also illustrate how language creates barriers. Ursula LeGuin, in "She Unnames Them," one of the stories of her collection of poems and stories, *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences*, plays on the passage from *Genesis* where Adam names all the animals. In this case, Eve "unnames" the animals in an effort to dissolve the boundary between human and non-human created by names and language. Once she has done so, Eve reflects that the animals

> seemed far closer than when their names had stood between myself and them like a clear barrier: so close that my fear of them and their fear of me became one same fear. And the attraction that many of us felt, the desire to smell one another's scales or skin or feathers or fur, taste one another's blood or flesh, keep one another arm,—that attraction was now all one with the fear, and the hunter could not be told from the hunted, nor the eater from the food. (235)

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[5] For a discussion of the need of cosmology and myth, see F. Mathews, *The Ecological Self*. For her defense of panpsychism, see *For Love of Matter*.

This text comments on the act of naming, which has long been considered a form of exercising power over those silent or silenced. As the names are "returned," Eve perceives the increased closeness between the human (who has left behind the marker of superiority) and the non-human. Both are on the level now, tentatively and fearfully exploring the new relationship. In this text, LeGuin breaks down the human/non-human divide where skin and scales and fur and feathers become simply different types of "clothing," acknowledging the diversity but rendering it meaningless from a hierarchical value perspective. At the end of the story, when Eve has also given back her name to Adam and leaves the Garden of Eden, she realizes that the change is difficult and that it requires a whole new perspective, a new language: "my words now must be as slow, as new, as single, as tentative as the steps I took going down the path away from the house..." (236). Nevertheless, she is committed to the change in values, to finding a new way to relate to the non-human world, one in which all species would be equally valued and accorded an ethical dimension.

Language as a barrier to expressing, hearing or perceiving the real truth is also addressed by Linda Hogan in her novels. In *Solar Storms* Angela finds humans to be inarticulate: "most of us had inarticulate souls, silent spirits" (181). She is also taught, here echoing the theory of E.O. Wilson, that "there once had been a covenant between animals and men" but now it had been broken (*Solar* 35). She learns that "the division between humans and animals was a false one. There were times, even recent times, when they both spoke the same language" (*Solar* 81-82). Her journey of learning allows her to hear nature: "I thought I heard the voices of the world, of what was all around us—the stones, the waters flowing toward their ends, the osprey with its claws in fish, even the minnows and spawn. I heard trees with their roots holding ground" (*Solar* 181). Similarly, the protagonist of the novel *Power*, Omishto, also comments on the unnecessary interference of words and that through silence, one can "survive and be friends with this land" (*Power* 19) and learn to understand the language of nature: "words are such noisy things and silence is something you have to listen to and when you do, it takes you by the hand, it catches hold of you. It tells you how to know things, like how sounds travel, where a certain bird is calling from" (*Power* 19). Finally Angela comes to the conclusion, that if the barrier of language were removed, the truth would emerge:

> I began to feel that if we had no separate words for inside and out and there were no boundaries between them, no walls, no sky, you would see me. What would meet your eyes would not be the mask of what had happened to me, not the evidence of violence, not even how I closed the doors to the rooms of anger and fear. Some days you would see fire; other days, water. Or earth. You would see how I am like the night sky with its stars that fall through time and space and arrive here as wolves and fish and people, all of us fed by them... (*Solar* 54)

In these examples we can observe that different species are individualized and have the capacity to act, merely by their doing/being in the world. The human characters take on an open stance of listening. Likewise, these passages render human-rational language as unessential, allowing for other forms of communication

that may well be more accurate. For instance, in Hogan's *Mean Spirit* one reads that Lila Blanket "was a listener to the voice of water, a woman who interpreted the river's story for her people. A river never lied. Unlike humans, it had no need to distort the truth, and she heard the river's voice unfolding like its water across the earth" (5).

Furthermore, these examples also highlight a third counter-hegemonic strategy, that of reversing popular perception. By stressing the elimination of language, the protagonists are able to hear nature, thus granting agency to nature and undercutting the boundary between human and non-human, arguing against the hyperseparation that Plumwood describes. Nature ceases to be passive, an object and is awarded subjecthood. In many instances of Hogan's novels, nature is quoted to be observing humans. In our culture, it is always humans observing the other, nature; humans studying nature either as scientists or viewing TV documentaries, animals in zoos or reading maps and interpreting the land. John Berger denounces that when our "imperial" eye observes the non-human, we are exercising our power over nature (14). We fail to acknowledge that nature has the power to observe us, and thus, deny it any agency. These literary texts force that perception upon the reader. For example, Angela arrives by ferry to Adam's Rib and sees that "the pale trunks of birch trees stood straight; I was certain the dark eyes on their trunks looked at me" (*Solar* 22). Similarly, Omishto, as she enters the swamp "feels watched. By nature, I think now. It's what I felt watching me, all along. It knows us. It watched us. The animals have eyes that see us. The birds, the trees, everything knows what we do" (*Power* 59). In the swamp, after the hurricane, Ama (Omishto's aunt and guide) tracks the panther, a totemic animal for the fictitious Taiga tribe of the novel. Here the agency of the cat is clearly acknowledged by Omishto who observes that "The cat looks back at us. It doesn't run. In the darkness its eyes shine and this is what I see. Eyes. It seems to look right through us. It sees through us. Then, at ease, as if certain we will follow, it moves slowly away. It is calling us forward... That eyeshine is its testimony. Its voice, its words" (*Power* 64). As Ama goes forward, she calls Omishto and the "cat looks up and she shows me to the cat, and what she does is, she introduces me to it, it to me. She says my name as she looks at me, as if I am both an offering and a friend" (*Power* 65). In this passage, the cat is treated as experientially equal and capable of a reciprocal relationship. The panther is neither homogenized nor instrumentalized. Omistho, guided by Ama, who "keeps up relations... with nature and the spirit world" (17), learns to hear the earth and consider it with an ethics of care: "they come to me with their sounds, their wordless voices, their needs, the water, the trees, the animals" (228). The fact that Hogan, repeatedly in her fiction, represents nature as observing humans is a radical departure from the dominant politics of representation which confers agency and voice only to the human viewer. If we allow animals and plants to return our gaze, then we acknowledge their agency and subjecthood, becoming aware of our likenesses and differences, precisely the strategy which Plumwood defends (137).

These literary examples also abound in alternative ways of attaining knowledge. They do not reject rationalism and science; however, they also accept alternative ways, a fourth counter-hegemonic strategy. Wilson and his followers trace the

vestiges of biophilia, concluding that they remain stronger in indigenous communities where knowledge is not just ratiocination but can also be derived from alternative ways of knowing, reaching the same conclusions as scientific knowledge (Nelson 203). Linda Hogan, in her preface to *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World* states as the purpose of her collection of essays to "search out a world of different knowings," through connectedness to nature, based on "lessons learned from the land" (12). Hogan maintains that by listening to nature, we can arrive at the same knowledge as that achieved by science and intellect (19). Echoing Mircea Eliade who affirmed the importance of "learning the language of animals" (98), Hogan recalls that healers in the Native American tradition were called interpreters because they were the ones able to "hear the world and pass its wisdom along" (50). So she, in a manner consistent with the biophilia hypothesis, recalls that not only indigenous people and those who have continued to live in traditional societies are able to hear the "voices of earth but that time ago, the same attitude reigned in Western society, now relegated to the territory of myth (50-51). Hogan, much as theorists Wilson and Mathews, considers myth, not as falsehood, but a "high form of truth" (51). They all accept, as Plumwood, that our culture often insists on an excessive intellectualism, privileging the mind over matter and rejecting material sources of knowledge.

This return to alternative ways of knowing is developed by Mathews, who stresses the unity of mind and matter. *Solar Storms* provides us with excellent examples. In this novel, Angela, together with the three other women, Dora-Rouge who is around one hundred years old, Agnes and Bush, undertake a trip north to the construction site of the dams in Canada and to where Dora's people used to live. The trip not only requires all their strength and ingenuity but it is also a mythic journey connecting Angela to the land and her tribal heritage. During their canoe trip, they find, as a consequence of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project "flooded and drowned" rivers and "other places, once filled with water, [now] were dry" and age old islands which had disappeared" (*Solar* 205). They have to learn to "read" the signs of nature, for maps are totally useless since the "land refused to be shaped by the makers of maps. Land had its own will" (*Solar* 123). The women need to take into account the "mischief and trickiness" of the "defiant land" (123). Our culture's imposition on and instrumentalization of nature, viewing it according to our own prejudices, is made patent as the women realize that maps "were only as accurate as the minds of their makers and those had been men possessed with the spoils of this land" (122). This text also provides an example of how the perception of the map makers (the center) of the other (the land) creates its own reality (the maps which do not fit the terrain), thus confirming the inaccurate view of the center. In the end, the women have to throw away the maps, open themselves up to contingency and alternative ways of knowing, reconnecting mind and body. They learn to rely on Dora-Rouge's "cell-deep memory," a trail her body remembers and one which Angela also sees in dreams: "I'd dreamed them, lakes clear as glass, lakes that were black water and rocked against land, sure as tributaries of my own blood" (137). She sees the trail "as if it were inside me already, the future, alongside a memory of place, people, and even hardship" (137). Here, rational knowledge is eschewed in favor of

other ways of knowing. Angela learns to recover her biophilic learning and to reconnect to the earth. She learns that

> there was a place inside the human that spoke with the land, that entered dreaming, in the way that people in the north found directions in their dreams. They dreamed charts of land and currents of water. They dreamed where food animals lived. These dreams they called hunger maps and when they followed those maps, they found their prey. It was the language animals and humans had in common. People found their cures in the same way (*Solar* 170).

And finally a fifth counter-hegemonic strategy, one which emphasizes the subjecthood of earth others, is literature's ability to give voice to those who do not have it. Giving voice to nature presents a thorny ethical issue, as the mere expression "give voice" implies that we (humans, writers) have the power to "give" that voice. Philosopher Val Plumwood argues that any representation of animal voices or intentions always implies a translation and an interpretation into our cultural and linguistic paradigms, in the same manner of translations from one language and culture into another. She claims that representing animal communication may be difficult but not impossible (58-59). The difficulty, as we have seen, lies in Western cultural paradigms which have privileged rationalism to the extent that it has been used as the measuring stick to hyper-separate humans from the other-than-human-world and in this case, narrowing meaningful communication exclusively to language. However, humans are not the only ones on earth with agency or the capacity to communicate. Donna Haraway also addresses this by pointing out that "in a sociological account of science all sorts of things are actors, only some of which are human language-bearing actors, and that you have to include, as sociological actors, all kinds of heterogeneous entities[...]. This imperative helps to break down the notion that only language-bearing actors have a kind of agency" ("Cyborgs" 5). Many ontological theories of environmental ethics state that humans must acknowledge that they are "interest carriers" any time that they try to attribute subject status to animals or "inanimate" entities such as rocks or rivers. Yet, we as humans make sense of things through words, and as such, in order to understand the non-human, we need words. Literature and that "empathizing imagination" might be one more way to attempt to understand and make sense of our relationships in and with the world: as Malamud states, literature has the potential to present a "valuable (if not complete and flawless) account of what it is like to be a different animal from ourselves" (7). Ecocritic Patrick Murphy claims that for those creatures and entities that do not speak human languages, we must rely on humans to give them a voice and "depict their subject positions in opposition to their objectification by others" (24). The test of how accurate those renderings are needs to be based on the "actions that they call on humans to perform in the world. The voicing is directed at us as agents-in-the-world" (24). Malamud proposes a specific aesthetic ethic that centers animals in our discourse and advances an advocacy methodology (43), much like what Murphy suggests. Political theorist David Schlosberg, in discussing eco-justice, recognizes the need for humans to articulate a voice in the name of nature,

much as the case when advocates or lawyers are used to represent the needs of those unable to do so directly (such as minors or the mentally challenged, always bearing in mind the needs of those represented) (65). Writer Ursula LeGuin also addresses this issue of rendering the natural world as a speaking subject, and she remarks that "very often the re-visioning consists in a "simple" change of point of view" (75).

This shift of perception, a common literary strategy, is made patent in the science fiction *Xenogenesis* series by Octavia Butler. In the first novel, *Dawn*, protagonist Lilith, rescued by aliens from a nuclear disaster, discovers that the aliens have cured her cancer and made her stronger. However, she feels angry because "This was one more thing they had done to her body without her consent and supposedly for her own good. 'We used to treat animals that way,' she muttered bitterly" (*Dawn* 31). By comparing what is being done to her with the way we treat animals, the reader is invited to see the other side and think. Another example could be LeGuin's "The Wife's Story" where we find an example of a shift, of "stepping into the shoes of the other." The wife complains that her husband has changed, returning late and smelling strange. Their children begin to fear their father, so the wife follows him one night:

> I saw the changing. In his feet, it was, first. They got long, each foot got longer, stretching out and the foot getting long, and fleshy, and white. And no hair on them.
> The hair begun to come away all over his body. [...] And he turned his face. It was changing while I looked. It got flatter and flatter, the mouth was flat and wide, and the teeth grinning flat and dull, [...]
> He stood up then on two legs.
> I saw him. I had to see him, my own dear love, turned into the hateful one.
> I couldn't move, [...] burst out into a crazy, awful howling, a grief howl and a terror howl and a calling howl.(81)

This story reverses the myth of the werewolf, forcing the reader to empathize with the she-wolf whose "husband" transforms into a man. The story makes the reader question all the horror tales about human transformation into animals, and consider that the reverse perspective might be equally horrendous to non-human others.

Another example can be found in Aurora Levins Morales' co-authored autobiography *Getting Home Alive*. In a section titled "Distress Signals" she begins by copying a report from Reuters on the unexplained massing of dolphins in Japan in 1974-75 and the beached whales in Australia in 1985 and then makes her creative comment, giving voice to the animals by taking their point of view and addressing humans:

> I flounder, I beach, I drive myself forward, but the ocean is behind me, not ahead. They think we don't understand this, that we are dumb beasts. The small two-legged upright shapes standing outlined against the light of the sky make noises of worry[...].We have come here on purpose: to die, to lay our bodies in front of your noses, to rot in your sight. *The sea, the sea is dying*." (66)

In this fragment we can see this repositioning: the authorial persona takes the point of view of the dolphins and whales and speaks to the humans on the beach, as agents-in-the-world. She recognizes the agency of the animals by implying that the dolphins massed around Iki Island to prevent fishermen from leaving the coast, as the result of their killing hundreds of dolphins entangled in their nets, and she clearly voices that the whales have chosen to commit suicide. Her accuracy in the voicing is tested by the reactions of the animals, which are forced to act as they lack a human language, but their actions are in reality, much more eloquent than any words. Morales, with her empathizing imagination, translates and interprets the actions of the whales in terms that humans can understand. As Malamud suggests, the aesthetic ethics requires that a human and humane response to a "cultural encounter of any kind involving animal subjects, is the development of the consciousness that [humans], as a species, have behaved badly, inexcusably, toward our fellow creatures" (43). As their agents-in-the-world we need to accord non-humans respect and "develop a deeper sense of their integrity, their wisdom and importance on their own terms—not as judged by the criteria of human utility or aesthetics" (43). This is the ethics of care that ecofeminists Plumwood and Karen Warren advocate.

All these literary texts dramatize a continuous process of mutual discovery between human and non-human characters. Non-human others are acknowledged as sentient beings with a degree of agency, while humans learn to be open to listening, to communicating with their earth others and awarding them reciprocal respect. In these examples, non-humans are no longer backgrounded or instrumentalized. By acknowledging their own identities, needs and potential, their subjecthood is made patent, albeit, translated into our cultural paradigm and thus they are made deserving of ethical consideration. Although the representation may be flawed at times, it certainly brings us closer to understanding what it might be like to be an earth other. The fact that the protagonists of these novels show concern and respect for the non-human other also reinforces positively an ethics of care. In doing so these literary texts exercise counter-hegemonic strategies which help dissolve the false dichotomies which our dualistic thinking has created. Moreover, these strategies allow human beings to recall our ecological embeddedness. Randy Malamud states that literature should "initiate and inspire the *beginning* of an imaginative consideration and reformulation of who these animals are and how we share the world" (emphasis in original 34). These literary texts provoke that reformulation of what our relationship to earth others should be, giving nature an ethical consideration. They re-situate humans in the biosphere and re-animate nature, providing readers with an adequate ethical response to the non-human world.

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WHY MEMORIALIZE? STEPHEN SPENDER'S AESTHETICS OF REMEMBRANCE IN *VIENNA**

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ASBTRACT

Drawing from current theorization on aesthetics and from the heated debates of the representation of war and violence in arts, humanities and the media, this paper engages with the issue of art (and literature) and its condition in the world today, always at risk of masking the extremity or reality of suffering, either by suffocating it or assimilating it and turning it into an object of pleasure for the reader or spectator. With a reflection on issues on mourning and trauma, and within the domain of cultural memory, we take Stephen Spender's poetry, and his long poem *Vienna* (1934), as a prime exponent of cultural production where loss and its aftermath—crucial as well in subject formation—becomes constitutive of the aesthetic, formal, and material properties of a good number of poems.

KEY WORDS: War poetry, Stephen Spender, mourning, cultural memory, melancholia, trauma.

RESUMEN

A partir de la teorización actual sobre estética y de los acalorados debates sobre la representación de la guerra y la violencia en las artes, las humanidades y los medios de difusión, este artículo incide en la problemática de la representación de todas estas cuestiones en el arte y la literatura en la actualidad. Arte y literatura corren el riesgo de enmascarar situaciones extremas de sufrimiento, bien acallándolas, bien asimilándolas y convirtiéndolas en objeto placentero para ser observado y examinado por lectores y espectadores. A través de una reflexión sobre cuestiones de duelo y trauma, y dentro del marco de la memoria cultural, ilustramos estos debates mediante la poesía de Stephen Spender, y en concreto, de su poema largo *Vienna* (1934) como exponente de primer orden en el que la pérdida y sus secuelas —cruciales también en la formación de la subjetividad—se convierten en constitutivas de la propiedades estéticas, formales y materiales de éste y otros volúmenes del mismo autor.

PALABRAS CLAVE: poesía de la guerra, Stephen Spender, duelo, memoria cultural, melancolía, trauma.

> Somewhere I felt that there was a place which was
> at the very centre of this world, some terrible place
> like the core of a raging fire. Perhaps it was in a cell
> where some helpless old man was being beaten to death,
> perhaps it was in a café over some frontier where exiled

leaders were plotting to return. If I could ever
approach it, I felt it would be the centre where
the greatest evil of our time was understood
and endured, But at this thought I was appalled,
for it made me realize that the centre of our time
was perhaps the violent, incommunicable
death of an innocent victim.
Stephen SPENDER, *World* 192-93.

1. MEMORY, MOURNING, PERFORMATIVITY

Theodor Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* sets up the basis for any current discussion on art and literature situating both cultural productions as forms of critical understanding. Adorno's crucial concept of negative dialectics (or of the negativity of aesthetic experience) summons the critical faculties of art, such that a view of art as reflective, as merely "yield[ing] positive understanding" is undermined (qtd. Alpen xv). As such, art can incite, and illustrate, the negation, the failure, the subversion of the nevertheless unavoidable effort at understanding. In light of Adorno's frequently misunderstood post-World War II dictum, "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," (*Prisms* 34) the act of positioning art, or aesthetic expression/representation, as an agent of "critical understanding" or "the subversion of [positivist] understanding" becomes one way of linking art not to the kind of aestheticism that turns disaster into pleasurable or seductive beauty, but to a thought, which, in Adorno's words, is "measured by the extremity that eludes the concept." Thus, art is always at risk of masking the extremity, or reality of suffering, either by "drowning" it or assimilating it and turning it into an object of pleasure for the spectator. The challenge to art, as well as to "cultural criticism," as Adorno puts it, is to face "the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism" (*Prisms* 34)—and the positioning of "poetry" within this dialectic is what is often overlooked by those who choose to interpret "no poetry after Auschwitz" as a totalizing claim.

Unless art takes on the role of challenging understanding, of going beyond its own function as reflection, object, abstraction, it thus cannot fill a social or ethical function. However "autonomous" art, which critic Ernst van Alpen describes as not "independent of context" but as having "an agency of its own" can, it seems, enact a relationship of exchange and response with the spectator: "If art 'thinks' and if the viewer is compelled, or at least invited, to think with it, then art is not only the object of framing ... but it also functions, in turn, as a frame for cultural thought" (Alpen 16). This is what he calls "performativity" of certain kinds of art.

In this paper I would like to argue that art can mourn, or at least perform a work of mourning, through which it is politicized in its capacity to represent social,

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cultural and political histories of traumatic loss. What I am suggesting is that art can perform, through its own (aesthetic) form and structure, a response to trauma and loss consisting of the simultaneous reflection and enactment of psychic processes of mourning (akin to the grieving process conventionally understood to be taken by a human subject, or person subjected to bereavement and loss). And as such it becomes possible to speak of the "work of mourning"[1] both as the labour and process of grief and as a work of art.[2] But I am ascribing to the work of art a sense not so much of subjectivity as agency, I am proposing a performative reading of works of art and literature, such that, without necessarily taking the place of human subjects or being thought to be "like" the human psyche, they can be understood as being able to act, to enact a process of mourning, and to bring about an active response in the reader or beholder.

The performative "work" and "object" I present in this paper is taken from poetry, and the case study I have selected to engage in dialogue with these theories centres specifically on the performative nature of the language of poetry devoted to war by poet and essayist Stephen Spender's testimonial poems about the interwar period in Europe, drawing attention to the complexity of representation in such an ideologically laden terrain. As a tentative conclusion I argue that loss and its aftermath becomes constitutive of the aesthetic, formal, and material properties of the poem, and of all poetry engaging loss and trauma. My reading of Spender's *Vienna* is necessarily a depressingly realistic one, and certainly makes sense in the light of Spender's own feelings about bordering artistic failure, having spent several years making art that aspired to heal a sick world and to help prevent an oncoming war. With war seemingly inevitable, Spender's idealizing ambitions had come to grief and his art revealed as useless or, worse, irrelevant. The poem offers a powerful and personal articulation of his resigned conviction, that indeed, as his friend and mentor W.H. Auden would write "poetry makes nothing happen."[3]

As Judith Butler has authoritatively pointed out, Freud came to see that "incorporation, originally associated with melancholia, was essential to the task of mourning" (*Precarious* 21). Melancholy incorporation, thus, may be read as the refusal or reluctance to let go of loss. Ultimately, this process of incorporation by which I am transformed by the lost other, then, may, in one version, be understood as the work that mourning performs. Or rather, perhaps grief itself does not "work" or perform the labour of mourning; maybe the "work" consists of the transformation undertaken or endured by the mourning subject in allowing the relation to the (lost) other to shape the continuing self. If so the notion of "Trauerarbeit" consists of the incorporation of loss rather than the gradual detachment from a lost object.

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[1] "Trauerarbeit" in Freudian language. Freud theorizes on "Trauerarbeit" in "Mourning and Melancholia."

[2] I take the English language conflation of the term work that in Spanish, among other languages, is divided into two categories: Trabajo (Arbeit, travail) vs. Obra (Werk, oeuvre).

[3] W.H. Auden included this line in his well-known elegy, "In Memory of W.B.Yeats," 248.

Along the same lines, Mieke Bal, describes "cultural memorialization as an activity occuring in the present and future." In particular, Bal draws on the potential of cultural memory "to mediate and modify difficult or tabooed moments of the past—moments that nonetheless impinge, sometimes fatally, on the present." Further, Bal argues that "cultural recall is not merely something of which you happen to be a bearer, but something that you actually *perform*, even if, in many instances, such acts are not consciously and willfully contrived" (vii).

Framing memory in terms of narrative, Bal suggests that the relationality of "narrative memories" (which are "memorable," "affectively coloured," and "active and ... situated in the present") is shattered by traumatic memory, as well as by the difficulty of "incorporating trauma into narrative memory" (xiii). Bal juxtaposes linear or comprehensive versions of narrative with the "'timeless' duration, relentless repetition, and narrative splitting off associated with trauma," in order to suggest that the "drama" of traumatic memory, in which the self may have been an "actor," is not necessarily something the self can possess or otherwise "master" (ix). Bal calls these inter-relational forms of remembering and taking account of the past "acts of memory," which can contribute to "the emergence of narrative" (x). Thus, the "origin" of cultural memory, as Bal conceives it, is constituted by trauma and by the very failure, or loss, of narrative. "The origin lies at a place of inevitable loss," Foucault writes (143). It appears as though this can be argued for the emergence of the ego/subject, as well as for processes of cultural memory, and the conditions of melancholy grief. Memory and mourning are intimately connected; if mourning is the paradoxical process of incorporating loss, memory is a process that depends crucially on forgetting.

Our aim in this paper would be to show how Spender in *Vienna* managed to identify a case of overwhelming political urgency and his poems acted as witnesses to the massacre of civilians and of socialist freedom fighters against the rise of Nazism. In John Sutherland's view, one of the crucial issues Spender confronted in this volume was whether democracy could mobilize and assert itself sufficiently to resist the onslaught of totalitarianism (171). Rather than taking an explicitly anti-civil war stance, *Vienna* insists upon facing the civilians' lived experience of war. Spender attempts to come to terms with the psychic wounds inflicted by the cruel struggle, which, in his view, were still far from healing.

2. SPENDER'S *VIENNA*: WHEN "POLITICAL" MEMORY BECOMES PERSONAL

At this point I would like to turn our attention to poetry in order to suggest that cultural memory is also preserved in poetry[4] and that there are poetic genres, such as the elegy, which have traditionally been associated to mourning and death.

[4] There are many instances in history in which poetry has acted as a reservoir for cultural memory focusing on the collective. The twentieth century is particularly ripe with instances in which

My suggestion is to look into Stephen Spender's long poem *Vienna*, published in 1934. The poem focuses on the events that led to the defeat of the socialist insurrectionists in February 1934 in Austria, where Spender had travelled shortly after it occurred. This was socialism's first battle and its first defeat. *Vienna* constitutes the only major literary work in English devoted to the event. It opens with a passage from Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting" as epigraph; "They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress. None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress"(*Vienna* 7). Owen, from the generation of poets of the Great War,[5] and much read by Spender, addresses thematically in "Strange Meeting," the same concepts that he attempts to theorize in the Preface to his book: two soldiers meet in Hell, one German, and one English. Owen stages this scene as a moment of recognition: "I am the enemy you killed, my friend." Insofar as the dead man, now facing his killer, demands mourning, he does not want to be mourned for his death, but for what died with him: "I mean the truth untold, / The pity of war, the pity war distilled." His testimony dies with him, and it—the truth he has to tell— is what has the power to heal the wounds of war. One way to read the phrase "the pity war distilled" is to consider that, for Owen, the profound knowledge of death that war had taught him took the form of pity. In his case, his emotional response to those traumatic events best articulated the knowledge he had gained from that experience. But the line also points out that war is not simply a tragic event, it actually fits the structure of tragedy.[6]

The war poets' refusal to treat death in war as heroic, or even to offer a traditional memorial to the war dead, led directly to W.B. Yeats' well-known rejection of their writing. Yeats dismissed their work—Owen's in particular—with his proclamation that "passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies... If war is necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering" (*Oxford*, xxiv-xxv).[7] Yeats contemptuously called Owen "a revered sandwich-board Man of the revolution" (*Letters*

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traumatic memory has come to the fore as in the case of war poetry on different fronts from Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, to W.H. Auden, Spender, C. Day-Lewis, Anna Akhmatova, Denise Levertov, and Holocaust poetry with the work of Paul Celan, Miklós Radnóti, Charlotte Delbo, Charles Reznikoff, W.D. Snodgrass, and Czeslaw Milosz.

[5] We can certainly identify a generation of soldier poets—usually called trench poets—who addressed the devastation and suffering of the war out of their own experience in which we should include Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Julian Grenfell, Herbert Read, and Robert Graves.

[6] "Pity" is a key term for Wilfred Owen. Given the deliberate classical reference of the term, Owen clearly identified the power of his writing with its cathartic function, its ability to distill overwhelming emotions down to their essence. He sought out the point at which those feelings threaten to become unbearable in an attempt to confront a truth which is buried in that experience.

[7] In his introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, Yeats explains that he substitutes Herbert Read's *The End of a War* for the work which he finds more representative of the trench poets as a whole. He does, nevertheless, include a few poems written by other soldiers. They are Siegfried Sassoon's "On Passing the New Menin Gate" (written after the war), Julian Grenfell's "Into Battle" and Edmund Blunden's "Report on Experience." The most notable exclusion from the anthology is Wilfred Owen.

124), and omitted him entirely from *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. His rejection of the war poets indicates both the depth of the resistance to the trench poets and the degree of force that was required to repulse their challenge to traditional conceptions of war poetry. At issue in the modernist debate surrounding the trench poets and Yeats's exclusion of them from *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* is the question of what is required for poetry to be considered tragic. From Yeats onward, critiques of this poetic generation have centred on the issue of poetic form, arguing that they failed to represent the Great War adequately because their writing did not move beyond the lyric form, which was unable to contain or express the full experience of war. The precedence given to the personal suffering of the soldiers by the trench poets was seen as a direct effect of the lyric form. In effect, Yeats's argument faulted the trench poets for failing to ensure that their writing helped to reinscribe the values that support war. His criticism deliberately conflated formal and thematic issues; he argued that these poets' theme of passive suffering was not proper to poetry because passive suffering is not tragic. But the Aristotelian notion of tragedy does not finally rest upon an active form of suffering—a heroic self-sacrifice—rather the emphasis in classical drama is upon the representation of suffering itself, and the cathartic response it evokes in the audience.

At this point, the question is not, "Why did their writing fail to attain the level of tragedy?" It is tragedy which has failed the war poets. Their poetry discloses the newfound conviction that their prior belief in abstract concepts such as heroism and patriotism—concepts for which, up to the war, literature had been a major means of representation—was one of the irrecoverable losses of the war.

For the war poets, poetry became a space for expressing the emotions which they had dissociated while the event was actually occurring. Nevertheless, the transformation of pain into an artistic expression can take many forms and is not always healing; while for the war poets art provided a means of working through trauma, others, such as Spender, express the concern that the aestheticization of pain can be a form of repression, allowing the culture to reify the sacrifices of war and deny the suffering it entails.

Vienna, Stephen Spender's first book-long narrative poem, is divided in four parts, and presents images of the political life of Austria and details of the fighting, particularly the heroic episodes of the capture, trial, and killing of Kalloman Wallisch, the socialist mayor of Burck-an-der-Mur and leader of the socialists in Austria. Along with this public material and awkwardly associated with it, the poem presents Spender's love affair with an American woman whom he calls Elizabeth in his autobiography, *World Within World*. In his view, poetry must always engage with some level of personal experience, "[B]ut in part also it was concerned with a love relationship, I meant to show that the two experiences were different, yet related. For they both were intense, emotional and personal, although the one was public, the other private. The validity of the one was dependent on that of the other: for in a world where humanity was trampled on publicly, private affection was also undermined" (*World* 192).

As Samuel Hynes points out, "Vienna is a poem not so much about the history of the uprising as about the mythology. It is not a narrative, though it includes narrative passages: it does not tell the whole story, it ignores chronology, and

it does not explain. What Spender seems to have aimed at was the expression of his own personal sense of Vienna." (24). In Vienna, Spender proclaims "The place meets the time" (*Vienna* 17). He plays with the ideas of life and death within the microcosm of the Austrian capital, where the old grandeur mixes with the new, and,

> Whether the man living or the man dying
> Whether this man's dead life, or that man's life dying
> His real life a fading light his real death a light growing. (*Vienna* 13)

We can certainly say that *Vienna* engages also in some sort of theoretical statement that Spender rounds up with a metacommentary, corresponding to the fourth section in the poem, "Analysis and Final Statement." The five voices within this last section continue their almost monological exchange with no synthesis: the dialectic of the one isolated among the many, even if those are friends, since the war knows no friends.

In *The Destructive Element*, the book Spender was writing alongside *Vienna*, he identified three principles as necessary for the modern writer. First, the modern writer must take risks—it was in this spirit that Spender introduced himself in the underground life of Berlin, and now, in 1934, he was in the front line in *Vienna*. The second necessary thing was to forge a style both politically subversive and artistically distinct. The third necessity, to which the final section of *The Destructive Element* is devoted, is "proper subject," and increasingly for Spender this could be glossed as political subject. Upon completing his long poem, *Vienna*, Spender intended to demonstrate he was guided by these three principles. The historical significance of Austria and the struggle on the streets of Vienna in 1934 certainly provided a privileged vantage point to reflect upon the future of Europe.

The poem is devoted to the uprisings in several Austrian cities in February 1934. The differences between the Social Democrats and the Republican organisation (prohibited in 1933) on one side and Christian-Socialists, in other words the government, on the other, escalated between February 12 and 15, 1934 to a civil war when the Social Democratic party headquarters resisted a weapons raid with armed force conducted by their political adversaries in Linz ("Hotel Schiff" in the poem). Preceding the raid, Mussolini had repeatedly called on the Austrian Chancellor Dollfus to take action against Marxists, the heads of the Chamber of Labour had been dismissed, and several noteworthy members of the Social Democratic party arrested.

The conflict in Linz was followed by uprisings in Vienna and other areas, all of which were crushed by military force. The unorganised protest movement failed mainly because the general strike called by the Social Democrats went unheeded. Several leaders of the protest movement were executed (G. Weissel, K. Wallisch, K. Münichreier among the most prominent), others were able to flee the country. As a result of the uprisings, the Social Democratic Party, trade unions and all representative bodies led by the Social Democrats on the municipal and provincial level were banned, and the May Constitution of 1934 was declared, establishing a corporate estate.

Vienna is divided into four sections: "Arrival at the City," "Parade of the Executive," "The Death of Heroes" and "Analysis and Final Statement." Spender confronts the emotions following the suppression of the Socialist Party in Austria due to the abuse of power and the political upheaval against fascism and its leaders, Dollfuss, Fey and Starhemberg. The poem signals the beginning of the socialist clandestine activities and oscillates between the political and the personal moving to a more intimate dimension in which the poet finds himself in the middle of a love triangle with Tony Hyndman and Muriel Gardiner (under the pseudonyms Jimmy Younger and Elizabeth, as we know from *World Within World* 192).

Spender finally read *Vienna* as a failure, a composite of two split halves that never got to fuse "The poem fails because it does not fuse the two halves of a split situation, and attain a unity where the inner passion becomes inseparable from the outer one. Perhaps the world in which I was living was too terrible for this fusion to take place: the only people who attained it were the murderers and the murdered" (*World* 192). In *Vienna*, Spender had tried to fuse the story of the workers with the story of his own sentimental affair, and had been unable to move these two elements beyond his first initial design. Later on, in a new project, *The Edge of Being*, he would return to the memories of Vienna and recognize that his mind will not assimilate such disparate experiences: the "crystal bowl" of the love affair is flawed by the reality,

> There was reality, the flaw
> Within the golden crystal bowl, where life
> Was not entirely love nor even
> Baroque frozen in dolphin attitudes
> But was the unemployed who starved. (*Edge* 21)

Part I "Arrival at the City" reports on Vienna as perceived by the poet upon his first visit in the mid 1930s. This is a period of profound and significant changes in Spender's life. For the first time he falls in love with a woman and becomes aware of how men and women play complementary roles and their relations go beyond the usual comradeship among men,[8]

> Love for a friend expressed a need for self-identification. Love for a woman, the need for a relationship with someone different, indeed opposite, to myself. I realized that self-identification leads to frustration if it be not realized; destruction, perhaps if it be realized a certain sterility if it be realized...I could not develop beyond a certain point unless I were able to enter a stream of nature through human contacts, that is to say, through experience with women. (*World* 185)

[8] In *Vienna*, a strong sentiment of guilt arose for Spender out of his love affair with Elizabeth, because it conflicted with his feelings and his duties toward this secretary, T.A.R. Hyndman. In *World Within World*, we learn that Elizabeth and Spender discussed his guilt, and he wondered whether their explanations, "which made [his] 'psychology' responsible for everything, did not actually increase [his] sense of guilt" (*World* 197).

Throughout the poem, there is an oscillation between description of the outside objective world and description of inward sentiments; both efforts may employ concrete imagery; and thus the movements from one thing to another are not easily noticeable.

"Arrival at the City" presents us with an almost domestic scene at the Pension Beaurepas, where his patron brings to the poet's mind that "many men so beautiful" lay dead while the vulgarian lived on, and he compares him implicitly with Wallisch, whom he makes the hero of the rising. After some fragments of self-revealing dialogue from the women residents of the Pension, the poem proceeds to force the paradox that the life of the patron is insignificant while the wounds and the death of the hero are an "Opening to life like a flower him overarching" (10). Of these two instances, the poet says he chooses "the wholly dead," and adds, "Their courtesy like lamps through the orange fog, with a glazed eye/ Can preach still" (11); and the image is the source of the idea Spender develops later in his well-known poem, "Exiles from Their Land, History Their Domicile," a poem in *The Still Centre*, in which the dead, in his own words, have "obtained for their lives a symbolic significance which certainly passed unnoticed when they were living" and have imposed on the imagination of posterity a "legend of their unity of being." (*Collected* 14). It is not death we fear, the poem goes on, but disloyalty to an ideal memory of peace in the past and disloyalty toward the dead.

Finally, Part I closes with the same lines as those it opened with: "Whether the man living or the man dying, / Whether this man's dead life, or that man's life dying" (13).

Part II, "Parade of the Executive"(14-27) illustrates the construction of a fully-fledged fascist state in Vienna in 1934. The "Executive" and the "Unemployed" are the two main characters whose exchange tells about the conditions of life in the city from opposite views. The Executive justifies the illegitimate seizure of power by the new regime, manipulating the truth, calling on the authority of the ancestors, organizing parades, holding up flags, with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. He tries to conceal the frequent outbreaks of violence underlying a façade of peace and order. Beneath the appearances of absence of conflict and harmony, we come to know Dollfuss' fascist methods: elimination of his political enemies, torture, circulation of biased propaganda. The workers and their grassroots movements and political parties are thus neutralized now as much as they will be in the future,

> ... We say Vienna
> "Tenements were a fortress built by the workers
> "So we killed the workers to save the workers—
> "And when those houses were put up we said
> "The building materials used by the socialist municipality are of such inferior quality that the new working class tenements will soon fall to pieces." (17-18)

The Unemployed, relegated by the new government to invisibility and indifference, still shows courage and determination, and retains the memory of the revolutionaries massacred by the new regime. His strength and resilience is still

disconcerting for the representatives of law and order, as when they ask themselves, "Why did one dying, among their wounded, / In a dark groaning attic, suddenly sing? / And there moved as actively as on a movie screen / Before their eyes the May Day celebrating" (18). Mention to May Day instantly triggers the work of memory, "Memory of sky as blue as woman's veins / But with veins of red, ..."(18). At the end of this part, Spender introduces a figure called The Stranger, the observer of the political scene, who is objective and impartial. "Would he forgive us?" the poem asks, returning at the end to the sense of obsessive guilt that pervades this section.

In Part III, "The Death of Heroes," the poet identifies with the revolution and meditates upon the causes of its failure. The poem describes the retreat of Wallisch to the mountains and how he was hunted down and caught by ski-patrols, then his defense in court, his death, and finally how sympathizers brought flowers to his grave and to the graves of the other dead revolutionaries. The man in charge of these cruel actions is Vice-Chancellor Fey.

This section aims at memorializing the defeated, the massacre of civilians and the resistance of the workers and their leaders. Throughout this part we witness the effects of local struggles, and listen to a wide range of anonymous voices which oscillate between blind obedience to the military and harsh critique. The experience of those who suffered remains in the testimonies we are given:

> "From other windows
> we fired down.
> "I turned and spoke to my son. He said 'Listen,
> "'The howitzers begin'. 'Ha!' That is Fey's joke
> "'Making his big thud into February
> "'When the ice echoes so.' It was no joke to hear
> And see my son lied dead. That was at 12." (23)

> "[A}t Meidling our leader refused
> to serve out arms "I refuse to send men to the slaughter house." (23-24)

> "I forsook the workers to kill the workers because
> "I was fed by these traitors. Now kill me." (25)

"The Death of Heroes" can be understood as a poem of grief, mourning the loss of the men tortured and killed, and the crushing of the proletarian movement now suffocated. The poet blames the fascists and their repressive methods, and he also mentions some treacherous leaders of the workers movement and the movement itself for strategic mistakes and miscalculations (21-22). The poem glosses the last moments of confrontation between fascists and workers, and the surrender of the latter: "At Schlinger Hof, the police drove out all the women and children in front of the building, and threatened to fire on them. The workers surrendered" (24).

The poet remembers the episode at Florisdorf, the uprisings in factory workers´ barracks and the hand-to-hand combat on the streets. The massacre of civilians, and the destruction of the town, gestures toward a new beginning, "...as the man saying / 'Here the insurrection ends, here revolution begins'" (24-25).

We are told that when the federal army moved forward, Wallisch had to withdraw into the mountains with a group of men. After a few days he was identified and imprisoned, and shortly thereafter he was placed before a court martial and sentenced to death. He was charged with having instigated a battle against the police and was executed on February 19, 1934. The memory of Wallisch is retrieved in the story of his life as some sort of confession, one prior to his sacrifice for the ideals he had always lived up to,

> "At the age of 11 I became a mason's apprentice
> "I was exploited even as a child.
> "At 16 I became an assistant and at age 17
> "I made my travels in Austria and Germany
> "And saw oppression of the workers.
> "From 1914 to 1917 I fought in the War
> "And gained some distinction. I have been a socialist.
> "I have devoted my whole life to the workers
> "To serve their cause. I have enemies only
> "Because I fought for the workers as faithfully,
> "one must be ready to do all,
> "Ready to sacrifice oneself, even to lay down one's life" (28)

The final lines of this section take up the promise of regeneration, "We built / Upon their earth the wave of a new world / From flowers: each morning when light spelled / Its crested certainty, the police, afraid of daisies / trampled the flowers." (29). This is certainly the earth of the dead and buried. Spender uses plants and flowers as metaphors that conjure up images of resilience and rebirth. But the fallen world after the defeat is no longer a place for heroes. What follows is the end of section III:

> Lucky those who were killed outright; unlucky those
> Burrowing survivors without 'tasks fro heroes':
> Constructing cells, ignorant of their leaders,
> Assuming roles;
> They change death's signal honour for a life of moles. (30)

According to David Leeming, Spender makes room for "the rise of a new necessary communal struggle" (90). The poet justifies the objectives and the rationale behind the revolutionary workers' movement and expounds the reasons and arguments that legitimise their struggle.

The majority of the reviewers of *Vienna* concentrated their objections on the images in part attributed to the affiliation of Spender with other political poets. Tom Wintringham found Spender "unable to associate himself with the living stuff of the revolution," whose inability produced in Vienna, "a remoteness, a coldness of image..." (158). Edwin Muir, one of Spender's most sensitive critics, argued that in *Vienna* there was no natural voice and nothing seemed to be felt with definiteness, such feeling was being muffled "in the latest kind of poetic diction." (qtd. Weather-

head 71). This muffling was probably intentional. In the poem there is certainly a self-conscious restraint, and Spender's images may seem remote and cold, but there is no reason to attribute this to a lack of an engaged response in politics.

In *Vienna*, Spender wanted to keep the past inviolate; but it was not to be so. In his next book of poems, *The Still Centre*, the piece "Returning to Vienna, 1947" proceeds to link the poet's love affair with the architecture and the sculpture of the old city; but the "seeming permanence was an illusion," and

> ...what was real was transitory dust
> true to our time dust blowing into dust
> The dust a vital inward spring with power
> To shatter history-frozen visions
> And burst through cities and break down their walls (*Edge* 22)

In other poems of this volume, dust appears again as the destroyer. One recalls the showers of acrid dust that followed the explosion of bombs in the air raids that Spender witnessed as a fireman at the time of the writing of some of these poems.

The Still Centre introduces us to new conflicts that Spender's foregoing volumes had variously revealed. We could even say it is, in general, the same conflict, but finds new terms and new images: in the early poems there are traditionally good and beautiful things, nature and culture, on the one hand, and progress and communism, on the other; there is the world of will and that of sensibility, there is a continuity between the ruined world and the visionary from *Ruins and Visions*. Now, and as a corollary to the fallen and devastated world of the massacres of war, we are exposed to the 'destructive dust.' In the last stanza of the last poem of the volume, "Time in our Time," Spender writes, "Oh save me in this day, when Now/ Is a towering pillar of dust which sucks / The ruin of a world into its column" (56).

3. CONCLUSION: THE NECESSITY TO MEMORIALIZE

The relationship between poetry and its audience is directly implicated in what is, for Spender, one of the most important questions raised by the poets of his generation: how might poetry provide an adequate response to the tremendous trauma of the war and the loss of so many lives? The responsibility to find a way to represent that experience is one of Spender's foremost concerns, dictating such formal considerations as diction, tone, imagery, and poetic form. More radically, Spender believed that this responsibility impacted, not only upon his own work, but upon the entire field of poetry in his contention that English poetry was not yet fit to speak of the war. Spender saw his own writing as an attempt to bridge that gap, by taking over from the previous generation of poets of the Great War and continuing to make English poetry speak to the soldier's experience. From early on in his career, Spender recognized that the trauma of war would, through the writing of the soldier poets, leave its mark upon literature just as it had left its mark upon those who

lived through it. Significantly, trauma and memorialization are processes inscribed upon the field of poetry in the same way that those are experienced by an individual: as an irrevocable break. The writings of the war poets are positioned on the far side of the abyss of history. The war has forever sundered them from the tradition of war poetry that preceded them. Because the war had emptied out terms like nationalism, patriotism and truth of both their meaning and their function of conferring meaning onto one's life, the war left everyone at a radical loss for a way of coming to terms with their experience. The war poets were highly self-conscious of the radical disjuncture between their experience of war and the traditional poetic language, for expressing that experience. Out of their poetry, they forged a new vocabulary for describing war. However, their writing also speaks to the traumatic impact of the war as more primarily a failure of comprehension than a failure of language. The main reason why the "unspeakable" agonies of their experience could not be spoken was not because such things should not be talked about, but because they themselves hardly recognized what was happening.

Up to the Great War, the primary function of war poetry was to record a self-authorizing history—that is, to narrate the events of battle so that they serve as their own historical justification. In such writing, war is represented as the guarantor of history and history as the fulfillment of war's promise. Instead, Spender's poetry navigates a very different relationship to history, making its way through a course that has been ravaged by trauma. His poetry emphasizes an experiential understanding of history over a comprehensive one; rather than record the outcome of important battles, Spender presents his experience of the uprisings in Vienna as overwhelming and difficult to comprehend cognitively, much less see it from an objective viewpoint situated somewhere outside of the unfolding of events.

After the unanimous favourable response of the critics to *Poems* (1933), Spender was overwhelmed with the negative reaction to *Vienna* (1934). As I.M. Parson's wrote in the first important review of the poem published in November 1934, "Mr Spender, we cannot help feeling, is in a sense too involved in his material" (qtd. Sutherland, 173). In our view, not only did Spender have to deal with the massacre on the streets of Vienna and the loss of innocent civilian lives, but he also had to say farewell to a love relationship never to be fulfilled. Apart from the elegiac quality[9] of several sections in the poem, *Vienna* stands as a historical monument and fulfils the project of the generation of the 1930s, no longer documentary but meditative, it reaches audiences as a test case on the scope and value of political poetry in those troubled times.

[9] This elegiac quality also shows in sections devoted to Muriel Gardiner, such as what follows in section four: "I think often of a woman/ with dark eyes neglected, a demanding turn of the (head / And hair of black silky beasts / How admirable it is / They offer a surface bright as fruit in rain / That feeds on kissing. Loving is their conqueror /That turns all sunshine, fructifying lemons./ Our sexes are the valid flowers / Sprinkled across the total world and wet / With night" (*Vienna*, 33-34).

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JACK MAGGS: THE USE OF HYPNOTISM AT THE DUSK OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT

Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1997) shows the fascination of Victorian Britain for the occult and its link with the anxiety that existed about the survival of the British Empire. The lack of new territories to conquer in this world made the Victorians focus on the otherworld. This is illustrated through the character of Jack, who is hypnotised so that his mind can be explored. Hypnotism is also used to criticise the power that Britain exercised over its colonies, in this case Australia, thus exposing Britain's fear of rebellion: the colonised might take the role of the coloniser, as Jack threatens to do in the novel.

KEY WORDS: The British Empire, Australia, colonial anxieties, the return of the repressed, occult sciences, hypnotism.

RESUMEN

La novela de Peter Carey *Jack Maggs* (1997) muestra la fascinación de la Gran Bretaña victoriana por lo oculto y su relación con la anxiedad que existía sobre la supervivencia del imperio británico. La falta de nuevos territorios por conquistar en este mundo hizo que los victorianos se centraran en el más allá. Esto se ilustra a través del personaje de Jack, a quien se le hipnotiza para poder explorar su mente. El hipnotismo se usa también para criticar el poder que Gran Bretaña ejercía sobre sus colonias, en este caso Australia, exponiendo de este modo el miedo de Gran Bretaña a una rebelión: los colonizados podrían hacerse con el papel del colonizador, tal como Jack amenaza con hacer en la novela.

PALABRAS CLAVE: imperio británico, Australia, ansiedades coloniales, el retorno de lo reprimido, ciencias ocultas, hipnotismo.

INTRODUCTION

Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1997) is a version of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861), but from a different view. It relates what might have been the story of Magwitch, the ex-convict in Dickens's novel. It is about a thief transported to Australia and the troubles he finds when he returns to Britain. Although he is given a conditional pardon, and is thus able to make a fortune in Australia, he decides to break it and leave the country. He wishes to meet Henry, the little boy

who fed him years ago when he was just about to be transported and in whom he has invested a lot of money to turn him into a gentleman. When Jack is rejected by British society, and by Henry himself, his dreams of an ideal Britain begin to crumble. This essay intends to study the importance of hypnotism—also referred to as mesmerism—in the novel, and to explain why this practice, along with other pseudosciences, became a hype in Victorian Britain. To begin with, I will study how this fascination for the occult is portrayed in the book and relate it to the gradual sense of decadence that marked the end of the British Empire. I will also stress how the protagonist's return contributes to this feeling of loss. Afterwards, I will examine the topic of hypnotism, giving a brief historical account of this practice and analysing the author's reasons for choosing it as a vital element of the story.

ANXIETY AND FEAR AT THE END OF THE EMPIRE

Victorian Britain feared that the Empire was coming to an end. As Patrick Brantlinger contends, there were no more territories to conquer, which meant fewer opportunities for "heroism and adventure" (Renk 62). In addition, Britain was afraid of becoming "infected" by the barbaric. After being in contact with the uncivilised for so long, British people feared that they might regress to a primitive stage and dissolve into barbarism (in Renk 62). In the novel, this fear is shown in the anxiety that Jack triggers in England. As an ex-convict coming from Australia, he can be regarded as the colonial presence in the mother land and his return as an invasion. Significantly enough, he is constantly seen as an intruder (40, 46, 47) and almost all characters are afraid of him (4, 19, 185). Jack's past in an Australian prison is also crucial to understand the disturbance caused by his return.

Australia, as was the case with all the colonies in general, represented Britain's repressed unconscious, that is, everything that was considered inferior, dangerous, immoral and sinful. The settlement of penal colonies gives even more strength to this argument. The purpose of deportation was to eradicate the source of moral corruption that criminals represented and ship it so far away that it could not contaminate the rest of the British (Hughes 168). In other words, Australia became "the geographical unconscious" where the hideous refuse of Britain were sent. Consequently, Jack is socially condemned, rejected and feared. He is often perceived as a ghost (46), a beast (93), a murderer (19), a rascal (69), rubbish (84) or trouble (7). This explains his loneliness. He confesses to Henry in a letter: "It is a most melancholy business to be solitary in the place in which I did invest such High Hopes" (82). Jack hides because he can be arrested for breaking deportation rules. His prohibition to return clearly accounts for the negative perception of Australian convicts. Dickens captured this in his works. As Robert Hughes asserts:

> Dickens knotted together several strands in the English perception of convicts in Australia at the end of transportation. They could succeed, but they could hardly, in the real sense, return. They could expiate their crimes in a technical, legal sense,

> but what they suffered there warped them into permanent outsiders. And yet they were capable of redemption—as long as they stayed in Australia. (386)

Quoting Hughes's words, Edward Said ellaborates on this subject, adding that Magwitch's prohibition to return is "not only penal but imperial" (xvi). On these grounds, Jack symbolises the return of the repressed and his presence generates a feeling of uncanniness.

The concept of the uncanny was developed by Sigmund Freud who uses the word uncanny—"unheimlich"—to signify things that frighten. The uncanny occurs when something familiar—"Heimlich"—becomes unfamiliar—"unheimlich"—(Freud 341). Jack is made unfamiliar by being expelled to Britain's unconscious other: Australia. Transportation was a kind of social death and those transported were "mourned" as if they had died. Britain had got rid of them as if they "had been hanged" (Brittan 42). Therefore, Jack's return turns into an even more uncanny fact because it is as if he had risen from the dead. According to Freud, all those issues related to death bring about uncanny sensations in the highest degree (364). Our attitude towards death has changed very little since our primeval stage. The main reasons are the huge power of such an old emotional reaction and the scientific gap that still exists in our knowledge about death. We do not officially believe in ghosts and the return of the dead. Like any other primitive belief, these original anxieties have been repressed by the civilised world, but they remain at the back of our minds: "the primitive fear of the dead is still so strong within us and always ready to come to the surface on any provocation. Most likely our fear still implies the old belief that the dead man becomes the enemy of his survivor and seeks to carry him off to share his new life with him" (Freud 365). Moreover, the return of the dead is connected with animism. Jentsch asserts that: "a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one" (Freud 354). Hence, ghosts involve a double feeling of uncanniness. Ghosts are dead people, so they should be inanimate, but they might unnaturally become animate.

It is important to note that Jack is not dead. He has been constructed as a ghost by British society. The novel points to this fact, winning the reader's sympathy for the ex-convict. Dani Cavallaro argues that empathy is normally felt towards human beings who are victims of "spectralisation by inhumane cultural formations" (82). Although Jack is sometimes violent, he is not seen as evil. Readers imagine themselves in Jack's position and share with him such emotions as fear of solitude, exclusion or death in life. In an interview, Carey admits that this is also what he intends in his revision of Dickens's portrayal of the figure of the convict:

> contemplating the figure of Magwitch, [...] I suddenly thought THIS MAN IS MY ANCESTOR. And then: this is UNFAIR! Dickens's Magwitch is foul and dark, frightening, murderous. Dickens encourages us to think of him as the 'other,' but this was my ancestor, he was not 'other'. I wanted to reinvent him, ... to act as his advocate. I did not want to diminish his 'darkness' or his danger, but I wanted

> to give him all the love and tender sympathy that Dickens's first person narrative provides his English hero Pip. (Original emphasis) (Carey, "Interview").

Although Jack suffers pain and torture in an Australian prison, later on Australia offers him freedom and a new life when he is given land to start from scratch, a chance he never had in his native country. Blinded by his traumatic experiences and led by the belief in a wonderful Britain he has invented to survive, Jack refuses to see this positive side of Australia. Accordingly, he comes back to Britain, not only to unsettle like a ghost, but also to cure his past injuries. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud contends that there is a tendency to repeat earlier traumatic experiences in an effort to come to terms with them. This process can be understood as a desire to redo, to face up to one's aggressor—in this case British society—and accept the past in order to live the present in peace (Butler 264).

The British fear of an invasion by the colonies is reflected in the novel through several events, such as Jack's intrusion into Percy Buckle's house. While Jack is looking for Henry, he passes himself off as a footman and starts working for Buckle. The description of the street where the house is, ironically named Great Queen Street, points to Britain's decadence: "All that remained of the Golden Age were some pilasters and other ornaments still clinging to the façades of a few houses on the west" (9). Buckle's failure to be a proper master gives more evidence of this decline:

> Miss Mott must cook dinner for seven gentlemen. When Mr Quentin had been master, this would have seemed a trifle. Then it had been ten courses every night ... But Mr Buckle ... had not been conscious of his social obligations. He was a bachelor of an oddly private disposition, and often wanted no more than a little cheese and pickle for his tea. He hid upstairs in his snuggery with his book, his glass of porter, his round of Cheshire, and whether the housekeeper was housekeeping or the butler awake, he did not seem inclined to either notice or inquire. (17)

Buckle is a new rich, an ex-grocer who comes into an unexpected inheritance. The novel makes clear from the very beginning that he is not a real gentleman: "Mr Percy Buckle was the owner of a gentleman's residence ..., but he was no more a gentleman than the man [Jack] who was presently entering his household in disguise" (12). His inability to buy proper silver as a true gentleman would do also corroborates this impression: "the silver on the breakfast table accurately fulfilled his [Jack's] prediction of the night before. That is, it was not worth the trouble stealing. Of this low quality, however, Percy Buckle seemed to remain as ignorant as ever" (132-133).

It might be argued that the fall in the number of "authentic" gentlemen who epitomise the old values that alone would enable the Empire to preserve and prolong its existence, parallels, and partly explains, the fall of the Empire and allows the invasion of the mother country by the colonies. In this light, Buckle's house can be said to stand for Britain, which falls into the hands of Jack, an invader from the colonies. When Jack enters the house, he gradually takes over. Buckle, who has never managed to master his own house nor his servants, feels in danger, especially when his house suffers physical damage due to Jack's deeds: "the fresh injury which Jack Maggs's departure had caused to his front door was more disturbing to the

owner than even he ... might have anticipated" (189). Subject to social prejudices, Buckle is afraid of Jack and cannot sleep peacefully any more:

> 'Lord,' cried Mercy, 'do you fancy he roams the house all night plotting ways to murder us? ... Ever so slowly, Percy Buckle opened his bedroom door, and stood silently in the dark, trying to make out the noises of the house ... Now, with his heart beating so hard he could barely hear another thing, he descended the stairs in the night with his sword drawn'. (124-125)

That is why he unsuccessfully tries to murder him using Henry: "Buckle ... was now pushing at his back [Henry's] with the point of his umbrella ... It was Mr Buckle who flung the door open to the living room ... 'Fire!'—and pushed him forward into the room" (352-353).

The fact that Buckle is actually christened Percival, a name that says it all about the character, cannot be overlooked. He often shares the innocence and foolishness of Percival, one of King Arthur's knights (Barber 89). The name Percival also connects him with both King Arthur—one of the strongest emblems of British national imaginary—and the figure of the knight. By the end of the eighteenth century, medieval chilvary was revived in Britain as a result of an increasing interest in the Middle Ages. This revival led to the chilvarous gentleman of Victorian and Edwardian days along with certain ideals of behaviour. A real gentleman was:

> brave, straightforward and honourable, loyal to his monarch, country and friends, unfailingly true to his word, ready to take issue with anyone he saw ill-treating a woman, a child or an animal. He was a natural leader of men ... fearless ..., and excelled at all manly sports... He put the needs of others before his own ... He was always ready to ... come to help of others, especially those less fortunate. (Girouard 260)

Rather than property, the basic requirement to become a gentleman was moral qualities, acquired by proper training. The purpose of the chilvary revival was to form a social class with the appropriate moral values to rule the country (Girouard 260-261). For this reason, Buckle's portrayal as a failing gentleman is not only individual, but it encompasses the whole of Britain as well. Buckle also meaningfully shares his name with another Percival: Arthur Ernest Percival (1887-1966). As an officer whose surrender to the invading Japanese Army undermined British prestige as an imperial power in the Far East, his capitulation is remembered as one of the most humiliating in British military history (Stearn). Given that Buckle might be read in the light of the decline of the Empire, his connection with this historical figure involved in the depletion of British colonial power reinforces this idea.

HYPNOTISM IN *JACK MAGGS*

Pseudoscience became a fashion in Victorian times. As far as questions concerning humans and their place in the universe were concerned, science started offering answers different from the ones provided by religion. Because the division

between science and magic was not clear at all, pseudoscience was considered a more reliable method to look for meaning. Anthropologist Andrew Lang connects the end of the Empire with decadence and the Victorian interest in the occult. Since the British had already charted and taken possession of everything they could on earth, the only world left for them to explore was the otherworld (Renk 61).

The father of mesmerism was Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). His ideas were based on Isaac Newton's work *Principia* (1687), where he described a "subtle spirit or fluid that permeated solid bodies binding them together, lying at the root of electricity and heat and facilitating all biological processes" (in Plummer 16). Mesmer thought that if that fluid was not distributed properly, it could cause mental or physical illness. Some people could influence that fluid through what he called animal magnetism. This technique consisted in making patients fall fast asleep by passing magnetic rods over their bodies or by touch. During sleep, the fluid would get balanced again and the illness would disappear. Mesmer's theories were treated with scepticism and were often regarded as dangerous due to their secular nature.

Dr John Elliotson (1719-1868) was the major practitioner of mesmerism in Britain. He demonstrated, lectured and promoted mesmerism for its use in surgery—since no anaesthetics existed so far—and in the treatment of nervous disorders, for which he had to face the opposition of most doctors and scientists who condemned mesmeric practices because they lacked demonstrable scientific foundations (Oppenheim 213). Eventually, mesmerism attracted the attention of medicine, a change that derived especially from the work of James Braid (1795-1860), who intended to give it a more scientific approach and employed eye fixation and verbal suggestion to tire the patients' brain and send them to a "nervous sleep" (Plummer 17-18). He called this method hypnotism to distinguish it from animal magnetism, which he regarded as ridiculous. In contrast with mesmeric practitioners, he was convinced that the hypnotic power did not reside in the hypnotist, but in the patient (Oppenheim 214-215), a conclusion that seems to coincide with contemporary understanding of hypnotism (Lynn, Kirsch and Rhue 5). Despite the overall unreliability surrounding mesmerism, it was often practised, both as a scientific technique and as popular entertainment. Mesmerism arrived in Britain when there was no general agreement yet as to what science really was, when "the line between quack and professor of medicine was very thin indeed. Experiments took the form of private or public demonstrations" (Vaugham 1743). Although the development of chemical anaesthetic was fundamental in the decline of mesmerism as a scientific practice, it continued to exist as social entertainment (Kihlstrom).

Dickens was among those Victorians interested in the art of mesmerism. He was taught by Dr Elliotson, a close friend of his, and often mesmerised his family and friends for fun (Plummer 17). In *Jack Maggs* Carey reproduces Dickens's experiments with mesmerism through Tobias Oates, who is also a writer and shares other characteristics with the Victorian author. To name just a few: both lived through poverty and misery when they were children, their fathers went to prison because they could not pay their debts—which explains why Tobias, and Dickens in his books, worry so much about money and sympathise with children's suffering—,

both worked for a newspaper called "The Chronicle" and Tobias has an affair with his sister-in-law, and so did Dickens ("Interview"). Tobias persuades Jack to be hypnotised, claiming that he can cure his facial tic douloureux by getting rid of the phantom which is causing it (52-53). It is known that Dickens actually treated a woman, Madame Emile de la Rue, who suffered from facial spasms. In those sessions, the woman said that a phantom pursued her (Renk 70-71).

Tobias symbolises the hypnotic influence of Britain over its colonies. He is an English writer who, by means of hypnotism, wants to use Jack with a view to studying the criminal mind and writing the book that will make him famous. He is presented as a wizard or obsessive scientist. Faye Ringel explains that in gothic literature wizards are "scholarly, amoral, power-hungry—Promethean" and their goals are often to reach eternal life and discover the utmost secrets of nature. "Post-medieval wizards" include "mad scientific experimenters ... conjurers, jugglers, hypnotists and ventriloquists" (256-257). Tobias is obsessed with the criminal mind and his study is like the spooky laboratory of a mad scientist:

> Tobias was in the habit of purchasing what he called "Evidence" ... he had recently paid a very hefty sum for the hand of a thief ... This hand floated in a ... jar of formaldehyde... He had many such secrets hidden in his study. There, in that cubby hole labelled "M", were the notes he had made on his visit to the Morgue in Paris. There, on that very high shelf up against the ceiling, was a parcel wrapped in tissue paper and tied with black ribbon—the death mask of John Sheppard, hanged at Tyburn in 1724. There was much of the scientist about Tobias Oates. The study, with its circular window and its neat varnished systems of shelves and pigeon holes, was ordered as methodically as a laboratory. (49)

The exploration of the criminal mind lies behind his desire to mesmerise Jack. He regards Jack as both "a butterfly he has to pin down on his board" (48) and a piece of land waiting to be charted. He wants to draw the map of the criminal mind as if he were a colonial explorer, eager to conquer another world. In this way, Tobias embodies the Victorian interest in the occult fostered by the feeling of imperial decline. This is how he describes Jack to Buckle: "What you have brought me here is a world as rich as London itself. What a puzzle of life exists in the dark little lane-ways of this wretch's soul, what stolen gold lies hidden in the vaults beneath his filthy streets... It's the Criminal Mind ... awaiting its first cartographer" (99). Moreover, he uses Jack to travel and explore the exotic land he comes from. An example can be found when he induces Jack to imagine and describe the birds he considers typically Australian: "'What is the river like? ... Can you see birds?' 'Oh yes, Sir, hatfuls of birds.' 'Pelicans, no doubt.' 'Pelicans, Sir. Oh yes... 'Tell me about the birds. Are there parrots?'" (93-94).

Hypnotism thus functions as a metaphor for colonialism in *Jack Maggs*. Tobias's control over Jack parallels that of Britain over its colonies. Not in vain does the hypnotist very often exert powerful control over the mind of the consenting hypnotised. A significant point is made by Elizabeth Ho when she states that hypnosis is about passive imitation: "a radical emptying of the self to be filled with the attributes, even thoughts, of the dominant party" (127). After having studied the

work of early psychologists, Ruth Leys confirms and expands this statement, concluding that hypnotic suggestibility, that is, the complete identification between the hypnotised and the hypnotist, is not seen as suggestibility, but as the hypnotised's own desire (in Ho 127). Hence, Jack's submission to Tobias's mesmerism could be understood as his desire to be "infected" by an English mind so that he can be fully English again. As far as its uncanny effect is concerned, this total identification can be linked to Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry. Through imitation, the colonised produces a partial representation of the coloniser—"almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 318)—giving the coloniser a distorted image of themselves. That is to say, the familiar becomes unfamiliar. Besides, this uncanny transformation of the familiar "subverts the identity of that which is being represented, and the relation of power, if not altogether reversed, certainly begins to vacillate" (Young 147). It is necessary to note that although hypnotism implies imitation and thus it serves to relate it to colonial mimicry, as Elizabeth Ho points out, the subversive potential of the latter is lost as hypnotism is about passive imitation (127).

Jack's longing for Englishness is obviously the result of deportation and the identity conflicts that derive from this displacement. His identity lies in uncertain ground, half-way between Britain and Australia. For most part of the novel, he believes himself to be an Englishman. He has not formed a stable identity in Australia: "'I am not of that race... The Australian race.'" (340). Alan Lawson asks the question "Who am I when I am transported?" and asserts that this problem was common to those transported, since the new environment "did little to foster any sense of continuity, where the sense of distance, both within and without, was so great that a new definition of self—metaphysical, historical, cultural, linguistic and social—was needed" (169). Jack is obsessed with going back to Britain because, apart from being his birthplace, he suffers terribly as a convict in Australia, an ordeal he manages to endure by idealising England: "the wretched man would begin to build London in his mind. He would build it brick by brick as the horrid double-cat smote the air, eddying forth like a storm from Hell itself. Underneath the scalding sun, which burned his flesh as soon as it was mangled, Jack Maggs would imagine the long mellow light of English summer" (350). This can be linked to what A.A. Phillips called "the cultural cringe", the tendency of Australians to regard all things Australian as inferior to "the accomplishments of larger English-language cultures such as Britain" (Nile 9).

The novel, however, emphasises that Jack does not belong to England. For instance, at the beginning, he is told that he is at the wrong address when he is mistaken for Buckle's new footman (10). Similarly, he feels uncomfortable and constrained wearing the old footman's clothes, the clothes of a dead man, like Jack's actual relationship with England: "he was half-cripped by his dead man's shoes... They squeezed his toes in their vice. They cut his heel with their hooks" (43). That is why he chooses to wear his own Australian clothes, consisting of "comfortable Hessians ... made by an old hunch-backed cobbler in Paramatta" (120). In England he has been confined since early childhood. He was adopted by Ma Britten—a transliteration of Mother Britain—and forced to a criminal life. His stepmother only allowed him to go out to burgle. Jack's blindness about his true relationship

with England leads him to despise his two Australian sons. When he is given a conditional pardon and makes a fortune as a bricklayer, he only thinks about investing his money in Henry. Jack returns to England just for him, at the risk of being arrested or even executed for breaking the conditions of his deportation. He desires to turn this boy into an English gentleman, the same kind of gentleman he has always longed to be. As J.O. Jordan suggests: "Rejected by England, he compensates by creating an English gentleman whose love and gratitude he hopes will heal that earlier wound" (298). Jack's idealisation of England and his obsession with his adopted English son is a kind of mental imprisonment. He is not free until he wakes up from his fantasies by confronting England face to face:

> It is significant that Jack is constantly constrained by fear and the threat of betrayal in England, whereas he is free, socially acceptable and prosperous in Australia. His return to the social order which made him a criminal, which he has romanticised from afar, enables him to recognise the freedom offered by the social order of his former prison, which has itself begun to metamorphose from a penal colony into a site of liberation. (Hassal 134)

Jack's awakening starts when he discovers his hypnotist's true intentions. During the mesmeric sessions, his mind is filled with Tobias's. The ex-convict becomes this man's "alter ego, ... the projection of repressed desires, of the destabilising effects of the unconscious", and in a wider sense, Jack "emerges as the hidden subject of English culture, the discontent at the heart of civilisation" (Woodcock 135). He turns into Tobias's uncanny double, defined by Freud as an "urge towards defence which has caused the ego to project that material outward as something foreign to itself" (358). Since Tobias casts his own demons onto Jack, the Phantom that is supposed to cause Jack's spasms is actually Tobias's. He is unaware that the Phantom is his own construction:

> He feared he had done something against the natural order, had unleashed demons he had no understanding of, disturbed some dark and dreadful nest of vermin... Tobias reflected on how he was to lay this Phantom to rest for ever. He had by now long forgotten, if he ever knew, that this wraith was his own invention, a personification of pain that he had planted in the other's mind. (220-221)

Notice the connection between Jack's social perception as a ghost in Britain and the fact that mesmerism makes living individuals appear inanimate or dead. As Alison Winter argues: "the human and the mechanical ... [are] not the same, but disturbingly interchangeable" and therefore, the distinction between the animate and the inanimate is blurred. It is like "death in life", capable of redrawing the line between them (117).

Jack realises that the Phantom has been introduced into his mind by "Magical Arts", and so he informs Henry in one of his letters (259). Later on, he openly accuses Tobias: "'But you have never seen this Phantom yourself, Toby?' 'Of course not. He lives within you.' 'Then here's a strange thing. I never heard of this Phantom until I met you. I never saw him, asleep or waking ... What would you say if I

said you planted him inside me?' 'How could I do such a thing?' 'I'm damned if I know. But he was not there before.'" (289). Jack discovers that Tobias is using hypnotism to steal his secrets and write a book, so he rebels and the hypnotist's power begins to fade away. This moment marks the beginning of Jack's reappropriation of himself. Roles swap and Jack takes the lead: he takes Tobias as a prisoner (290), persuades him to give abortive pills to his lover (329) and forces him to burn his manuscript (331). "[I]t was the Criminal Mind which now controlled Tobias" (330). Jack's awakening from his hypnotic state symbolises his process of recovery from a traumatic past, accepting himself and his Australianness. His experience as a convict prevented him from seeing the truth. Ironically, Australia, the remote land where he was imprisoned, offers him the chance for freedom, happiness and prosperity that Britain constantly denies him.

CONCLUSION

Jack Maggs criticises the colonial relationship between Britain and Australia in the Victorian period, which came to embody Britain's unconscious other as the establishment of penitentiaries illustrates. Australia was the place onto which Britain excluded its dark self. At that time, there was also anxiety about the corruption and decay of the Empire due to its long contact with inferior lands and the scarcity of new territories to conquer. This is clearly displayed in the panic that Jack's arrival produces in Britain. He stands for the return of the repressed and the possibility of invasion by the colonies. The novel also shows how Victorian Britain became fascinated with the occult, materialised in the popular practice of pseudosciences, such as mesmerism. This increasing interest in the esoteric was linked to the sense of decadence that permeated the imperial enterprise. The lack of new lands to colonise in this world turned the otherworld into an attractive target. Tobias is the character who best represents this paralellism between colonialism and occult sciences. He is a cross between a writer and a scientist, and employs hypnotism to explore and possess the secrets of Jack's mind. Hypnotism is used in *Jack Maggs* as a metaphor for the destructive control that Britain exerts over Jack. This control is so powerful that pushes him to idealise his native country, rejecting everything that relates him to Australia. Fortunately, Jack's return to Britain proves to be therapeutic. It has the effect of putting his feet back on the ground. When he wakes up, he is able to recognise his Australian self and new homeland.

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DISSECTING PATRICIA CORNWELL'S DR. KAY SCARPETTA IN THE FORENSIC LABORATORY

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the symbolism of the forensic laboratory in Patricia Cornwell's forensic detective fiction, a genre which this author pioneered at the beginning of the 1990s. As the representative space in this genre, the detailed analysis of the forensic laboratory— particularly in the novels *Postmortem* (1990), *Scarpetta* (2008) and *The Scarpetta Factor* (2009) as characteristic examples in the series—suggests the essential identity features in the presentation of self of the woman hero in the series, Kay Scarpetta. It also showcases gender interactions between the woman forensic scientist and both those dead and alive involved in the investigation. In this way, the forensic laboratory acquires its full meaning for the revelation of the main pieces of the puzzle of Kay Scarpetta's feminist discourse.

KEY WORDS: Forensic detective fiction, forensic laboratory, Kay Scarpetta, Patricia Cornwell, feminist discourse.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo estudia el simbolismo del laboratorio forense en la ficción de detectives forenses de Patricia Cornwell, autora pionera de este género a principios de la década de los años noventa. Como espacio representativo de este género, el análisis detallado del laboratorio forense—en particular en las novelas *Postmortem* (1990), *Scarpetta* (2008) y *The Scarpetta Factor* (2009) como ejemplos característicos de la serie—revela los rasgos esenciales de la identidad en la presentación del yo de la mujer heroína de la serie, Kay Scarpetta. También muestra la interacción de género entre la médico forense y tanto los vivos y muertos que participan en la investigación. De esta manera, el laboratorio forense adquiere su pleno significado en la revelación de las principales piezas del rompecabezas del discurso feminista de Kay Scarpetta.

PALABRAS CLAVE: ficción de detectives forenses, laboratorio forense, Kay Scarpetta, Patricia Cornwell, discurso feminista.

Patricia Cornwell, "the first writer to bring forensic techniques to the center of her novels" (Blakesley 51), has decisively contributed to the current popularity of forensics both in popular fiction and TV shows thanks to her creativity, skilful use of forensic technology as well as adequate timing. As forensic detective fiction, in Patricia Cornwell's novels "medical forensics", quoting Linda Mizejewski, "guarantees the authority of the main character and the gritty realism of the details" (*Hardboiled* 42). This author has placed her woman hero, Dr. Kay Scarpetta, in the forensic laboratory since the beginning of her series with the novel *Postmortem* in 1990. Being a forensic scientist involves handling lifeless bodies and coming face to face with death as her daily routine in the only specially designed place for this task: the forensic laboratory.

As follows, works of forensic detection have at their cores the forensic laboratory and its dissection has essential symbolic undertones. The laboratory itself as well as the scientists and detectives who interact within that space at any one time form the centre of the action and provide the dynamism of the narrative. The laboratory is a singular world, unknown to most people. At the same time, it is the scene—the context—of an encounter between a living person—the forensic scientist—and a dead person, a socially-and-legally-sanctioned interaction between the living and the dead that is unique in modern society.

In the case of the Scarpetta series, the forensic scientist, Dr. Kay Scarpetta, is a woman who, like other fictional women detectives, functions as "a metaphor for all women, as they are all part of a masculine-dominated society" (Dilley 90), so, from the start - and many times by means of a first person voice—Patricia Cornwell's series is presented from a woman's point of view addressing the problems that women have to face in contemporary society. Within this general context, the fictional investigation permits the interaction between the female scientist and other subjects, giving rise to gendered perceptions and attitudes. The encounters also reveal power relationships and control that characterise the behaviour and decisions of the woman scientist. The analysis of the forensic laboratory in the first novel of the series, *Postmortem*, and two of the last ones, *Scarpetta* and *The Scarpetta Factor*, are proposed as relevant examples in the development of the construction of a discursive paradigm that, in the case of the fictionalisation of Patricia Cornwell, enables the presentation of feminist principles, beliefs and objectives—based on the understanding of women as intelligent and independent, able to do the same job as men and thus, deserving equal consideration—that, in turn, constitute the meaning of the works of fiction.

Thus, this article contends that Patricia Cornwell's novels can be framed within the tradition of feminist detective fiction, as works that, quoting Maureen T. Reddy, "participate in the larger feminist project of redefining and redistributing power, joining a long and valuable tradition of women's fiction" (149). In order to do so, the forensic laboratory enhances the importance of violence in the novels' agenda as a symbol of feminist critique. As Susan Elizabeth Sweeney highlights:

> feminist detective novels...investigate incidents of sexism, homophobia, and violence against women[...]. They suggest that these particular instances of wrongdo-

ing are the logical outcome of a society based on women's oppression, and that patriarchy and other hierarchical systems which discriminate against groups of people constitute the real evil behind such crimes (125).

The Scarpetta series discourse is figuratively revealed from the moment the reader is led into the forensic laboratory. When entering the morgue, the building is defined by its outer security, as described in *The Scarpetta Factor*. In order to open a heavy metal door, Dr. Scarpetta needs to pass a swipe card through an electronic reader. Once inside, the corridors form a network of tunnels, the underground location enhances its security but also its labyrinthine quality. The building itself, described as "a catacomb of white subway tile with teal green accents and rails that seemed to lead everywhere and nowhere" (*The Scarpetta Factor* 4), replicates the difficulties that the forensic scientist has to overcome during her scientific investigation of a victim's death in her dealings with the system. When she started working in the New York office, the intricacy of the building's layout caused Dr. Scarpetta to get lost, her perseverance and capacity for logical analysis helping her to discover the rationality of the space and, eventually, find her way. This gift for logical deduction has formed Kay Scarpetta's attitude to life and to work. While external influences are intended to discourage her professionally and personally, her application of logical deduction confers on her the strength of character, personality, resourcefulness and tenacity so that she continues her struggle until she succeeds.

Once inside the forensic laboratory, this space is introduced as intrinsically connected with death. Its distinctive nature is underlined in *Postmortem* in the following manner: "The morgue had a distinctive odor, the stale stench of death no amount of air deodorizer could mask" (*Postmortem* 24). It is a unique smell that Dr. Kay Scarpetta can recognise anywhere and that has permeated the walls of the morgue. This feature underlines the invasive nature of death and the contamination that it entails, in this case in the air that you breathe in the morgue. The dead body that is being wheeled in also has this contaminating power, as the white-tiled corridor leading into it is stained by blood leaking from the body. The first stop in the body's stay in the morgue is the "stainless steel refrigerator" (*Postmortem* 24), a place whose purpose is to avoid death's power because it is made of a strong material and its low temperature can prevent the spread of any viruses that the dead body may enclose.

This trait of the forensic laboratory is suggested to wrap the novels' feminist constructed discourse symbolically, establishing a connection between the stench of death and gender violence together with its deadly consequences. It is the invasive smell of putrefaction, the stinking abuse of a criminal perpetrator on the victim, and the only valid protections are to be found in the forensic scientist's realm, the forensic laboratory, thanks to its antiseptic qualities. The scientific environment of the laboratory stands out as the place where the most devastating effects of power abuse can be exposed.

Patriarchal prejudices are deconstructed through the dead but also through the living, particularly through the personage of Pete Marino, the detective who assists Dr. Scarpetta in the investigation. During the autopsy, she wants him to

phone her in order to discuss her forensic findings. However, their relationship at the beginning of the series has echoes of the relationship that Kay Scarpetta has with the system, a relationship characterised by resistance to her as a woman scientist, because she excels at her work and proves that women can be as talented as men. This resistance causes Pete Marino to let the phone go on ringing:

> The black telephones on the desk mocked me with its silence. Marino knew I was waiting by the phone. He was having a good time knowing that.
> It was idle speculation to go back to the beginning and try to figure out what had gone wrong. Occasionally I thought about it anyway. What it was about me. I had been polite to Marino the first time we met, had offered him a firm respectful handshake while his eyes went as flat as two tarnished pennies. (*Postmortem* 32)

Pete Marino symbolises patriarchal masculinity and can be portrayed as "a bigot, a chauvinist, and a homophobe" (Robinson 104), especially at the beginning of the series. On her part, Kay Scarpetta cannot understand men's reluctance against her and she definitely deconstructs patriarchal prejudice against a woman's work by means of her decisive contributions to the investigation in every novel. As the series progresses, patriarchal power abuse does not only bring about the death of the weak but also social and professional discrimination against women, those considered to be inferior.

When dealing with the dead, Dr. Kay Scarpetta treats the body with extreme care and delicacy, displaying all the respect that the victim's body deserves because a part of her humanity is still in there and it has a name. Vander, the autopsy technician, also shows his respect—"Vander delicately dusted what appeared to be three latent fingerprints left on Lori Petersen's skin" (*Postmortem* 29). As Dr. Scarpetta herself acknowledges, the tenderness towards the woman that she feels seems to belong to one Self—a Self which she readily recognises as her own and that is capable of empathy towards others, while another more rational Self is focused on the science and responds only to reason—"my gloved fingers working the forceps seemed to belong to somebody else" (*Postmortem* 28). Nevertheless, Kay Scarpetta's two selves are shown to complement each other as she, the forensic detective, and the laboratory technician work in unison. They can both share the same experience and similar emotions, since both women and men are portrayed as having the necessary empathic gaze towards others. Scarpetta's is not a gendered battle against men, but against power abuse—"Vander was slow and deliberate and tense, as I was. A feeling of helplessness and frustration was getting to us" (*Postmortem* 28). The sight of the dead human being may be overwhelming, but forensic science and technology create the decisive environment for the study of death as well as the final exposure of crime.

Inside the forensic realm, Dr. Scarpetta presents herself as being in control, conscious of her position in the laboratory since the first novel in the series, as suggested when in *Postmortem* she warns the security guard about a new arrival in an abrupt tone of voice—"I sounded hard and sharp, and I knew it" (*Postmortem* 25). The first test that the body that has just arrived in the morgue has to go through

is an X-ray. The X-ray room is equipped with a new laser that is able to stimulate atoms and molecules so that they produce an effect which allows for the identification and collection of fibres. Dr. Kay Scarpetta waits for the technician to adjust the equipment, standing next to "the dark shape of Lori Petersen's remains" (*Postmortem* 27); the body is still dark, hiding its secrets and truths. Dr. Scarpetta is also in the dark, with no light, literally as well as mentally, but her mind is alert and she is focused on her task: "my thoughts undisturbed, my hands perfectly still, my senses undisturbed" (*Postmortem* 27).

The forensic laboratory, apart from enabling the use of technical equipment that proves "its usefulness in finding fibers and other trace evidence, [and] it reveals various components of perspiration that fluoresce like a neon sign when stimulated by a laser" (*Postmortem* 28, 29), also provides other extra, but necessary, accessories like gloves and forceps, and even more specialised ones such as powder and a Magna brush. The autopsy suite on the whole is characterised by order, cleanliness, virus-and-death-stench neutralizer, situated in a sturdily custom-built section of the building:

> I paced the hard tile floor inside the autopsy suite with its gleaming stainless steel tables and sinks and carts lined with surgical instruments. [...] Disinfectant smelled sweetly revolting, only smelled pleasant when there were worse smells lurking beneath it. (*Postmortem* 32)

The forensic laboratory is the only place where whatever problem that death and crime pose can be dealt with successfully and scientifically, despite the frequently challenging nature of the corpse—"This was puzzling, a piece that seemed to fit but didn't, really" (*Postmortem* 31). Dr. Kay Scarpetta encounters obstacles, but working in the laboratory allows her to, eventually, overcome them and excel at forensic science.

Apart from providing the right equipment to do her job adequately, the forensic laboratory in which Dr. Kay Scarpetta works is updated in every novel of the series and forensic reports are made easier with items of the latest technology, as described, for example, in the novel *Scarpetta* with equipment such as a smartpen and a smart notepad. Objects like a ballpoint pen, a clipboard, and sheets of paper are not to be found there. However, Kay Scarpetta prefers some of the old ways, and looks back to a time when a forensic scientist's expertise was required to provide an explanation for societal violence:

> technology had no remedy for her fluent thoughts, and she still dictated them after she was done and her gloves were off. Hers was a modern medical examiner's office, upgraded with what she considered essential in a world she no longer recognized, where the public believed everything "forensic" it saw on TV, and violence wasn't a societal problem but a war. (*Scarpetta* 2)

Times have changed and the job of the forensic scientist has adapted to modern times, too. But Kay Scarpetta has learnt to combine the best of the old with the best of the new, as technology cannot fully reflect all the details in her forensic

analysis. In her experience, she is the one who knows best what is needed in order to do the job well. Her professional career in the forensic field reinforces her suitability for the investigation and empowers her. Moreover, as Christine A. Jackson argues regarding forensic fiction, "the protagonist, usually a coroner or medical examiner, follows ritualized procedures to identify the deceased. [...] These high-tech methods of detection are metaphors for knowing the self. [...] [During this process of explaining death,] the character understands more about experiencing life" (14, 15). In this way, Patricia Cornwell's novels deal with death and the dead but also talk about life and our modern society.

In the forensic laboratory Dr. Scarpetta is very busy doing her work, protected by surgical clothing from the invading nature of death, brain tissue and blood—two of the main parts in a human body that are a sign of life, but that are now dead—are trying to invade her body, and death is all around—"bone dust sifted through the air like flour" (*Scarpetta* 1). For her defence, the forensic scientist is surrounded by laboratory instruments that resemble those that might be used in a torture chamber, all manner of saws and knives, and it is even pointed out that they are in need of sharpening. There are similarities between the forensic laboratory and the torture chamber, not only the smell—the odour of death and fear, and a duplication of instruments and uniforms—but also because both scenarios are specifically designed for the extraction of the truth, the former from the dead and the latter from the living.[1] Unlike torturers and murderers, however, forensic scientists are legally sanctioned to use these deadly instruments and to perform all kinds of incisions on the body before them, all in order to unveil the truth, in pursuit of justice and restoration of the status quo. In this sense, Philip L. Simpson underlines the contrast between Kay Scarpetta and the serial killer as contributing to the novels' feminist discourse, when he argues that, since most victims in the series are women, Kay Scarpetta confronts "the serial killer as nightmarish embodiment of masculine backlash against female encroachment into the traditional male arenas of power" (114). A woman becomes the suitable crusader against crime and evil, against tradition, involving a basic reversal of gender roles in contrast to traditional male detective fiction: Kay Scarpetta is a woman who investigates women's abuse and murders triggered by a patriarchal conception of the world.

In *The Scarpetta Factor*, the overriding characteristic of the forensic laboratory is its impersonality, as one might expect of an institutionalised space in a big city like New York but also as a reflection of a patriarchal system that does not care about those victimised. The security guard at the entrance, for instance, is quite indifferent to Dr. Scarpetta's arrival—"the security guard was busy on the phone

[1] The comparison and contrast between the instruments used by Dr. Kay Scarpetta as a forensic scientist and the serial killer as an agent of torture, as well as the legal difference in their objective, are made apparent at the beginning of *Book of the Dead*. In the introductory chapter of the novel, the serial killer opens his toolbox full of cutters, knives and fine-tooth saws in front of his terrorized victim, echoing the list of instruments that fills Dr. Scarpetta's forensic laboratory available to her in the legally-sanctioned forensic analysis of the victim—in this case, a lifeless mute body.

behind Plexiglas and barely gave her a glance as she went past" (*The Scarpetta Factor* 4). In more general terms, it is the surroundings that reflect the hostility that Kay Scarpetta has to overcome—"a frigid wind gusted in from the East River, snatching at Dr. Kay Scarpetta's coat as she walked quickly along 30th Street" (*The Scarpetta Factor* 1). Together with the weather, antipathetic contrasts are further accentuated, it being just one week before Christmas, a time of the year when everybody is expected to be happy, a time of good cheer, a time when persons help each other. Even the location of the medical examiner's office is symbolically inert and sterile, situated dramatically as it is in what Kay Scarpetta calls "Manhattan's Tragic Triangle, three vertices connected by wretchedness and death":

> Behind her was Memorial Park, a voluminous white tent housing the vacuum-packed human remains still unidentified or unclaimed from Ground Zero. Ahead on the left was the Gothic redbrick former Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital, now a shelter for the homeless. Across from that was the loading dock and bay for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, where a gray steel garage door was open. (*The Scarpetta Factor* 1)

In the general context of the novels, the surrounding hostility points to a patriarchally-based society and its palpable degradation.

Against this backdrop, death and its victims appear to lie colourless, demanding a tremendous effort from the forensic scientist to focus and overcome the difficulties on the way. However, the victim's body may still keep some of its female owner's life, like in *Postmortem*—not just a cold corpse yet—"the covers from her bed open but still underneath her. [...] Her body was warm, her life so recently ended it seemed to linger about her like an odor" (*Postmortem* 27). It is suggested that the woman's body is still offering some kind of resistance to death, displaying the minimum connection with life, part of its warmth and smell, which contrasts with the coldness and the stench that permeates the whole morgue. The victim seems to resist accepting her death, as if waiting for Dr. Scarpetta's help, waiting to speak to her. There is a close connection between the victim and the forensic scientist, since they are both women and the pattern of violence in the novels, as underlined by Christine A. Jackson's analysis of Cornwell's novels, "extends the idea that one woman's murder is a crime against the entire gender" (57). In general terms, the violated body of the victim becomes a metaphor for women's abuse in society.

The overall analysis of the interactions between Kay Scarpetta and the victims in the novels has led Linda Mizejewski to argue for Patricia Cornwell's use of the body double, that is, "two simultaneous materialization of the same person" (2001: 8), particularly when Kay Scarpetta investigates the murder of women victims, which symbolically empowers the forensic scientist's critique of violence.[2] As

[2] In *Postmortem*, for instance, Kay Scarpetta notices that Lori Petersen, one of the victims, had the same profession, had gone throught the same long medical training and used to lay her clothes on a chair in a similar way after a long day at work like her. Judith Halberstam points out a

Sandra Tomc remarks about feminist mysteries, these "moments of metaphoric or mistaken identity are typical of feminist mystery stories; they help to establish the grounds for the text's description of political options" (46).

Sometimes Kay Scarpetta's involvement with the victim also entails its most difficult part, that is, dealing with the grief of the bereaved. It is not one of her professional duties, but she may offer generously to relieve the technician responsible who is gifted at it, and take on this delicate task in her place. In *The Scarpetta Factor* she meets the victim's mother and, as usual, she is at her best, providing details at this terrible moment of anguish and preparing the mother for the terrible sight of her daughter's inert body. Scarpetta behaves impeccably, being "as gentle as she could be" (*The Scarpetta Factor* 21). Kay Scarpetta does not only deal with the scientific side of crime but she is also capable of an empathic gaze when having to face the consequences that it ensues—the victims.

Besides, her relationship with the dead also unveils her deep social concerns so as to promote changes for a better society, even though she realises that change is difficult to bring about. At the beginning of her career she wondered whether "giving substance abusers a tour of the morgue might shock them into sobriety" (*Scarpetta* 1), but she regretted things did not work that way. Then, the novels suggest that there is something criminally evil persistently lurking in the dark and willing to permeate society at all levels—most of the novels imply that there are natural born predators in our society—but Kay Scarpetta's work on behalf of victims prevents her from surrendering all hope.

On the other hand, the presentation of the forensic laboratory is also an indicator of Dr. Kay Scarpetta's professional situation. In the last books of the series, it is revealed that she is not in charge of the laboratory, nor does she have authority in the workplace. Dr. Scarpetta holds a position in which she has to accept the supervision of a boss, a situation unusual for her as she has been "either a chief herself or the owner of a private practice for most of her career" (*The Scarpetta Factor* 6). Kay Scarpetta has got tired of finding herself in the middle of power battles, since what she is only interested in is forensic science. She is unwilling to take on the responsibilities of heading a forensic laboratory in a big city like New York, since she has already had a taste of what political pressures can be like when you are in charge, and she prefers to focus her attention on forensic science, partially apart from the system. In this sense, Kimberly J. Dilley remarks that "[the police-trained] women detectives work to balance understanding and carrying out the rules of the state with what they feel to be their higher purpose-their responsibility to the community. The law must take into account the people it is supposed to serve" (68). It is the question of justice that makes Scarpetta, like other women

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similar doubling narrative device referring to *The Silence of the Lambs*, between Clarice Starling and the "body found in Clay County, West Virginia, Starling's home state, [as] the corpse laid out on the table, of course, is a double for Starling, the image of what she might have become had she not left home, as Lecter points out, and aspired to greater things" (42).

detectives, get on with her job, "more concerned with finding some sense of justice than simply putting away killers" (Dilley 77), because she works for the victims. Kay Scarpetta's attitude to power suggests her deconstruction of any kind of abuse due to the injustice that it entails, which foregrounds her personal choice of working for the benefit of the social community disregarding her own benefit.

Despite the fact that the forensic laboratory embodies the realm of science, Scarpetta's professional world is not completely detached from her own life. Her most personal self and life concerns also enter the forensic laboratory. In *Postmortem*, for instance, before starting the autopsy, Kay Scarpetta's own beloved come into her mind: her niece Lucy, who is now staying with her, as she frequently does, has come looking for some motherly care that her mother, Scarpetta's sister, denies her. Scarpetta phones Bertha, her housekeeper, the person who takes care of Lucy whenever Scarpetta is called out for an emergency; she wants to make sure that everything is all right at home, so that she can give all her attention to the work in hand.

This scene of Kay Scarpetta's personal life, which stands in marked contrast to classic crime writing—where "the focus is on the investigation and the private life of the detective is largely or even wholly kept out of sight" (Bertens 58)—introduces another highlight of the series' feminist agenda. The fact that Kay Scarpetta is divorced, with no children of her own, but acts as a surrogate mother for her niece Lucy urges the reader to reflect on the traditional ideal of family. Sally R. Munt, taking into account Maureen T. Reddy's arguments and discussing the female private investigator in hard-boiled fiction—like Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone and Sara Paretsky's Warshawski—underlines that, as lonely heroines cut off from their families, they "can be positively understood as proposing independence as an ideal [. . .and thus,] are free to choose non-traditional intimacies in order to reformulate as 'pretended' family units" (49), what Maureen T. Reddy calls "chosen families" (109). Kay Scarpetta's behaviour, in this way, contends that the best mother is not necessarily the natural mother but the one that can provide a child with the necessary care and affection, since every individual should be free and independent to choose their own personal alliances.

All in all, when viewing the forensic laboratory as the symbolic space for self presentation of the principal character in forensic detective fiction, the main pieces of the puzzle of Patricia Cornwell's novels feminist discourse fall into place. Firstly, the forensic scientist comes across as a tough woman capable of overcoming any obstacles on her way. The labyrinthine layout of the forensic laboratory echoes other hindrances in Dr. Kay Scarpetta's daily routine. On the one hand, the gore reality on her autopsy table always poses a difficult challenge by itself. The truth about the crime lies secretly hidden in the dead body and Dr. Scarpetta has to make that body speak to her until she can scientifically explain the murder and unveil the truth. On the other hand, during her dissection of the body, Dr. Kay Scarpetta has to deal with law-enforcement officers, as exemplified by Pete Marino in the first book of the series. The pattern of their symbolic interactions underlines the prejudices of the patriarchal law-enforcement system, a traditional male preserve, against a woman's work as well as the unfairness of such irrational beliefs. The analysis of

these interactions confers Kay Scarpetta's attitude feminist undertones, since it showcases the need of women's active resistance in order to fight for a more egalitarian society. In this sense, Sabine Vanacker's study of Kay Scarpetta—together with Kinsey Millhone and V. I. Warshawski—as a feminist detective hero describes her "struggle within a patriarchal society [as] [...] the loneliness and vulnerability of the successful woman in a masculine hierarchy and the ease with which she can be ousted from her professional role" (76).

Apart from highlighting Dr. Kay Scarpetta as an empowered woman because of her performance in the realm of forensic science as well as in her dealings with the system, the forensic laboratory also showcases her symbolic interactions with the corpse and the contaminating power that it embodies. The invasive nature of death seems to parallel that of the crime, an evil force in society that lies hidden in the body ready to spread its influence in society. Thus, the forensic laboratory is the scene where a battle of powers takes place. It is the battle between Dr. Kay Scarpetta and crime, between good and evil. This is when Dr. Kay Scarpetta's job takes on a missionary dimension and her eventual success in the investigation acquires a heroic perspective as she remains, with the help of the sterilisation permeating the forensic laboratory, untainted by crime, both physically and symbolically.

In this way, Kay Scarpetta stands out as a suitable woman character for the defence of feminist beliefs in gender equality and, in more general terms, for the pursuit of societal justice. Her portrayal acquires its full meaning when taking into account the driving force of her struggle, that is, the victims. The forensic laboratory allows Dr. Scarpetta to explain the reader the victimisation that the dead body has had to go through from her experienced scientific perspective. This is a direct appeal to the reader to share Kay Scarpetta's view against societal ills, that is, all types of inequality and power abuse.

The dissection of the forensic laboratory in Patricia Cornwell's novels highlights its importance regarding the portrayal of the woman scientist's identity as a feminist woman hero since, quoting Peter Messent, "Scarpetta's intelligence, expertise, tough assertiveness and success in her ('unfeminine') professional arena [...] work to subvert conventional gender assumptions"(127). It is the realm of science and where Kay Scarpetta's work stands out for its difficulty, scientific worth but also for its symbolic construction of a feminist discourse. Due to the still unprivileged situation of women in contemporary society, fictional women characters cannot defy traditional detective genre conventions and must certainly succeed, so that feminist detective novels can call for societal change. Consequently, in Patricia Cornwell's fiction the woman hero becomes an empowered female character who deconstructs the traditional association of woman with the domestic, passivity and submission and whose life attitude and behaviour support the need of gender resistance as well as active agency so as to promote the belief in a more egalitarian society for both women and men.

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"STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND": MUTUAL VISIONS OF ANGLO-AMERICANS AND CANARIANS IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

The discourse of Otherness is crucial for constructing identity. This paper deals with the role played by the views of the Other in the creation of an image of the Anglo-American as the positive Other in the Canary Islands (Spain), and the emergence of a view of Canarians as the strange natives of an exotic land. After introducing the socio-historical background for these intercultural contacts, we make a brief reference to the way the discourse of Otherness has been used in cultural and literary studies. Then we offer a series of descriptions taken from a selection of English-written publications dealing with the Canaries. Another section is devoted to the Canarian vision of the "ingleses" (English), mainly through the works of two authors, Guerra and Millares Sall. The article is conceived as a broad survey that tries to account both for textual detail and the discursive trends found in the corpus used.

KEY WORDS: Otherness, Canary Islands, Canarian identity, Anglo-American identity.

RESUMEN

El discurso de la otredad es crucial para la construcción de la identidad. Este artículo estudia el papel que juega la visión del otro en la creación de una imagen positiva del angloamericano en las Islas Canarias (España), y la presentación de los canarios como los nativos extraños de un lugar exótico. Tras describir el contexto sociohistórico de los contactos anglocanarios, comentamos brevemente la forma en que se ha usado el discurso de la otredad en los estudios culturales y literarios. A continuación ofrecemos referencias tomadas de una selección de obras en inglés sobre Canarias. La siguiente sección la dedicamos a la visión canaria de los "ingleses," basándonos en las obras de Guerra y Millares Sall. El trabajo se concibe como un estudio amplio que aborda las evidencias textuales y las tendencias discursivas encontradas en el corpus utilizado.

PALABRAS CLAVE: otredad, Islas Canarias, identidad canaria, identidad angloamericana.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scholarly debates on alterity and otherness, difference, identity and subjectivity have long been taking place within comparative literary theory, comparative literary criticism, and cultural, colonial and postcolonial studies in a variety of languages and cultural contexts (McClintock; Pratt; Said; Young). The Canaries offer a suitable scenario for this type of studies, since foreigners have always been present throughout its history. Among our foreign visitors, those with Anglo-American origin have played an important role. Their customs, investments, architectural notions, speech... have influenced the islands, in general, and contributed to the building of Canarian identity.

After incorporating into the Crown of Castile in 1496, the archipelago soon became a point of socio-cultural and linguistic contact due to its strategic position half way along the maritime commercial Atlantic routes. Despite the islands' dependence on mainland Spain, close commercial links with the Anglo-Saxon world were always strong. Earlier contacts can be traced back to 1519, with the wine trade established between the islanders and English merchants from Bristol. Yet it was after 1880 when a numerous British colony settled in the islands, particularly in the islands of Gran Canaria and Tenerife, two very convenient ports on the routes to West Africa.

The British colony residing here played a significant role in the development of the Canarian economy, and also had a great impact at the socio-cultural and even the linguistic levels. Their initiative resulted in the increase in commerce and the beginning of two essential industries, the export of bananas, tomatoes and potatoes, and tourism, which are still our main economic resources. Besides, the British exerted a great influence on the islanders and many customs and words were adopted, since both groups participated in numerous socio-cultural, sport and charitable activities (González Cruz, *Convivencia* 401-515).

This favoured the image of the British as the prestigious makers of the islands' progress as well as the reference to them as the "ingleses" (meaning "the tourists and residents coming from English-speaking countries") in our folk songs and stories. How these two communities see each other is the main topic of this paper, which is structured as follows. After introducing the article's aims and the context surrounding the Anglo-Canarian contacts throughout history, section 2 outlines some relevant points in the discourses of the Other. Section 3 offers the vision several British and American writers from the 19th and 20th centuries gave of Canarian people. Our concern in section 4 is with the image of the "ingleses" in two popular literary works by two 20th-century Canarian authors. Finally, the paper offers some conclusions about these views of the Other and proposes further work on the validity of these visions for the present.

2. ON THE DISCOURSES OF OTHERNESS

Otherness has become a very prominent concern in contemporary thought. There is a long and very productive tradition within cultural studies dealing with the antinomy "we / the Others." As Voesterman remarks, discourse on the Otherness of people is based on the contrast alterity/identity, where identity is defined as "the affirmation of who we are by contrasting nearly every element of our way of life with that of others" (221). In Corbey and Leerssen's words, "the circumscription of cultural identity proceeds by silhouetting it against a contrastive background of Otherness" (vi). These terms, identity and Otherness, often have to do with cultures and are so closely intertwined that one does not go without the other.

The questions "Who are we?" "Who are the Others?" have been posed from different perspectives in an attempt to define those identities that tend to be considered as the norm, and those that are viewed as marginal. In connection with this, we must take into account something obvious that is usually forgotten, as Santaolalla notes: the fact that we all belong to some socio-cultural or ethnic group (11). However, the hegemony traditionally exerted by the white ethnic groups has resulted in a sort of generalised recognition of the whites—particularly of the Anglosaxon group—as the unmarked, neutral or invisible identity, whereas other variously "coloured" identities have undergone a process of categorization and stereotyping. In this sense, Weisz highlights the importance of the exotic subject in literature. It is a literary figure of Otherness, often marked by a token of the strange, the unknown, sometimes being a dangerous character, and Others becoming the source of some mysterious attraction (11).

On the other hand, culture may be viewed as a field of concrete practices which embody and perform differences. These cultural practices go unnoticed by the people who live within a particular cultural framework. It is only when a group's behaviour is seen from the perspective of outsiders that the remarkable features of that particular culture are identified. This is precisely what happens in travel writing, which involves the authors' encountering other cultures and clarifying, explaining and justifying those new realities. In those intercultural encounters one inevitably tends to assess Others' merits and faults by contrasting them with those of our own (González Cruz and González de la Rosa 45-6). Besides, the writers' attitudes, beliefs, values and ideas are greatly influenced by the culture in which they live or travel. As Mills states, "far from being 'objective' descriptions of the way the nation is, these descriptions are largely determined by the socio-historical context within which they are written" (86). Thus, we share her view that travel writing is an "implicit quest for anomaly," as if the travel writer were searching for something as strange to describe. And yet, [...] this is only because in describing the anomaly the writer is affirming the societal norms of England [...]. One of the striking features in all the descriptions of other countries is that objects are presented only in terms of their *difference* to objects in Britain. And this difference is portrayed as "strange" (89).

When considering Otherness, Petersoo proposes a typology of Others, based on two dyads: external versus internal and negative versus positive, resulting in four

ideal types of Others: internal positive Other, internal negative Other, external positive Other and external negative Other (120). Although the accuracy of Petersoo's typology might be questioned by some authors who have posed its limitations, in general, it can be said that in the Canaries it could be applied rather unproblematically. Thus, while there is not much textual evidence about it, Spaniards can intuitively be considered as the internal negative Other (with their aquiline noses, fricative sounds and superiority pretentiousness, as depicted in many folk stories and songs), whereas the Englishmen are the external positive, despite the existence of some ambivalent views. They could be cheated or laughed at, yet there is admiration and gratitude for this group of outsiders in the islands.

These ideas shape our analysis of the Anglo-American view of Canarians, based on the travel writings commented in section 3 below. They aim at proving that the natives "share widely a set of relatively stable traits of physique and personality, patterns of behaviour and attitudes" (Altenbernd 9). Despite their criticisms, which by no means imply hostile distrust and denigration, we can find admiration for their hospitality, content and simplicity of life, and other universally positive virtues.

For the Canarians' view of the "ingleses" in section 4, we resort to two humorous books whose authors are still very popular in the islands. In both works, but especially in the case of Guerra's stories, humour is used as a device for the construction of Otherness, humanizing the other, bestowing upon him qualities that personalize him. He is no longer a stereotype, but an individual who has his own reasons to behave in a certain way. On the other hand, when characterizing the Other in a humorous ironical way, these writers obviously make fun of the features and habits of the "ingleses," but somehow this can often be interpreted as a sublimated form of embarrassed envy for what their own group lacks.

3. THE ANGLO-AMERICAN VISION OF THE ISLANDERS

There is actually a copious literature on the Canaries written mostly by British, but also some American authors. This bibliography, compiling more than 300 titles since 1583 till the present, constitutes an invaluable legacy which reveals the enormous interest this place has aroused throughout history (González Cruz, *Notas*). Tourist guides and travel accounts show the enormous capacity of observation of their authors. Eager to learn everything about the islanders and their customs, they gave detailed descriptions of almost anything that caught their attention: little wonder that Robertson referred to them as the impertinent, inquisitive visiting-writers.

Although these books include considerable criticism, in many of them the reader can also feel the authors' love and care for the islands. This is the case of Stone, who in the preface to her book admits that "in all I have written, whether it be of virtues or failings, I have been imbued throughout by a kindly feeling towards the inhabitants and a love towards their happy land, the beautiful isles of the Blest"

(x). Likewise, when recounting the various episodes of the Castilian conquest of the islands, she expresses her feelings of admiration for the "Guanches," the ancient inhabitants, because of the "noble sentiments of valour and generosity" they showed in their behaviour, always treating their Spanish prisoners "according to their usual custom, with gentleness and humanity," even when their invaders had so often "proved perfidious" (Stone 14-18).

When describing daily life in the islands in those days, there is something that catches everyone's attention about the place: it is the quietness and the peaceful character of the inhabitants and, particularly, the way they enjoy their lives "in a far better manner than do the people in our hives of industry. They have more playtime [...]. The entire population is inclined for revelry" (Whitford 19). This is justified—Latimer argued—because of the influence of the weather, since as in all warm climates, Canarians almost lived out of doors (146). Similarly, Lee observes how character is largely governed by climate, which explains why the visitor to the Canaries "must not expect to find energy a feature of their inhabitants" (17). In fact, as Brown states, "the climate not only makes the wants fewer, but acts with a sedative effect all round" (c4). In this respect, Murray admitted that "one thing may fairly be said in favour" of the rather gloomy and uninteresting capital of Grand Canary: "Its inhabitants are exceedingly kind and agreeable to strangers" (171). Another item in her list of tropical pleasures is "that of being thoroughly idle." But the pleasure derived from this idleness was very relative, and some tourists found it rather irritating. This was D'Este's view about the typical slowness of the native Canarians, which was nothing but exasperating (223).

Most writers seem to agree with Lee, who notes that "indolence is here nature's first law: *dolce far niente* the aim of life" (17). Likewise, Stone states: "there is a general indolence among the peasants, added to a certain amount of stupidity, which prevents any innovations. A great deal of the stupidity must of course be attributed to an entire want of education" (152). It seems that this want of education together with a strong religious fanaticism pervaded both the mentality and the customs of native Canarians at that time: They were slow to receive an impression and still slower to risk any money by acting on an idea. Partly because of the islanders' apathy and partly because of the caution or jealousy of the Spanish Government, little had been done to develop industries related to fishery or the extraction of oil, which might have been carried on at a profit (Brown d31-d32). This indolence and apathy also implied carelessness for the island's natural and historic patrimony and therefore resulted in many cases in the total or partial destruction of places such as the Painted Cave in Gáldar or the Guanche Cemetery in La Isleta, as Stone denounced (184-89).

However, apart from these negative effects, the warm climate also seemed to have a positive side: it produced content, satisfaction and gave a certain *joie de vivre,* which made Canarians quite peaceable and "sober." Regarding this, Lee notes:

> As for licensing laws, they do not exist, for the very excellent reason that they are not wanted. The wine shops are opened and closed at the sweet will of their proprietors. [...]. The "drink problem" solves itself. An English resident in Las Palmas

recently declared that in three years he had seen only one drunken man, and he—*proh pudor*!—was a compatriot. (25)

This absence of intoxication, Lee comments, has its corollary in the paucity of crime, since brutality "such as is familiar to us at home" is here unheard of. In those days crime seemed to be unknown in the islands, which also provoked a kind of problem for the Canarian police force, as long as the sturdy guardians of the peace [...] have little occupation beyond passing the time of day with the inhabitants and begging the favour of a light for their cigarettes. For the sake of the police, a little crime is rather to be desired. It would sharpen them up. (25-26)

In Whitford's opinion, "everybody, old and young, is bent upon amusement" (19). This might explain something that—as Latimer noted—takes but a short time to discover: "it is more acceptable to the Spanish mind to put off for tomorrow rather than do today." For this reason, she adds, "Mañana-tomorrow has become an appreciated joke among our countrymen" (135). Likewise, Stone stated: "Spaniards are great talkers. If they did more and said less, there would be more chance for the speedy advancement of the islands" (173).

Despite these minor faults, most authors agree that Canarians are remarkably "courteous, hospitable and kind to strangers" (Murray 194). In fact, as Whitford put it: "the high Castilian code of good manners exists in the Canary Islands. Indeed, from the most exalted dignity of the Church to the lowliest beggar of the caves, politeness prevails towards all strangers" (20). While accepting this, it must also be borne in mind that beneath this generalised kindness of the population there was "much ignorance, superstition, and prejudice to combat here" as Barker (13) found in his visit to the Archipelago in 1889. Small wonder, if we just take into account the high percentage of illiteracy among the islanders. In fact, schooling was not compulsory and "there is little or no acquired taste for reading or literature of a higher standard. Typical detail: one will search in vain through the Town for a bookseller" (Foreign Official 81-2). In this respect, Frances Latimer ironically comments: "Spectacles, or glasses of any kind, are not in much requisition among the islanders, who mayhap do not injure their eyes with close study or literary labours" (215).

Throughout the 20th century, the breaking of the two world wars put a curb on the massive influx of visitors but the tourist industry continued developing with one new feature: thanks to the increasing power of the cinema, American tourists started to visit the islands, and several publications dealing with the Archipelago appeared in New York. They were mostly travel books but also fiction. Due to lack of space, we will just comment briefly on three of them.

One is Cronin's novel, where the characters complain about the people or the place. Thus, we read that Corcoran "deplored the indolence of the natives" (93). Talking about Canarians, another character states: "'Tis the business instinct. If ye don't watch out, they'd swindle ye hollow" (94). In reference to Tenerife, another protagonist says: "This place is a sink. Choked and festerin' with black godless ignorance" (146). Somewhere else we read: "You know, most folks think we're a primitive society here. Nothing of the sort. We have every amenity. It's the most charmingly delightful spot you could imagine... Everybody has a good time here" (106).

Likewise, prolific writer Paul Eldridge offers a collection of 25 stories inspired on the islands and their people. A master storyteller, Eldridge presents the Canarios as: "wise and naïve, kindly and cruel, delightful and exasperating." He launched a fierce attack on the various aspects of their behaviour that he finds unfair, so that the stories manage to give a completely demystified vision of life in the islands. "The Islanders"—he wrote—are "suffering from a perpetual sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the Anglo-Saxons" (85). One of his Canarian characters said: "we are *malos*—bad—*malos*. But only toward one another. Toward the foreigners we are all butter and honey. We smile and bow and scrape, and they say—the Canarios are angels. But toward our own we are" (64). In another tale, another Canarian character meditates: "he, too, rejected the poor and fawned upon the rich. Was this a disease prevalent only among the Canarios, as the Canarios who were contemptuous of one another believed, or a universal epidemic?" (82).

In some of the tales we can identify Eldridge as both the narrator and main character who ironically states:

> Oh, how I loved this oasis in the vast desert of the Atlantic—everything about it, its beauty, its even climate, its legends. (...) I even loved the Island's inconveniences, its insularity, its backwardness. And its people, too, I loved, despite their unreliability, their congenital lying, their infantile moodiness. (98)

More negative comments can be found throughout the text, mainly in the characters' lips, such as: "You are a flatterer, like all Canarios" (308), or "we Canarios haven't any initiative [...]. We drag our loads like mules and oxen and go wherever we are driven" (63). Notwithstanding, we must make it clear that the author's intention and attitude are not negative at all. Rather, his aim is to prove how the islands were far from being a paradise for their inhabitants: As soon as "Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Aragon established their permanent sovereignty over all the Canaries, the Fortunate Isles found their name a jest and a mockery" (12).

Finally, American publicist and military Walter recounts his family's process of adjustment to life in Gran Canaria, where they had run off "for a change of pace" (17). It is only natural that the Walters of Angostura Valley would be somewhat different from the Walters of Haddonfield, New Jersey. Just after renting a villa, Walter writes, "gradually—very gradually—we began getting deliciously *bananafied*," a local term since in his opinion "Grand Canary is home base for the bananafied," meaning that for Canarians "life is simple, relaxed and serene—quite free of ulcers, hypertension, overtime, shock treatments, rest cures and five o'clock martinis." He notes how "the banana plant, and therefore the bananafied human being, is NOT lazy. He just doesn't crowd his capacity"(97-98).

The third part of the book, titled "Getting bananafied," describes the Walters' process of adaptation to life in the island and the contrasts between Americans and Canarians:

> While the American flees to the suburbs, the Canario villager—having no car—embraces the sociable congestion of the town. Even our eager search for sunshine

> [...] was greeted with quite incomprehension. The sun here—though never intense—was considered something to avoid. (95)

Walter underlines "the friendliness and serene good nature of the valley people" which made them relax more and more, so much so that they didn't bother to lock their door, as they "trusted all who worked within" (148). They soon realised how "today's Canarios are a people apart from the visitors from peninsular Spain. They are a happy blend of the serenity, industriousness and trustful directness of the Guanches with the dignity, independence, chivalry and hospitality of the Spanish" (114).

In his final evaluation of the meaning of their Canarian adventure, Walter writes:

> The Canarios showed us how to live useful lives without strain. They do not pretend to be something they aren't. They are morally honest–honest with themselves, their families, their friends. [...] Canarios generally are not preoccupied with perfection in the things they make or service they perform. They are industrious without being exacting. [...] It's all part, I suppose, of being bananafied, acting oneself, not crowding one's capacity and living a long contented life. (238-39)

In short, these texts prove the interest the visitors had in the Others, the native Canarians; but this interest is mutual, as we will see below. In Isaac Latimer's words, "[Spaniards] are as interested in looking at a native Briton as the native Briton is interested in seeing them" (60); likewise, his daughter Frances notes Canarians "are quite as desirous of making acquaintance with our ways as we with theirs" (161).

4. CANARIANS' VIEW OF ENGLISHNESS

As stated above, foreigners soon became part of the folklore of the islands and their presence was felt in many spheres, including literature. There are many instances of the Other in Canarian writings, like those of Quesada's and Morales', two modernist Canarian authors, who made wide reference to the British presence in the islands, both as tourists and permanent residents, representing progress and welfare, but also being partly criticized for their apparent colonial exploitation.

Our study of the image the "English" have in the Canaries will focus on two humorous books, those by Guerra and Millares Sall, this latter also known as Cho-Juáa. Set in the decades after the Spanish Civil War, both works reflect the hardships Canarians had to endure at the time. Nevertheless, the use of humour as a cohesive identity instrument is a key element in these works. As Ziv states:

> A cohesive group provides its members with defence from external forces. What is humor's contribution to group cohesiveness? In the model presented by Martineau (1972) for the social functions of humor, he emphasizes the tasks of humor as raising the morale of group members and as strengthening ties between them. He

> also notes that humor contributes to the maintenance of consensus within the group and narrows the social distances between its members. (32)

Similarly, Triandafyllidou notes the Other "serves in overcoming the crisis because it unites the people in front of a common enemy, it reminds them 'who they are' and emphasizes that 'we are different and unique'" (Petersoo 119).

The beauty and humour of the books rely mostly on the language and the tone used, and the way they illustrate the typical Canarian cunning. As we will see in the extracts below, language is a vital tool to create humour and to distinguish the native from the stranger. Likewise, the language of the Others is an important device to identify them, since these authors imitated the sounds and expressions used by our visitors when trying to communicate with Canarian people. Guerra is especially brilliant at reproducing the attempts of many Englishmen to speak Spanish: their difficulties in pronouncing the "r" or the "j" sounds, their changing the gender of certain Spanish nouns, the verb tenses and forms, among other typical problems.

It is difficult to translate humour, especially when it lies mostly in form and, although meanings can be paraphrased, the vocabulary and expressions are lost. Besides, many of the words and expressions used in the two books are also, regrettably, disappearing in the current Spanish of the islands. The media, the national education system in the 1960s and 1970s with teachers from mainland Spain correcting pronunciation and vocabulary, and the lack of prestige of the Canarian dialect have contributed to this fact. It seems characters like Pepe Monagas and Cho-Juáa appeared as a reaction to this situation.

According to González, Cho-Juáa, the main character of *Humor Isleño*, became in the 1960s the symbol of cultural resistance against a world that, with the appearance of television and massive tourism, as well as with the invasion of work force from mainland Spain, was beginning to disappear (430-1). The same could be said of Monagas, who is still considered the quintessence of Canarian identity, the down-to-earth country bumpkin.

Interestingly, Cho-Juáa is also the nickname of the author, Millares Sall, who illustrated *Los cuentos*. When drawing some of their scenes, he used a cartoon very similar to his own Cho-Juáa to depict Pepe Monagas, with the subsequent consequence that for many Canarians Monagas and Cho-Juáa share the same physical appearance: a tall strong man with a belly, who wears a white shirt, black trousers, the typical Canarian hat and a black sash where anyone could see the typical "naife" (from 'knife').

Published between 1976 and 1978, *Los cuentos* is a series of short stories, normally with no real beginning or end. The protagonist is a 20th-century picaresque character, who in post-Spanish civil war times does whatever he can to provide for his family. Not famous for his love of work, many Canarians know his aphorism "Todo aquel que trabaja es porque no sirve pa otra cosa" ("Anyone who works is because he is no good for other things"). He sometimes works as a tourist-guide, a folk healer, a carriage driver, among other jobs. In some stories, he undertakes little assignments, usually legal, to get some money. Thus, he is seen painting a house, training the parrot of a cathedral canon to sing "Retosna vinchitore," sell-

ing brooms he had "borrowed" from a nearby stall. His neighbours call him for help or as a mediator, but especially when there is a party.

In his research on graphic humour in the islands, González states that tourism contributed with a new character, who is generally identified with the British tourist, known as "mister" or "choni" (a popular derivation from the diminutive Johnny)" (445). In fact, foreigners appear in some of Monagas's stories and Cho-Juáa's cartoons. Foreigners are basically the "English," although Guerra distinguishes between English residents and tourists, both groups united as an endless source of money. Opposite to all these outsiders, Pepe Monagas represents the shrewd common Canarian man, some kind of a country bumpkin: witty, mischievous, funny, with a mixture of admiration and greed in his attitude towards the English (Vera Cazorla, "Todo" 265-80).

There are four stories with an English character involved in a funny situation or joke in *Los cuentos.* Their speech is transcribed exactly as it sounds and the image they project is far from negative (Vera Cazorla, "Visión" 311-26). They are the following:

1. "When Pepe Monagas thrashed some *chones* who were boasting,"
2. "When Pepe Monagas did not please a tourist,"
3. "When an Englishman took revenge on Pepe Monagas,"
4. "When Pepe Monagas unblocked the *vate colose* of an Englishman on a Carnival Monday."

In the first story, Pepe is showing the city to a group of sailors. Half of them are British and the other half American, but they are all "chones." For hours Pepe takes them to different parts of the city, when an Englishman said that the population of Las Palmas could fit in a London park, or that the statement that San Antonio was the church where Columbus prayed before leaving on his trip to America was a lie and some other comments. While Pepe kept quiet, an American began to talk about New York and said in a difficult Spanish:

> Nousogtros en Ameggica tenegmos a unos siroujanos especialesss... A oun solgdado delg Pacífico le llevó ouna bala de canión una piegnna entegra. Oun cirougano amegicano le opuso ouna mecánica y ahoga es el mejor cogedor del moundo. ¡Ooooh! (We Americans have special surgeons. When a cannon ball tore off a soldier's leg, an American surgeon gave him an artificial one and now he is the best runner in the world. Oooh!)

The Englishman replied:

> Ouug, señoggg! Eso nou es nagda. En Inglategra oun mégico inglés pouso a oun soldado ingless que él había pegdido aun brazo enentegro oun brazo mecágnico. Y él volgvió a hasegrr sus cosas togdas del bragso. Y hoy él es el megorr vioulinisgta del moundo... (Oh, sir! That is nothing. An English doctor gave an artificial arm to an English soldier who had lost his. And he went as before. Now he is the best violinist in the world...)

Things got worse and the tourists could not agree on the merits of their countries, until Pepe explained that a boy was working in a well when an explosion injured his chest. Then a doctor from the island took a nannygoat's udder and "grafted" it onto the boy, who is now producing milk without froth.

In the second story, Pepe is driving a carriage. Although he does not understand a word of what a tourist utters, he takes him to different sights in Las Palmas: San Telmo Park, the Cathedral and the like. Once finished, he takes some money out of the wad of cash produced by the tourist. But the latter complains because he thinks it is too much, and looks up in the dictionary the word "fee" in Spanish, which is "tarifa," and shouts "¡Tagifa, tagifa!" aloud. With the noise a crowd gathered around Pepe and the tourist, and a local policeman arrives and asks what the problem is. Quickly, our protagonist tells the policeman that the man wants Pepe to take him to Tafira, a village close to Las Palmas, and that due to the heat and the state of his horse he cannot drive him there, while the poor tourist continues shouting "¡Tagifa, tagifa!"

Another famous anecdote occurs in the third story, with Pepe working as a tourist guide and carriage driver. He sold a Canarian bird to an English sailor; once aboard, the sailor realized the bird was lame and wanted his money back:

> ¡Simerrrrrrjuensa, ou yes! Mi no quierre comprá uona pagarrita con menos uno sapato... Devuelvi librrras, que te devuelvi la pagarrito... *(*Swine, oh yes! I do not want to buy a bird with less than one shoe. Give me my pounds back... give me my pounds back, I will give you back your bird...).
> Guanijai ti tu plei... rezongaba Pepe [...]. ¿Usté pa qué lo quiere? ¿Pa cantá o pa bailá? (Guanijai[1] ti tu plei... grumbled Pepe [...] What do you want it for, to sing or to dance?). (476).

In the fourth story, Pepe is having fun when he is called to the house of an English resident. The toilet was blocked and after fixing it, he charged the Englishman an excessive amount of money:

> Whot?—resolló el mister pegado a la pared [...]. ¿Y disa ousté que yo no tiene nagda que desiiir. Eso es moucho carrísimo, absoloutamenti. (What? Complained the mister, leaning on the wall [...]. And you say that I have nothing to say. This is very expensive, absolutely.)

Pepe answers:

> Es que usté no se jase cargo, miste, que hoy es lune de Carnaváa y que ésa, dispensando el móo de señalar, era caca inglesa. (You are not aware, mister, that today is Carnival Monday and that, excuse my way of pointing, it was English poo.)

[1] "Guanijai" results from Canarians' pronouncing "One John Haig."

On the other hand, in *Humor isleño* foreigners caught the attention of many Canarians for their appearance, clothes and language, and this could be seen in some of Cho-Juáa's cartoons, when a local policeman scolds a man in shorts, a hat with a flower and a camera: "Don't you know that you cannot walk like that in the street?" The confused tourist says "Mi no comprende" and the policeman answers "¡Aah, sorry. You are a foreigner. Go on, go on."

In another cartoon, a tall couple in bizarre clothes walks along the street while a lady in black tells a friend "¡Ay, Saturninita, Carnivals are coming soon!" and the other replies: "Carnivals? No, my child, don't you see they are tourists?" Besides their eccentric clothes, tourists sometimes behave in amazing ways such as when they get undressed or nearly so on the beach. This happens in another cartoon where an old Canarian woman complains: "I do not know if he is a Swede or a Dane, all I could tell you is that he was naked."

As in Guerra's stories, Cho-Juáa's cartoons also prove how tourists are an attractive source of income. They seem rich and willing enough to spend their "pounds." In a street we find a taxi-driver, a man in black and a foreigner in shorts, a flowered shirt and a map. The taxi-driver asks the man in black: "*Marsialito*, how much could I charge this *choni* to go from the Port to the Cathedral?" and the man answers: "Well, I think twenty "duros." The taxi-driver continues: "How do you say that in English?" And the other replied: "Tell him, uan pon." "And if he wants to go to Tafira?" Marcialito answers: "¡Ooh, pon, pon." Finally, the taxi-driver exclaims: "If we go to Mogán,[2] this is going to sound like a machine gun!"

5. CONCLUSION

The texts examined above seem to record Anglo-American's colonialist stereotypes mainly in their perception and judgements regarding local literacy and, indirectly, civilization standards. We can conclude that the English-writing authors of the 19th and 20th centuries describe native Canarians as a very kind, peaceful and gentle people who know how to enjoy their lives; however, they also appear rather primitive, lazy, ignorant and indolent. In turn, Canarians tend to show admiration and gratitude towards the "ingleses," for the progress they brought with them; but they are also humourously observant and critical with their visitors' appearance and behaviour. All in all, in these ambivalent views of the Other there seem to be more positive than negative aspects.

For the last two centuries the Anglo-Canarian encounters have not stopped, though perhaps their direct impact on Canarian society has somewhat diminished, becoming absorbed into the globalised influence Anglo-Saxon culture is now exerting on the whole planet. Following this line, we ask ourselves what aspects of our typical Canarian identity remain today. Undoubtedly, we have changed dramati-

[2] Mogán is the farthest village in the southeast of Gran Canaria.

cally but maybe we can still partly recognise ourselves in those descriptions and opinions offered by Anglo-American authors in the past. Further work may also determine whether our impressions about the positive role our English-speaking visitors continue to play are certain and whether they remain being the positive Other we like to have around.

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INTERACTION IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM AND IN THE FORUM FROM A LEARNER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

One of the main problems teachers face in the foreign language classroom is low student participation. Nowadays, with the advent of computer mediated communication (CMC), students have at their disposal another medium to communicate and participate in their language learning process. But what is their attitude towards this medium? Our study investigated the perception of preservice English language teachers of the interaction that occurs both in the classroom and in the forum. Two groups of students between the ages of 20 and 40 responded to a questionnaire designed ad hoc. The results obtained from the analysis of the data suggest that CMC acts as a complement to the language learning process.

KEY WORDS: Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), forum, language learning, participation, feedback, preservice English teachers.

RESUMEN

Uno de los principales problemas al que se enfrentan los profesores de una lengua extranjera es la escasa participación de los alumnos en el aula. Hoy en día, con la incorporación de la Comunicación Mediada por Ordenador (CMO), los estudiantes tienen a su disposición otro medio para comunicarse y participar en el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua. ¿Pero cuál es su actitud hacia este medio? Nuestro estudio ha investigado la percepción de futuros maestros de inglés de la interacción que se da en la clase y en el foro. Dos grupos de estudiantes de edades comprendidas entre los 20 y los 40 años rellenaron un cuestionario diseñado ad hoc. Los resultados obtenidos de los análisis de los datos sugieren que la CMO actúa como un complemento para el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Comunicación Mediada por Ordenador (CMO), foro, aprendizaje de la lengua, participación, *feedback*, futuros maestros de inglés.

1. INTRODUCTION

The extensive development of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) over the last decades has led to the emergence of new alternatives in language teaching. Most of the research carried out in this field has shown that people behave differently when communicating online compared to a face-to-face situation. People show fewer inhibitions, display less social anxiety, and reduce their public self-awareness (Matheson and Zanna; Siegel et al.; Sproull and Kiesler). The illusion of anonymity that language learners experience when communicating via computer is an important element in reducing anxiety. As Wallace has explained, "Even when we are not exactly anonymous on the net, the physical distance and low social presence make us feel less inhibited, less likely to be detected"(139).

However, in the study by Arnáiz and Ortega, it was detected that students appear to be as comfortable when participating in the classroom as when participating in the forum or discussion board. The study by the aforementioned authors, like the one we present here, was carried out with preservice language teachers attending a blended course, that is, while students attended face-to-face classes at the university, they used Moodle as a support tool.[1] In this type of blended course, the teacher asks the students in class to consult Moodle for details of the assignments they have to do, for the keys to certain exercises or for any particular link that has been uploaded and to which they must go in order to be able to follow the classroom sessions adequately. Furthermore, Moodle is the medium used to send assignments and receive them, once they have been marked by the teacher. Besides, in the discussion board, students have the chance to interact and give their opinions about the topics proposed either by the teacher or their fellow students. Usually, the topics chosen are a continuation of the topics brought up in class or, the reverse, sometimes the topics brought up in the discussion board are taken to the classroom and a debate ensues. In this way, the teacher establishes an inevitable link between the classroom and the virtual environment.

As Leffa (39) explains, mainstream theories in foreign language teaching tend to focus either on the individual (addressing issues such as learning styles) or the community (including methodologies such as collaborative learning or study teams). The arrival of computers in foreign language instruction seem to have contributed further to this dichotomy, highlighting the differences between a student working alone in front of the computer or interacting with others in a community.

One of the main motivations for doing this research is the belief that an emphasis on either the individual or on the community leads to a reductionist approach. Our suggestion, then, is to stress the point at which they intersect. In order for the learner to interact with other learners, he or she has to do something (action) through some kind of mediation (tool). Computer Assisted Language Learn-

[1] Moodle was designed on the basis of various pedagogical principles ("social constructionist pedagogy") to help educators create effective online learning communities).

ing (CALL) brings a new paradigm to the field of language teaching, giving priority neither to the student nor to the teacher, but on the relation created between them in the learning process (Leffa 40). Therefore, language teachers need to realistically assess the implications of using computers as another tool for language learning, and to consider the changing role of the teacher to that of "mentor and consultant" (Fernández Carballo-Calero 7) and, consequently, the inevitable adjustments of the relationship between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves.

Some of the key aspects of the relationships established in the classroom between teachers and students and among students are, undoubtedly, the reaction of students to the teacher's responses, students' expectations as regards feedback not only from the teacher but also from their classmates (peer feedback), and the feelings of closeness students have to their teacher and to their classmates. It is these aspects that we will explore in this paper with the aim of shedding light on the area and contributing to increasing the knowledge related to classroom reality.

Behind all the perceptions and feelings mentioned above lies one single concept: *feedback*. Feedback has been demonstrated to play an important role in instruction (Mory; Topping) with many learning theorists positing that it is essential to students' learning (Driscoll). In general, instructional feedback provides students with information that either confirms what they already know or changes their existing knowledge (Mory 745-746). Higgins, Hartley, and Skelton (62) note that feedback which is meaningful, of high quality, and timely, helps students become cognitively engaged in the content under study, as well as in the learning environment in which they are studying. Furthermore, feedback may be even more important in online environments than in traditional classrooms (McVay-Lynch). Due to a lack of feedback, students taking part in online courses are more likely to disconnect from the material or environment than students attending face-to-face courses (Ko and Rossen). While instructor feedback is often cited as the catalyst for student learning in online environments, lack of feedback is most often cited as the reason for students' withdrawing from online courses. The criticality of feedback in online environments has led Notar, Wilson, and Ross to make a number of recommendations to increase its effectiveness. Specifically, the authors call for feedback that is "diagnostic and prescriptive, formative and iterative, and involving both peers and group assessment" (646). According to these authors, feedback should be aimed at improving the skills needed for the construction of end products more than on the end products themselves. While students agree that feedback needs to contain a summative aspect, they also hope for formative comments. As Mory reports, students expect feedback in an online environment to be: 1) prompt and timely; 2) ongoing formative (during online discussions) and summative (about grades); 3) constructive, supportive, and substantive; 4) specific, objective, and individual; and 5) consistent. However, to attain this level of feedback in online courses, instructors must invest a significant amount of time and effort. In order to meet students' needs for immediate and ongoing feedback, an instructor would have to be online almost continually (Dunlap), a suggestion that is impractical and incongruent with the types of independent learning being promoted through online courses.

One possible solution is for instructors to capitalize on peer feedback as an instructional strategy, requiring students to provide feedback to one another while simultaneously encouraging greater levels of interaction. In this way, instructors could be spared from evaluating large numbers of student postings, yet still provide ample instances of formative and summative feedback. Students, on the other hand, would still receive the feedback they require in order to assess their progress in the online environment.

Peer feedback provides students with a greater awareness of audience, more practice in understanding as well as empathetic support to the process of writing (Rosalia and Llosa 322). The use of peer feedback in an online learning environment offers several advantages which include: increasing the timeliness of feedback, offering new learning opportunities for both givers and receivers of feedback, and humanizing the environment. By asking students to provide each other with constructive feedback, instructors are inviting them to participate in each other's learning and thus take advantage of a greater understanding and appreciation for their peers' experiences and perspectives (Connolly et al. 355). Moreover, by engaging students in the feedback process, meaningful interaction increases—interaction with fellow students and interaction with the content of the discussion postings—which subsequently promotes students' satisfaction with the course (Richardson and Swan) and with the instructor (Sherrya, Fulford and Zhang). If used effectively, both instructor and peer feedback may increase the quality of discourse, and thus the quality of learning, in the virtual environment (Ertmer et al. 415).

However, using peer feedback as part of the learning process has some challenges: 1) overcoming students' anxiety about giving and receiving feedback (especially negative feedback) and 2) ensuring reliability. According to Palloff and Pratt, "the ability to give meaningful feedback, which helps others think about the work they have produced, is not a naturally acquired skill" (123). In terms of implementation, Topping (256) points out that both assessors and assessees might experience anxiety about the process. Furthermore, Topping notes that learners may perceive the peer feedback they receive to be invalid, leading them to refuse to accept negative feedback as accurate. It is still unclear whether challenges related to giving and receiving peer feedback in a traditional environment will be exacerbated or mitigated when applied within the online environment. Tunison and Noonan (506, 508) report that many students find it difficult to communicate complex ideas in an online environment and that their ability to express their questions clearly and comprehend detailed explanations is limited by the lack of face-to-face interaction.

While feedback has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy in traditional learning environments, limited research has been conducted that examines the role or impact of feedback concerning online learning environments in which learners construct their own knowledge, based on prior experiences and peer interaction. The purpose of the exploratory study presented in this paper is to help to fill this gap by examining students' reactions to the feedback they get from their teacher and from their classmates as well as their preferences. Strongly connected with the concept of feedback is the emotional distance between students and teachers and among students, and this distance will also be analysed. We focus on asynchronous

CMC, such as threaded discussion, in contrast to synchronous CMC (e.g., real-time chat). Moreover, the aim of the study is to compare these students' reactions and perceptions in the online environment with those in the classroom context.

2. METHOD

Setting and Participants

The setting for this investigation was a B2 level EFL (English as a Foreign Language Classroom) at the Teacher Training College belonging to the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The language levels were established following The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR).[2]

There were 46 student participants who ranged in age between 20 and 40 (M = 24,65; SD = 6,499) ; 34 (73%) were female and 12 (26,1%) were male.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire designed ad hoc. Participants were asked to indicate on a five-point **Likert scale** their degree of agreement on 7 statements related to the two learning contexts mentioned above. They had to respond whether they Disagreed Strongly or Disagreed, Had no opinion/ Felt Neutral, Agreed or Strongly Agreed (1-5).

Procedure

The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the students, and participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Data analysis

The data were analysed and transferred to the statistical analysis software package SPSS 16.0 to calculate descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlations for the different variables. Different Student's t-tests were also conducted.

[2] A guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe. The 2008 study by Martínez Baztán has addressed correspondence with the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines. Thus, B1 would correspond to Intermediate Mid and Intermediate High, B2 would correspond to Intermediate High and Advanced Low, and C1, to Advanced Mid and Advanced High.

3. RESULTS

The first result we present is the one related to students' perception of the value the forum has had for them. The mean obtained in the variable "I feel that the forum has been a positive experience for me" was 3.85 (*SD* = .816), which indicates that students perceive the forum as positive.

As we were interested in finding out the different reactions and perceptions of students in the two contexts selected, namely, the forum and the classroom, Student's t-tests were used for the examination of mean differences. Their reactions to the teacher's corrections either to their own output or their classmates' were the first topic of interest. The Student's t-test used for the examination of mean differences shows that the mean score for the context of the forum was 4.09 (*SD* = .915) and for the context of the classroom was 4.26 (*SD* = .905), but this difference in means was not significant: t (45) = -1.242, p > .221. Table 1 summarizes the results of the Student's t-test for the first two variables we set out to compare.

TABLE 1. STUDENT'S T-TEST. REACTIONS TO CORRECTIONS BY CONTEXTS (*N* = 46)

	Forum	Classroom	*t*	*df*	*P*
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
I read and I try to take notes of the corrections the teacher makes	4.09 (.915)	4.26 (.905)	-1.242	45	.221

When asked about who they expect feedback from, the mean expectation score obtained for teacher's feedback was 4.13 (*SD* = .833) and for classmates' feedback, 3.78 (*SD* = .867). This difference is statistically significant: t (45) = 3.078, p > .004. Table 2 shows the results obtained for items related to feedback expectations.

TABLE 2. STUDENT'S T-TEST. EXPECTATIONS OF FEEDBACK BY AGENTS (*N* = 46)

	from my teacher	from my classmates	*t*	*df*	*p*
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
When I participate in the forum, I expect feedback	4.13 (.833)	3.78 (.867)	3.078	45	.004

In Table 3 we observe the results concerning the perception of closeness. The results reveal that closeness to the teacher on the part of the students had a mean of 3.78 (*SD* = .867) and closeness to their classmates had a mean of 3.57 (*SD* = .860). The difference between both scores was again statistically significant t (45) = 2.486, p> .017.

TABLE 3. STUDENT'S T-TEST. PERCEPTIONS OF CLOSENESS TO THE TEACHER AND TO CLASSMATES (N = 46)					
	To the teacher	To my classmates	*df*	*T*	*p*
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
The forum has made me feel closer	3.78 (.867)	3.57 (.860)	45	2.486	.017

Correlation coefficients were computed among the seven variables examined. The notetaking of corrections students do in the virtual environment correlates significantly with the notetaking they do in the classroom (r = .455), with the expectations they have in the forum about their teacher's feedback (r = .539), and with those they have of their classmates' feedback (r = .529). Also significant, although not as highly significant as the previous correlations, is the correlation between the notetaking of corrections students do in the virtual environment and their perception of closeness to their teacher (r = .305).

The results also show a strong positive correlation between the expectations the students have of the feedback they get from their teacher in the forum and the following two items: firstly, the expectations they have of the feedback they get from their classmates (r = .539); secondly, their feeling of closeness to their teacher (r = .409). On the other hand, the expectations of getting feedback from their classmates is strongly associated with the feeling of closeness to their classmates (r = .437); and the feeling of closeness to classmates is, at the same time, closely linked with the feeling of closeness to the teacher (r = .764).

As for the item related to their view of the forum as a positive experience, there is a strong positive correlation between this item and students' expectations of getting feedback from their classmates (r = .486) and also between this item and students' feelings of closeness to their classmates (r = .379). Finally, we can observe a positive correlation, although not as strong as the previous ones, between students' view of the forum as a positive experience and their feeling of closeness to their teacher (r = .361). Table 4 summarizes the results of the Pearson correlations for the seven variables under study.

TABLE 4. PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF THE SEVEN VARIABLES EXAMINED (N = 46)							
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I try to take notes of the corrections the teacher makes in the forum to my production or to other students' production	-						
2. I read and I try to take notes of the corrections the teacher makes in the classroom to my production or to other students' production	.455**	-					

3. When I participate in the forum, I expect the teacher to give me some feedback	.539**	.396**	-				
4. When I participate in the forum, I expect my classmates to give me some feedback	.529**	.527**	.539**	-			
5. The forum has made me feel closer to the teacher	.305*	.244.	.409**	.468**	-		
6. The forum has made me feel closer to my classmates	.162	.149	.174	.437**	.764**	-	
7. I feel that the forum has been a positive experience for me	.256	.236	.193	.486**	.361*	.379**	-

*p<.05. **p<.01.

4. DISCUSSION

On analysis of the data, we observe that students consider the virtual environment as a positive aspect in the learning process.

In the first place, we see that students pay similar attention to the corrections made by the teacher in the two learning contexts analysed. This means that the forum, in spite of still being a relatively new learning environment for them, is not seen as a much better option than the classroom context, or does not attract students' attention more than the classroom sessions. This result is also evidence of the fact that the figure of the teacher remains intact in the new context.

Secondly, the data show that the students have a clear preference for their teacher's feedback. This result confirms what other studies have indicated, i.e. that students usually prefer to get an answer from their teacher rather than from their classmates and that they usually find it difficult to trust other language learners.

Thirdly, according to our results, the forum has played a more significant role in helping students feel closer to the teacher than to their classmates. This result is not consistent with previous research, which has highlighted the impact of CALL both on the relationship between teachers and students and among students (Leffa).

Lastly, the data allow us to see vital associations between the different contexts dealt with in our paper and also between the different agents or participants in the learning process. The high degree of correlations between the variables suggests that students consider CMC as an integral part of the learning process, and not as an add-on to their course.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Our study, although exploratory, shows that students feel that the computer complements the classroom. CALL does not seem to be aimed at replacing either the teacher or the textbooks. The basic idea is that we need tools to improve

the quality of the learning process, to make it more varied and compatible with different learning styles and CALL is doubtless one of them.

CALL has often been described in terms of dichotomies: tutor vs. tool or individual vs. group of learners. These dichotomies can be referred to as the "or" approach, where either the individual or the group is discarded, which is an obvious impossibility, since both are equally essential. Another possibility is to emphasize both the individual and the community, on the basis that we may refer to it as the 'and' approach. Again, this is questionable because nothing is left out and may well result in redundancy. What we suggest here is that neither the individual nor the community should be emphasized, but the point at which they coincide.

However, it is important to underline that any implications should be interpreted in light of the following limitations. The first one is imposed by the instrument used in this study, which may not appropriately capture participants' perceptions and feelings and may therefore serve as an important limitation. The second limitation refers to generalisability, as the number of participants was not very high (46). The third one is determined by the level of the participants, who had a B2 level of English. It would be interesting to analyse how reactions and perceptions change using subjects who have a lower (B1) or a higher (C1) level.

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THE ENGLISH EXAM IN THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION: AN OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The importance of the University Entrance Examination in the students' academic future has fostered research on the characteristics of the exams which compose it. Among them, the English exam has been analysed concerning crucial issues such as its validity and reliability, the students' written production in the foreign language, and the type of improvements which may be implemented in the exam. The results obtained in the studies conducted so far on the English exam are overviewed in this paper, so that they may be considered in forthcoming studies or when implementing changes to the exam.

KEY WORDS: University Entrance Examination, English exam, studies, revision.

RESUMEN

La importancia de la Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad en el futuro académico del alumnado ha propiciado la investigación de las características de los exámenes de los que se compone. Entre ellos, el examen de inglés se ha analizado respecto a cuestiones como su validez y fiabilidad, la producción escrita del alumnado en la lengua extranjera, y las posibles mejoras que se pueden incluir en el examen. Los resultados obtenidos en los estudios que se han realizado hasta el momento se presentan en este artículo, para que se puedan considerar en estudios futuros o cuando se implementen cambios en el examen.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pruebas de Acceso a la Universidad, examen de inglés, estudios, revisión.

1. INTRODUCTION

The University Entrance Examination in Spain, together with the student's score from secondary education, is the key to access the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Therefore, it is crucial that this high-stakes examination meets the six characteristics that Bachman and Palmer require for a test to be useful, namely "reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact and practicability" (29-31). Only by revisiting these characteristics and implementing any necessary changes will students be offered a University Entrance Examination which

may give them equal opportunities to access a degree. In the case of the English exam, it is also important to study the students' (written) command in the foreign language (FL), as reflected in their (written) production. The results obtained in this respect will help teachers, researchers and testers to know the students' level before entering the EHEA, and see if they are ready to face the use of the FL in their degrees (i.e. to exchange ideas in the FL, to enjoy mobility programmes, etc.).

The studies which have analysed any aspect regarding the English exam in the Spanish University Entrance Examination so far have been divided into three categories (García Laborda, "Analizando" 10). However, this classification did not consider the studies that have described the students' command in the FL either by using a Computer-aided Error Analysis (CEA), or an Interlanguage (IL) analysis, methodologies developed by Dagneaux, Denness and Granger, and Selinker, respectively. Thus, this article will review the studies done on the English exam in the Spanish University Entrance Examination by dividing them into the following three sections. In the first one, the studies related to the issues of reliability and validity will be described. Then, the (C)EAs and IAs conducted with the students' written production will be reviewed. Finally, the third section will be devoted to those publications which have advocated for an improvement of the exam and suggested future lines of research.

2. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN THE ENGLISH EXAM IN THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

In this section, the analysis of two "measurement qualities" (Bachman and Palmer 19) will be explored. The first one is the reliability of the test, that is, the extent to which test scores result from a test which is free from measurement errors. The second quality is the validity of the exam, which is determined by its reflection of the working definition of language ability being evaluated.

2.1. Reliability

To analyse intra- and inter-rater agreement, in a pre- post- design experiment, Amengual Pizarro (*Discrepancy*) asked thirty-two raters to rate ten compositions in the established order and provide a holistic mark from zero to ten to each of the compositions. Three months later, the same raters were again required to mark the same compositions holistically, but in a different established order. Among the results of the study, various aspects are worth noting. First, the pre- stage was characterized by more variability among the raters' holistic scores (pre-stage: M= 4.85, SD= 1.08; post-stage: M= 4.55; SD= .67) as well as a wider range of scores (pre-stage: 2.90-7.00; post-stage: 2.80-5.60), and the raters' holistic agreement was low (k= .66). There were no statistically significant differences in the average composition in the pre- and post-stages, although the standard deviation (SD= 9.1) showed that scores were widespread around the mean, a result in line with two previous

publications which had showed poor inter-raters' agreement (Amengual Pizarro, "Study"; Amengual Pizarro and Herrera Soler). Finally, the level of intra-rater agreement proved to be quite high, although some raters showed important differences in the pre- and post- stages.

The effect of the different types of evaluation on the reliability of the exam has also been analysed. Amengual Pizarro ("Posibles") focused on the intra-rater agreement of thirty-two raters in ten compositions when using holistic and analytic evaluations. The results revealed that the use of a holistic evaluation resulted in a low total raters' agreement (k= .64), although it was slightly higher than that found in the use of analytic rating (k= .60). Nevertheless, the degree of consistency in analytic scoring was higher than that in holistic scoring (k= .69; k= .66; respectively). In fact, data show that raters' analytic scoring was more arbitrary and heterogeneous than that in holistic scoring, although both types of evaluation showed significant correlations.

Similarly, Watts and García Carbonell compared the results obtained when using holistic and focused holistic evaluation. The latter was conducted by including six degrees of correctness and a descriptor per degree. To check the inter-rater agreement, two groups of four inexperienced raters evaluated the same one hundred exam papers, each group using a type of evaluation. The findings obtained indicate that focused holistic criteria showed significantly greater reliability in the total scores, a greater score variance, but a lower judge variance. Finally, there was a high consistency in the ratings in the pre- and post-stages in all questions.

The possible causes for the poor results of holistic evaluation have also been considered. Gila González used a questionnaire to ask eight raters about the English exam. Regarding its evaluation, the lack of vocabulary, grammatical errors and lack of coherence, in decreasing order of importance, were claimed to be the causes of errors, although the aspects which influenced the raters' score were the lack of coherence in the presentation of ideas, grammatical mistakes and the erroneous use of vocabulary, and connectors. Similarly, Amengual Pizarro ("Study"), and Amengual Pizarro and Herrera Soler asked raters to highlight the best and the worst aspects of thirty-two compositions (which had been previously classified) and to relate them to seven different aspects. The results show that the attention paid to various aspects of the students' compositions differed depending on their proficiency level. Another crucial result was that there was not a direct relationship between the raters' judgments and their scores. Two further analyses were conducted to investigate whether raters would give the same importance to errors in discourse or in isolated sentences (Amengual Pizarro, "Study"; Amengual Pizarro, Herrera Soler and Alonso Vázquez).

Other variables have proved to affect the scoring process. First, Herrera Soler ("Effect") compared the ratings by ten female (five of them working at secondary education and the other five at university) and ten male raters (same distribution in secondary education and university). Regarding gender, men were found to be more lenient than women in objective and subjective questions of the exam, and the raters' working place also proved an important variable, since secondary school teachers focused more on accuracy. The type of question rated also biased

the raters' scoring, as can be seen in the fact that university teachers agreed on the scoring of the composition, but there were significant differences when they scored open questions. Finally, the proficiency level shown in the exam also determined the raters' scoring. The data in this publication reveal that secondary school teachers were stricter when the composition was poor, but university teachers became stricter as the level of the exam was better. Amengual Pizarro ("Posibles") also studied the raters' gender and working place. Her results point out that women working in high schools were more lenient than men working in the same institution, although differences were found as far as the type of evaluation done. When using holistic evaluation, women granted higher scores than men in the same institutions, whereas the opposite trend was found when using analytical evaluation. When women worked at university, their scoring was stricter than that of men at the same higher institution, a finding in line with Herrera Soler ("Effect" 176), but contradicting his claim that the group of women working in high schools is the stricter scoring group in all the cases.

2.2. Validity

Various types of validity have been defined in the literature (Bachman; Shaw and Weir). Among them, the construct, content and predictive validity of the English exam have been the focus of research.

The construct validity of the English exam has been analysed by considering the tasks that students need to perform, and by studying the way how the evaluation of those tasks affects the score obtained. Thus, Herrera Soler ("Is") asked eight raters to evaluate four hundred and fifty exams. The results revealed that the objective items in the exam presented non-normal data distribution, lacked calibration and they did not discriminate students. The subjective items of the exam (the open-answer and non-directed composition) were the ones which did so. In another study, Herrera Soler, Esteban García and Amengual Pizarro studied the relationship between the true/false question and the composition. As a general conclusion, scorings tended to be homogenous when the true/false question and the open-answer questions were studied, while the consideration of the open-answer question alone implied a negative bias in the scoring.

Sanz Sainz also claimed that the exam lacked construct and content validity. A crucial example of the lack of construct validity was seen in the little attention paid to communicative aspects in the exam. An example of the problems with content validity is the insufficient number of tasks required in the exam, which did not allow the students to produce language which is representative of their command of the FL, and it did not let them show their competences or aptitudes.

The scores obtained by eighty-one students of English Philology at the Universidad de Granada, with their scores in the Quick Placement Test and their marks during their first university year were compared by Sanz Sainz and Fernández Álvarez ("Validez"). The results revealed that the English exam in the University Entrance Examination had low predictive validity. In fact, it was the Quick Place-

ment Test score that was found to keep a direct relation with the students' mean score at the end of the first year, and with the number of credits passed in September of that academic year, thus showing a significant predictive value. In the light of these results, the authors agreed with Herrera Soler's previous claim ("Is") that the validity of the exam was not that good and it was unable to discriminate students regarding their competence level.

3. (C)EAS AND IL ANALYSES CONDUCTED WITH THE DATA IN THE ENGLISH EXAM IN THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

Eight studies have dealt with the language produced by Spanish students when taking their English exam. The edited book by Iglesias Rábade (*Análisis*) includes the chapters by Crespo García, Doval Suárez, González Álvarez, Iglesias Rábade ("Análisis"), and Woodward Smith, who used the English exam in the University Entrance Examination in June 1995 in Galicia. The other three studies are PhD dissertations. The first one by Wood Wood used the exams in June 1999 in the Canary Islands, whereas Rodríguez Aguado analysed the exams in June 1996 in Valladolid, and Díez Bedmar ("Analysis"; "Spanish") the ones taken in June 2008 in Jaén.

As seen in the brief descriptions below, the research interests which triggered each of these studies determined the focus of research and the methodology of each chapter or PhD dissertation. Thus, the analysis may consider either a specific linguistic aspect of the students' written command in the FL, as shown in the chapter by Doval Suárez, one error category, in the case of the chapter by Crespo García, or various error categories, as used by Rodríguez Aguado. The studies also differ in the (computer) learner corpus used (i.e. type of writing task, number of words, year and place of compilation, etc.), in the use of a (C)EA or an IL analysis for the data analysis and the error taxonomies used (Dulay, Burt and Krashen).

Morpho-syntactic errors were highlighted by Crespo García in 500 exams by means of a (C)EA which considered a linguistic category classification and a surface structure taxonomy. The data in the publication reveals that out of the 2,117 errors found, most of them are morphological (80%), then followed by morpho-syntactic (17%) and syntactic ones (3%). If the word class which triggered those errors is borne in mind, the three word classes which posed more problems were verbs (58%), adjectives (11%) and nouns (7%), in descending frequency order.

Doval Suárez scrutinized spelling errors in 322 exams (78,507 words) by means of a descriptive taxonomy considering the surface structure and the linguistic category classification. All in all, 1.27 spelling errors were found per 100 words, or a mean of 3.11 errors per exam (*SD*= 3.11). Most of these spelling errors were found in the open word classes (89.1%), and the errors triggered by phonetics were the most common ones (62.7%), specially those related to double consonants (60.2% of the errors).

The learner corpus analysed by González Álvarez was composed of 1,000 lexical errors in 304 exams (*M*= 3.29, *SD*= 2.8). The error taxonomy employed in this case focused on the open word class where the error was located, as well as the cause or process of the error. The word class where more lexical errors were found was the open word class verbs (45%), and the most frequent cause of lexical error was semantic approximation (34%), followed by hybrids and semantic extension.

Iglesias Rábade ("Análisis") focused on the students' use of discourse markers in a learner corpus composed of 2,000 exams. To do so, he followed the classification of cohesive devices into referential, substitutive, elliptical and conjunctive. Within referential devises, the incorrect uses of "his" and "hers" as possessive pronouns, "its" as a neutral possessive pronoun and "theirs" as a possessive pronoun were highlighted. Then, the percentage of error of the plural demonstrative determiner, "these," and the adverb "near" were high when studying demonstrative reference, while comparative reference showed few errors. The problems found in the use of verbal substitutors were mainly due to the substitution of the lexical verb in the second conjoin, and the main problem with ellipsis was related to the cases in which only the operator (99.55% of errors when using it) and the auxiliary verbs (99.48% of error when using this type of ellipsis) were ellipted. Finally, clausal ellipsis always presented errors when a "wh-element" was used. The analysis of the conjunctive markers used revealed that the adversative conjunctive "actually" showed the highest percentage of error (43.14%), and the erroneous use of "after all," instead of "above all" (18.75%), was the highest one in the use of causal and sequential conjunctive markers. Finally, the temporal conjunctive most frequently mistaken was represented by "*the next time" (41.18% of errors in its use).

In Woodward Smith's chapter, the students' use of prepositions was classified by means of the surface structure taxonomy. The most frequent error was that of misuse, whereas wrong word order did not present any occurrence. The results show that the three prepositions with a higher percentage of errors are "to" (22.5%), "in" (13.2%) and "of" (13.1%). Especially important were the prepositions which may express the nuances of place, time and circumstance, because these polysemic prepositions triggered 74.1% of the errors in the prepositions in the learner corpus.

The students' use of the definite, indefinite and zero articles was the main objective of Wood Wood's PhD dissertation. To do so, the 4,976 uses of articles in 332 compositions were analysed by means of an IA. The 1,160 erroneous uses found (23.3% of the uses) were closely related to the type of reference which they express. In fact, students did not show many problems with definite reference (11.1% of erroneous uses), or the indefinite one (27.3% of errors), but struggled with the expression of generic reference (52.7% of errors). The use of the zero article in generic reference with uncountable nouns showed the highest percentage (65.9%). As far as the type of errors which students made when using each article, the most frequent one out of the three types considered (omission, agreement and misuse) was their omission in the cases of definite (75.1%) and indefinite articles (44.7%), and the addition of the article "the" in the contexts where the zero article would have been preferred (75.5%).

The learner corpus used by Rodríguez Aguado consists of 12,204 words in 123 compositions which were analysed by means of a (C)EA in which vocabulary,

morpho-syntax, spelling and discourse were considered. Thus, the 1,325 errors found in the corpus were classified into the error categories of, morpho-syntax (47%), vocabulary (27.8%), spelling (12.7%) and discourse (12.5%). Within morphosyntactic errors, the highest percentage of errors was found in verbs (38%). As highlighted by Crespo García (1999), this word class proved important as well because the study of lexical errors also showed that this word class was the most problematic one for the students when selecting vocabulary (39.12% of errors). Regarding the third error category, spelling, the most frequent spelling errors were found in double consonants (29%), problems with "y" and "I" (29%), a finding in line with González Álvarez (1999).

Finally, the learner corpus compiled by Díez Bedmar ("Analysis"; "Spanish") consists of 302 compositions (34,403 words), error-tagged with the error taxonomy developed at the Centre for English Corpus Linguistics by Dagneaux, et al. The results offered reveal that students show more problems when dealing with the selection of vocabulary (*M*= 3.23; *SD*= 2.75), then followed by spelling problems (*M*= 3.13; *SD*= 2.53), errors in the use of pronouns (*M*= 1.62; *SD*= 1.70), and articles (*M*= 1.45; *SD*= 1.56).

4. THE NEED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE EXAM AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The University Entrance Examination and the English exam have undergone some improvements along the history of the exam (as seen in Royal Decrees 1640/1999, 990/2000, 1025/2002, 1318/2004, 1892/2008), some of them motivated by the many voices which have claimed that the exam needed a change (e.g., Martín Úriz, et al.; Santana Lario; García Laborda, "Análisis"; Sanz Sainz and Fernández Álvarez, "University"). For instance, Sanz Sainz and Fernández Álvarez ("University") and García Laborda ("Análisis") reflected on the fact that few changes had been made in the exam, and Sanz Sainz and Fernández Álvarez ("University") highlighted the need to redesign the exam, to establish contents and objectives clearly, as well as to design a new construction protocol which ensured the quality of the exam. García Laborda ("Análisis" 29) highlighted that the English exam was still based on the Unitary factory hypothesis by Oller ("Evidence"; *Language*), who claimed that the students show a homogenous command of English in the written and oral mode. Apart from that, the criteria used to establish the students' proficiency at each level are not clear, since guidelines, such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), or the ones in European Association for Language Testing and Assessemnt (EALTA) or the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), have not been used so far to establish levels which are necessary for European Convergence (Sanz Sainz and Fernández Álvarez, "University"). Rating criteria or punctuation scales could also be developed by the CEFR and applied to the English exam, so that the process of rating is standardized and rater training made easier (Herrera Soler, "Vigencia" 12), which would improve the inter- and intra-rater agreement and provide more reliable results.

The need to include more skills in the English exam has also been made explicit in various publications (Fernández Álvarez; Martín Úriz, et al.; Sanz Sainz and Fernández Álvarez, "University"). Thus, various pilot exams have been designed and implemented considering listening, writing and reading (Martín Úriz, et al.), and also including the oral component, as seen in the studies by Romero García, Fernández Álvarez, and García Laborda and Gimeno Sanz ("Aproximación").

According to García Laborda ("Análisis" 29), the future of the exam for FLs revolves around three main aspects: the exam construct, its interrelation with information technology and the application of current test theory to the exam. Regarding the second aspect, the use of evaluation platforms is fostered. In the case of Spain, the multilingual platform for exams *PREVALEX* is described as a useful tool to adapt the exam to an electronic format (García Laborda, "Aportar"; "Net"; "Plataforma"; García Laborda and Gimeno Sanz, "Adaptación"; García Laborda and Magal Royo). This platform is divided into three modules, which tackle grammatical issues, writing and a blended oral module. Only the first module is automatically checked, so 30% of the tasks in the platform need human correction (García Laborda, "Plataforma").

Based on this multilingual platform for exams, the project *PAULEX* has emerged and has developed the platform *PAUER*, where (productive and receptive) oral and written tasks can be developed. As described by García Laborda, Magal Royo and Martínez Sáez, this platform makes use of an appropriate number of visual and oral aids. Pilot studies have already been conducted considering the four skills, and the major difficulties found when doing the oral and listening components have been reported (García Laborda and Gimeno Sanz, "Aproximación"). A preliminary study on the students' errors when writing on the computer for the pilot exam has also been conducted by García Laborda and Bakieva.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has offered an overview of the studies which have been done so far on the English exam in the University Entrance Examination. With the results obtained so far, informed decisions can be made when considering the changes that are still necessary to improve the current English exam at any Spanish university and adapt it to the requirements of the EHEA.

To begin with the two measurement qualities analysed, both reliability and validity may be improved. The reliability of the exam has proved to be poor, and affected by variables such as the type of evaluation conducted, the number of raters, their gender, working place, type of writing task evaluated, etc. Similarly, the validity of the exam still falls short of expectations, although some important changes such as the future inclusion of the oral skill have been done (Royal Decree 1892/2008). The tension between the practicalities of the exam and its reliability and validity still needs to be considered, so further research and the application of the results to the exam are still needed.

Secondly, the students' main errors at this stage of their acquisition process have also been outlined. Despite methodological limitations, some tendencies in the students' problems when writing in the FL have been outlined by Díez Bedmar ("Spanish"). Therefore, scoring rubrics may be fine-tuned so that raters may be trained to react to these frequent errors and cope with them in the rating process, thus avoiding biased scores. The students' level at this stage should also be contrasted against a standardized scale, such as the CEFR, to see if they meet the requirements that the EHEA establishes in their degrees regarding the use of the FL.

Finally, the possibility of administering the English exam by means of a platform is being explored at the moment. Although still in a pilot stage, this promising innovation in the English exam may prove a step forward in the improvement of the exam so that it may be administered and evaluated more easily.

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A CONTRASTIVE SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH, SPANISH AND FRENCH IDIOMS

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ABSTRACT

Idiomatic expressions have been vastly researched in the last years (Corpas, *Manual*; González Rey; Boers and Stengers, "Quantitative"; "Adding"). Many studies have approached idioms from a cross-linguistic perspective (Awwad; Dobrovol'skij, ""Phraseological"; "Idioms"; Corpas, *Lenguas*; Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen), highlighting the similarities between idioms from different languages. The present paper seeks to contribute to cross-linguistic idiom analysis. We aim to conduct research into the English, Spanish and French idiomatic repertoires in order to find out both similarities and differences. We will concentrate on the semantic specifics of idioms on the basis of the hypothesis that the identity, similarity or divergence of idioms is largely grounded on the plane of content.

KEY WORDS: Idiom, equivalence, metaphor, mental image, culture.

RESUMEN

Las expresiones idiomáticas han sido objeto de numerosas investigaciones en los últimos años (Corpas, *Manual*; González Rey; Boers and Stengers, "Quantitative"; "Adding"). Los estudios se han centrado en la comparación interlingüística de fraseologismos (Awwad; Dobrovol'skij, ""Phraseological"; "Idioms"; Corpas, *Lenguas*; Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen) y han subrayado las similitudes entre unidades fraseológicas de distintas lenguas. Este artículo pretende contribuir a la comparación fraseológica a través del análisis de los inventarios fraseológicos del inglés, español y francés con el fin de estudiar las semejanzas y diferencias entre ellos. El estudio se plantea desde una perspectiva semántica basada en la idea de que la identidad, semejanza y divergencia que presentan las expresiones idiomáticas se asienta en gran medida en el plano del contenido.

PALABRAS CLAVE: expresión idiomática, equivalencia, metáfora, imagen mental, cultura.

1. INTRODUCTION

Idiomatic expressions have been vastly researched in the last years (Corpas, *Manual*; González Rey; Boers and Stengers, "Quantitative"; "Adding"). The study of idioms has been undertaken from three perspectives: psychological, cognitive and linguistic. Psychological studies have examined people's mental imagery of idi-

oms (Cacciari and Glucksberg) and idiom processing (Gibbs, Bogdonovich, et al.). Cognitive studies have explored the metaphoric motivation of idioms (Lakoff, *Women*; "Contemporary"; Lakoff and Johnson; Lakoff and Turner; Gibbs and Steen; Kövecses, *Metaphor*; *Language*; Boers and Stengers, "Adding").

Much of the linguistic research into idioms has been done from a cross-linguistic perspective. Cross-linguistic idiom analysis has focused on three domains (Dobrovol'skij, "Idioms" 368):

– description and comparison of structural types of idioms
– description of thematic groups. i.e. idioms with constituents from the same semantic field
– types of cross-linguistic equivalents

The present article focuses on the last domain. We provide a comparative description of English, Spanish (from Spain) and French idioms from a semantic perspective.

2. SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH, SPANISH AND FRENCH IDIOMS

Many English, Spanish and French idioms display both similarities and divergences. The contrastive analysis yields three types of equivalence: full or absolute equivalence, partial equivalence and non-equivalence.

1. Full Equivalence

A considerable proportion of English, Spanish and French idioms are full equivalents, i.e. they are identical with regard to meaning, syntactic and lexical structure, and imagery basis. We provide some examples below:

tighten one's belt / *apretarse el cinturón* / *se serrer la ceinture*
on the tip of one's tongue / *en la punta de la lengua* / *sur le bout de la langue*
not to lift a finger / *no mover un dedo* / *ne pas remuer/bouger/lever le petit doigt*
have one's head in the clouds / *estar en las nubes* / *être dans les nuages*
do something behind someone's back / *hacer algo a espaldas de alguien* / *faire quelque chose sur le dos de quelqu'un*
take one's time / *tomarse su tiempo* / *prendre son temps*
pull the wool over somebody's eyes / *quitar la venda de los ojos de alguien* / *faire tomber le bandeau des yeux de quelqu'un*
be on the same wavelength / *estar en la misma onda* / *être sur la même longueur d'onde*
have an eye on someone / *no quitar ojo a alguien* / *avoir l'oeil sur quelqu'un*
have nerves of steel / *tener nervios de acero* / *avoir des nerfs d'acier*
get out of hand / *escaparse de las manos* / *échapper des mains*

Full equivalence frequently results from the fact that the idioms are "interlingual loans" (*préstamos interlingüísticos*) in Wotjak's and Corpas' (*Diez*) terms. Consider the following examples:

> headhunter / *cazatalentos* / *chasseur de têtes*
> the black box / *la caja negra* / *la boîte noire*
> *coger el toro por los cuernos* / take the bull by the horns / *prendre le taureau par les cornes*

Other similarities between idioms rest upon a metaphoric or cultural basis. A metaphoric or metonymic motivation underlies many English, Spanish and French idioms. Let us illustrate this kind of idioms:

THE HEAD IS THE SEAT OF EMOTIONS: break someone's heart / *romper el corazón* / *briser le coeur*.
POWER IS UP: look over one's shoulder / *mirar por encima del hombro* / *regarder par-dessus l'épaule*.
HAPPY IS UP: be in seventh heaven/*estar en el séptimo cielo* / *être au septième ciel*.

The figurative meaning of several idioms in English, Spanish and French is obtained through the metaphoric background of a constituent. Thus, coldness displays a metaphorical link with lack of emotion or indifference or cowardice, as shown in the idioms 'in cold blood'/*a sangre fría/de sang-froid*, 'leave somebody cold'/*dejar frío a alguien/ne faire ni froid ni chaud*.

Some body terms show a link to a personality or behavioural trait. Hence the hand is metaphorically linked to control (rule with an iron fist / *gobernar con mano de hierro/gouverner avec une main de fer*) and the nose to curiosity (be nosy / *meter las narices* / *mettre son nez*).

A few full equivalents are based on the same metonymy. Let us look at a few examples:

THE ORGAN FOR THE SENSE: turn a deaf ear / *faire la sourde oreille* (the ear for hearing). The Spanish equivalent *hacer oídos sordos* contains the sense term (*oído* 'hearing').
THE SIGN OF AN EMOTION FOR THE EMOTION: red with anger / *rojo de ira* / *rouge de colère*.

Cross-linguistic idiom equivalence may rely on an identical cultural basis. Several English, Spanish and French equivalent idioms are culturally rooted. Culturally-marked idioms fall into two groups:

a) Idioms based on the European cultural heritage, which has religious, literary and mythological components. Thus the expressions 'separate the wheat from the chaff' / *separar el grano de la paja* / *séparer le grain de l'ivraie*, 'bear one's cross'/ *llevar su cruz* / *porter sa croix* (*cruz/croix* meaning 'cross') con-

tain a biblical reference, while the idioms 'rest on one's laurels'/ *dormirse en los laureles / s'endormir sus ses lauriers*, Achilles' heel / *el talón de Aquiles / le talon d' Achille* refer to classical mythology.

b) Idioms based on a cultural element (e.g. a common belief or tradition). Thus the idiomatic meaning of 'keep your fingers crossed'/*cruzar los dedos* relies upon the belief that making this gesture with one's fingers gives luck. The meaning of the expressions 'the black sheep' / *la oveja negra* is based on shepherds' belief that black wool is not as valuable as white wool.

2. Partial Equivalence

Another type of cross-linguistic idiom equivalence is partial equivalence. Partial equivalents show divergences in the compositional structure or in the imagery basis. We will illustrate the different types of partial equivalence by means of several examples.

1. *Contrast in the compositional structure*

Some idioms show variation at the level of lexical implementation. For example, the Spanish idiom *a plena luz del día* differs from the English expression 'in the cold light of day' in the adjective modifying the kernel constituent, and from the French counterpart *en plein jour* in the addition of the nominal element 'light'. In much the same way, the lexical difference between the English idiom 'slam the door in somebody's face' and the corresponding Spanish and French expressions, *dar con la puerta en las narices / fermer la porte au nez*, lies in the choice of the body term (face versus *narices/nez* 'nose').

Differences in the syntactic structure may be put down to the addition of a constituent, as in a bolt from the blue / algo *caído del cielo / c'est tombé du ciel* (addition of a verbal constituent in the Spanish and French expressions , *caído/ tombé* 'fallen') and *être tout yeux, tout oreilles* / be all ears / *ser todo oídos* (addition of a further noun constituent in French, *yeux* 'eyes').

A few idioms differ in the location element. It is the case of put one's foot in it / *mettre les pieds dans le plat / meter la pata*, build castles in the air / c*onstruire des châteaux en Espagne / construir castillos en el aire.*

Other idioms show differences in the syntactic pattern of the verb. Thus, the idiom 'to ring a bell' has a ditransitive pattern, while its Spanish equivalent, *sonarle a alguien*, is intransitive. The metaphoric view of sleeptime as a time to think before making an important decision is present in the idioms 'sleep on something'/ *consultar con la almohada / la nuit porte conseil*, but while in English it is articulated through a verb, which is followed by an object in Spanish, in French it is lexicalized by a clausal structure.

2. *Contrast in the imagery basis*

A group of English, Spanish and French idioms foreground diverging mental images. The mental image may evoke an element from the same lexical domain or may be drawn from a different domain. Thus in the idioms there's something fishy going on/ *hay gato encerrado* / *il y a anguille sous roche* a hidden animal stands for something suspicious, the difference lying in the animal concerned. In the idioms have a flea / *tener la mosca tras la oreja* / *avoir la puce à l'oreille*, the core constituent is an insect, a flea in English and French, a fly (*mosca*) in Spanish.

Below we provide further examples of idioms based on images drawn from the same domain:

– Body images
cost an arm and a leg / costar un ojo de la cara / *coûter les yeux de la tête*
pull somebody's leg / *tomar el pelo* / *se payer la tête de quelqu'un*
– Animal images
when frogs can fly /*cuando las ranas críen pelos* / *quand les poules auront des dents*
– Food images
the icing on the cake / *la guinda al pastel* / *la cerise sur le gâteau*
sugar the pill / *dorar la píldora* / *dorer la pilule*
– Miscellanea
catch somebody red-handed / *pillar a alguien con las manos en la masa* / *prendre quelqu'un la main dans le sac*
it was all Greek/just double Dutch to me / *me suena a chino* / *pour moi c'est de l'hébreu*
have a screw loose / *faltar un tornillo a alguien* / *être un peu marteau*

The image lying at the heart of the idiom may be drawn from a different domain in the different languages. Thus the idioms *llevar la batuta* / *mener la danse* evoke various artistic domains - the domain of music in Spanish, that of dance in French.

Let us illustrate this kind of semantic contrast with further idioms:

between the devil and the deep blue sea / *entre la espada y la pared* / *entre le marteau et l'enclume*
carry the can / *pagar el pato* / *porter le chapeau*
it's raining cats and dogs / *caen chuzos de punta* / *il tombe des cordes/trombes*
irse de la lengua / *let the cat out of the bag* / *vendre la mèche*
hit the ceiling / *subirse a la parra* / *monter sur ses grands chevaux*

In a few English, Spanish and French idioms we notice subtle differences derived from the cultural component of the idiom. As Mellado (75) remarks, "...el carácter universal de los FR [fraseologismos] se manifiesta más en el plano semántico funcional, del significado fraseológico, que en el semántico estructural de los componentes, que es donde más se aprecian las peculiaridades de cada lengua." This is

particularly true of idioms from culturally salient domains in the language, including French idioms from the domain of cooking, English idioms from the domain of sailing, and Spanish idioms from the domain of bullfighting. This type of idioms have no absolute equivalent. Below we present some examples:

it's a piece of cake / *es pan comido* / *c'est du gâteau*
*s*ell like hot cakes / *venderse como churros*
have a bun in the oven / *avoir une brioche au four*
sit on the fence / *ver los toros desde la barrera*

3. *Non-equivalence*

Non-equivalent idioms abound in the English, Spanish and French repertoires. Some authors have laid the emphasis on the semantic differences between idioms from different languages. In this light, Dobrovol'skij ("Idioms" 368) adopts a strong position: "In bilingual dictionaries and contrastive descriptions of idioms it is usually impossible to find parallel expressions which can be used equally in all cases."

Many English, Spanish and French idioms do not have an idiomatic counterpart in the other(s) language(s). This point is illustrated by means of the following examples:

English idioms: white lie, be on the cards, put the cat among the pigeons, keep a low profile, face the music, be over a barrel, clutch at straws, be in someone's good books, one sandwich short of a picnic, the gift of the gab, be over the hill, be tied up.

French idioms: *avoir le bras long* ('be influential'), *un navet* ('a bad film'), *se faire des cheveux* ('worry') , *avoir un poil dans la main* ('be lazy'), *avoir le nez qui remue* ('lie'), *avoir les mains libres* ('be able to act freely'), *baisser les bras* ('give in'), *en avoir plein les jambes* ('have walked too much'), *avoir un coup de coeur* ('be keen on something/somebody'), *avoir un cheveu sur la langue* ('lisp'), *être aux oiseaux* and *être aux anges* ('be very happy').

Spanish idioms: *darse el tute* ('make a big effort'), *pasarlas canutas* ('have a terrible time'), *en el quinto pino* ('very far'), *estar de mala uva* ('be in a foul mood'), *saber latín* ('be very sharp'), *no venir a cuento* ('be irrelevant).

Cross-idiomatic non-equivalence may result from the fact that the concept expressed by an idiom in one language is not lexicalised in other languages. It is the case of *golden handshake* and *pendre la crémaillère* (to move into a new house and have a party with your friends to celebrate).

Another type of non-equivalence between idioms is generated by their symbolic motivation. This seems to be the case of a few colour idioms where a colour

occurs in a symbolic function. Thus blue is a symbol for sadness in English ('feel blue'), and yellow stands for dishonesty and deceit in French (*rire jaune* 'force oneself to laugh', *un jaune* 'a strikebreaker').

Cross-idiomatic non-equivalence may also be grounded in culture. There are four types of culturally-determined idioms:

a) Idioms that contain a culture-specific constituent, e.g 'not to be short of a bob or two', 'spend a penny', *fermer la boîte à Camembert* 'die', *faire chou blanc* 'to fail'. The words *Camembert* (a kind of cheese) and *chou* 'cabbage' denote typical French foods.
b) Idioms that evoke an aspect of the target culture such a custom or tradition, a literary work or a historical figure. The figurative meaning of the idiom *to be flavour of the month* is connected with the supermarkets' practice of putting a particular flavour of something on special offer for a month.

The French idiom *ne pas s'embarquer sans biscuit* refers to sailors' custom of taking a piece of tough bread with them on their long and sometimes dangerous voyages. Hence the current meaning 'not to get involved in something without taking precautions'. The French expression *être/faire la mouche du coche* draws upon a fable written by the 17th-century author La Fontaine. The idiom *avoir un violon d'Ingres* 'have a hobby' refers to the French painter Ingres' habit of playing the violin (*violon*) in his leisure time. Finally, the meaning of the Spanish idiom *estar entre Pinto y Valdemoro* (be slightly drunk') evokes two Spanish towns which used to be famous for their wines.

c) Idioms from culturally relevant domains. The cultural idiosyncracy of certain domains has been signalled by a number of authors (Nida; Santoyo). For instance, horsing is a culturally salient domain in English, which explains the relatively high proportion of idioms from this lexical field in the English idiomatic repertoire ('to take pot luck', 'to go amiss') and the absence of an idiomatic counterpart in Spanish and French.

We provide further examples of idioms from cultural domains:

SAILING: sail close to the wind, be a nervous wreck, be at sea, be plain sailing, miss the boat, put/stick one's oar in something, learn the ropes.
BULLFIGHTING: *dar la puntilla, vestirse de luces, echar un capote, entrar al trapo, caerse del cartel, estar al quite, estar hasta la bandera.*
COOKING: *retourner quelqu'un comme une crêpe* 'manipulate', *faire la crêpe* 'turn in bed from one side to the other because you cannot fall asleep', *sucrer quelqu'un* 'ill-treat somebody', *se ronger les foies* 'to worry', *une nouille/bûche* ' a silly person'.

d) Idioms built upon a stereotype. Another group of expressions with no idiomatic counterpart are those based on a cultural stereotype. For example, the British

and the Spanish communities appear to share a negative view of the French, as shown in the idioms 'take a French leave' / *despedirse a la francesa.* The French counterpart of the latter expression, *filer à l'anglaise*, hints at the French community's negative feelings about the English. Likewise, the idioms *bâtir des châteaux en Espagne* ('build castles in the air') and *parler français comme une vache espagnole* manifest a critical view of the Spanish.

Another type of contrast between idioms from different languages is rooted in the semantic structure. The non-equivalence is occasionally based on semantic properties. Dobrovol'skij ("Idioms" 376) refers to it as "asymmetrical polysemy." This means that an idiom has developed a further meaning in the source language, but only shares one of its meanings with the target language idiom. For example, the Spanish idiom *perder la cabeza* has two meanings, 'go crazy' and 'become too anxious to behave calmly'. The French idiom *perdre la tête* only has the first meaning, while the English expression 'lose one's head' only has the second meaning. Similarly, the Spanish idiom *tirarse de los pelos*, which means 'to despair" and 'to have a big argument', shares the second meaning with the French expression *s'arracher les cheveux* and the first meaning with the English idiom *tear one's hair out*.

Further examples of asymmetrical polysemy are found in the idiomatic expressions *tener un corazón de oro*/ *avoir un coeur d'or* / have a heart of gold and to have one's head in the clouds / *avoir la tête dans les nuages*. In the former set, the Spanish and French idioms mean both generosity and goodness, while the English expression only denotes generosity. The latter pair shares the meaning day-dreaming, but the French idiom has developed a further meaning, absent-mindedness.

The most striking type of non-equivalence is characterized by similarity of image and divergence in meaning. While "one-word false friends" have been the subject of much research (Kroschewski; Chamizo Domínguez and Nerlich;, among others), "phraseological false friends" have been disregarded (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen 109). From the viewpoint of cognitive semantics, idiomatic false friends consist of analogous constituents and have an identical image basis but display significant differences in actual meaning (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen 109).

From a cognitive semantics perspective, the semantic differences between similarly-looking idioms can be accounted for by differences in (i) the underlying conceptual metaphor; (ii) the imagery basis; (iii) the figurative meaning of the core constituent.

We will now explore these three classes of idiomatic false friends in English, Spanish and French. The semantic contrast between idioms can be explained by various conceptual metaphors. The idioms profile different conceptual metaphors. Thus the English idiom 'to set on one's high horses' has to be interpreted on the basis of the conceptual metaphor PRIDE IS UP. In contrast, the French idiom *monter sus ses grands chevaux* is based on the metaphor ANGER IS UP.

A group of phraseological false friends rely on the different reading of the mental image. The same lexical structure evokes different features of the image. An illustrative example is the pair 'my ears are buzzing'/ *tes oreilles ont dû siffler*.The underlying image of the English idiom evokes a continuous unpleasant sound that

the speaker can hear. In the French idiom the sound is the voice of people who have spoken about someone in their absence.

A further example is 'burn the candle at both ends' (to work too hard for too long) and *brûler la chandelle par les deux bouts* 'to waste your money, to ruin your health'. Both idioms denote an extreme action. Yet in the French expression the negative aspect of the given situation is dominant.

The image underlying the idioms *estar en pie de guerra* / *être sur le pied de guerre* evokes a person ready to do something. Yet the action meant in the Spanish expression is fighting, whereas the action denoted in French is that of leaving or acting.

Sometimes the idioms evoke different frames. The English idiom 'be in the same boat' evokes the family frame, the idiomatic meaning being 'take after somebody', while the Spanish expression *estar en el mismo barco* evokes the work frame, the idiom referring to a group of people taking part in the same project.

Last but not least, several phraseological false friends are based on one constituent that triggers off different secondary readings. Idioms with somatic constituents are a very productive category that provides examples of this type of false friends. Consider the idioms 'be nosey' / *avoir du nez.* The NOSE concept does not occur in its basic sense in either idiom. On the contrary, it has different functions, curiosity in the English idiom, intuition in the French expression. The same holds for the HEART concept in the idioms *avoir bon coeur* / *tener buen corazón*. The function generosity occurs in the French idiom, while the function goodness occurs in the French expression.

CONCLUSION

In this contribution we have undertaken a comparative study of idioms focusing on both the semantic resemblances and divergences between idioms in Spanish, French and English. The cross-linguistic idiom description has given evidence of the three degrees of idiomatic equivalence across languages: full equivalence, partial equivalence, non-equivalence. The analysis suggests that many similarities and divergences between idioms across languages are grounded in conceptual structure (at the level of conceptual metaphor or at the level of the mental image) or in culture.

We believe that the metaphoric or cultural foundation of the (non-) equivalence between idioms is a matter that deserves future investigation. The scope of this study being limited, it seems that an analysis of the metaphoric and cultural basis of idioms as the basis for cross-linguistic equivalence should be done in a range of languages.

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NOTE

BETWEEN THE SCYLLA OF THEORY AND THE CHARYBDIS OF PRACTICE: THE PECULIAR CASE OF A FRAME NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT

A frame narrative is usually defined as a narrative in which another narrative is embedded. Obvious as this definition is, it actually renders the notion of frame narrative inoperative as it can be applied to any narrative in which a character tells some story. This article argues that it is virtually impossible to define a frame narrative in strictly formal terms, even though there seems to exist a tacit agreement among literary scholars as to which narratives can and should be described as framed structures. The case of the frame narrative thus appears to involve a peculiar discrepancy between narrative theory and critical practice.

KEY WORDS: Frame narrative, narrator, narrative theory.

RESUMEN

Se suele definir el relato enmarcado como una narración en la que se inserta otra narración. Esa definición parece obvia aunque, en realidad, no hace sino diluir el concepto del relato enmarcado, ya que puede aplicarse a cualquier texto narrativo en el que un personaje cuente una historia. Este artículo demuestra que resulta prácticamente imposible definir el relato enmarcado en términos puramente formales si bien hay un acuerdo tácito entre los estudiosos de la literatura en cuanto a qué textos narrativos se pueden y deben tratar como estructuras enmarcadas. Por tanto, parece ser que en el caso del relato enmarcado existe una peculiar discrepancia entre la teoría de la narrativa y la práctica crítica.

PALABRAS CLAVES: relato enmarcado, narrador, teoría de la narrativa.

It might seem that the notion of a frame narrative, also called a story-within-a-story or a frame story, is self-explanatory: all the major dictionaries of literary terms define it in an uncomplicated manner as a story in which another story (or a series of stories) is enclosed and cite the same set of examples, including such classics as *One Thousand and One Nights*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Decameron* and *Frankenstein*.[1] An equally simple definition can also be found in more specialist, narratological, studies. Mieke Bal, for instance, defines frame narratives in the fol-

lowing manner: "[they are] narrative texts in which at a second or third level a complete story is told" (Bal 143).[2] However concordant with our intuitions these definitions might seem, the category of the frame narrative proves to be less clear when subjected to a careful scrutiny. While everybody seems to know to what texts it can be applied in critical practice, the analysis of the above definitions suggests that virtually any narrative can theoretically be called a frame narrative.

The crux of the problem lies in the definition of "a complete story." Consider the following example:

> I had lodgings in this street when I first came to Edinburgh as a student. I must tell you a story about the landlady, who was very frugal. It was her habit to come to me every morning to ask what I would have for breakfast, and she spoke like this: "Wud [sic] ye have a red herrin?—no ye wouldn't. Could ye eat a boilt egg?—no ye couldn't." The result was, I never had but bread and butter to my breakfast all the time I was in those lodgings, and very little of that. (Spark 40)

Not only is this passage self-reflexively called a story by an agent telling it, it also meets the theoretical requirements of Bal's definition of a story (8). It is a sequence of events (a "fibula" in Bal's terms) presented in a certain manner. The only problem is that it comes from Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie:* it is a little anecdote told by Miss Brodie to her pupils during one of their numerous walks. Following Bal's definition of a frame narrative, one would have to conclude that the rest of the novel constitutes a frame narrative embedding Miss Brodie's story about her landlady, which would be a rather peculiar approach to the structure of this novel.

Furthermore, the passage quoted above appears rather longish when judged against theoretical examples of a complete story, the length of which varies from one to three sentences, depending on a narratologist.[3] These theoretical premises are pushed to their logical limits by William Nelles, who devotes a book-length study to the discussion of embedded narratives. Having demonstrated that one sentence can constitute a complete narrative and that an apparently non-narrative text can be narrativised, he asserts that any utterance of a fictional character can be regarded as an example of an embedded narrative (125).

The acceptance of Nelles's reasoning has far-reaching effects. Firstly, it renders the notion of a frame narrative inoperative: any narrative which includes a passage which is directly quoted, in other words virtually any narrative, is an example of a frame narrative. Obviously, some examples of texts which are not frame narratives in the broad meaning of the term could be found: an interior monologue registering only the speaker's impressions or a Robbe-Grilletean presentation of the visual

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[1] See, e.g., Cuddon 354; Baldick 87; Myers and Simms 122.

[2] See also Prince 35.

[3] For a succinct summary of different definitions of a minimal narrative see Patrick O'Neill 17-18.

data deprived of any dialogues. However, the vast majority of narratives do include some directly quoted utterances. The implicit redundancy of the notion is probably the reason why Nelles himself fails, or omits, to define the notion of a frame narrative. The logical conclusion of his reasoning, though not expressed by him openly, is that the narrative of this type does not really exist, since one cannot find a set of distinctive properties whereby it can be identified. What one can discuss (and what Nelles does discuss) is a wider concept of narrative embedding. However, this notion designates a relationship between two sections, or levels, of a text (the one which quotes, or embeds, and the one which is quoted, or embedded); it does not define a specific class of narratives.

Furthermore, it is not only the notion of the frame narrative which is at stake. If any utterance of a fictional character can be regarded as a narrative, then any character who utters anything should be labelled a narrator. The danger involved in such an approach is aptly expressed by Susan Sniader Lanser: "Theoretically, any persona who utters discourse on his or her own behalf may be called a 'narrator,' though such a stretching of the term renders it rather useless" (137). Commenting on Lanser's misgivings, Nelles optimistically declares that "in practice the problem does not arise" (123). I would, however, argue that the opposite is true: the assertion that any speaker in the narrative text is a narrator is theoretically sound and valid if one accepts Nelles's premises, but it renders some theoretical notions completely unclear and makes critical practice a very complex endeavour. As noted above, his argumentation turns the notion of the frame narrative into a tautology, almost every narrative being a case of a frame narrative. As regards critical practice, to present a comprehensive account of narrators in any narrative text, one would have to analyse each and every speaker who makes any directly quoted statement. By the same token, each and every character to whom any statement within the fictional world is directed would have to be called a narratee. How many narrators and narratees can an average narrative text in the form of a novel accommodate? Their name is legion.

Nelles claims that "using the term 'narrator' for all speakers is not a 'rather useless' extension but a strategically necessary one" (125). If one looks at his, undoubtedly strategically motivated, selection of examples on the basis of which he analyses the functions of embedded narratives, one may experience a "déjà vu": *One Thousand and One Nights*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Decameron,* all the classic examples of traditionally understood frame narratives, figure prominently in his discussion. Likewise, his example of a minimal embedded narrative, consisting of a single word "Love" is not very original. This one-word long utterance comes from John Barth's "Menelaid," the story which ostentatiously explores the limits of narrative embedding, its most embedded fragment being eight times removed from the first, extradiegetic level.

What Nelles fails to do is to demonstrate how "a strategically necessary extension of the term 'narrator'" can fruitfully be employed in an analysis of some less obvious examples of narrative embedding. But perhaps there is not so much to be gained from such an approach. The only benefit of calling the characters who just exchange *hello*'s a narrator and a narratee seems to be a realisation that the

Genettean terminology describing narrative levels can also be used to describe the position of a character's utterance in relation to the discourse of the narrator who is quoting it.

The discrepancy between Nelles's purely theoretical assertions and the examples he discusses seems to suggest that he, unconsciously perhaps, agrees that there exists a class of texts, traditionally called frame narratives, the distinctive feature of which is the framed, or embedded, structure. The only problem is that it seems impossible to present a set of strict, formal criteria whereby this class of texts can be distinguished, Bal's definition being much too general. One solution to this problem could be the addition of the criterion of importance to Bal's definition. The narrative (or narratives) which is (are) embedded in a frame narrative constitutes (constitute) something which can be regarded as the main narrative(s) of a given text. This, of course, does not mean that the frame narrative is an insignificant, negligible element of the text structure. In order to avoid possible misunderstandings of that type, one could perhaps suggest an additional criterion of the relationship in length between the embedding and embedded narrative(s): if the former is shorter than the latter, then it can be labelled a frame narrative.

I am fully aware that the above definition is not completely satisfactory, not least because the criterion of importance shifts the emphasis from a purely formal description onto the interpretative one. Likewise, the criterion of length invites criticism from the perspective of borderline cases of narratives in which the ratio of words in the embedding narrative to words in the embedded one is 49% to, 51%. The only problem is that no better solution has been suggested so far. My attempt to present some, provisional as it is, definition of a frame narrative is motivated by the fact that I am convinced—and I believe that the majority of literary scholars, including both narratologists and people not necessarily concerned with narrative structures, would agree—that there is a difference in structure between *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *The Canterbury Tales.* The only problem is that it is not so easy to express this difference in absolute terms.

The difficulties which one encounters while attempting to offer an applicable definition of a frame narrative can be construed as an illustration of more general theoretical issues. Paradoxically, the formal theories of narrative appear unable to account in consistent and applicable terms for something which can be intuitively understood. Furthermore, the case of a frame narrative and Nelles's, internally consistent in its theoretical logic, deconstruction of this notion seems to illustrate a clash between two approaches to the objectives and procedures of a theory of narrative texts. Is the purpose of narrative poetics to provide a set of terms whereby we can make meaningful statements about texts and the elements of their structure, pointing out and categorising similarities as well as differences between them? Or should it rely on the internal logic of theoretical propositions, even though this logic produces conclusions which cannot really be employed in the description of actual narrative texts? The obvious answer to these questions is that a well constructed poetics, or a mere definition of some textual element, should combine applicability with internal consistency and clarity. But the example of a frame narrative demonstrates that it is not necessarily an easy task. Perhaps the solution to this

dilemma is to accept the inherent fuzziness of such categories as a frame narrative or a narrator. Elements of narrative poetics as they are, they seem to lack absolute formal criteria determining their application. Paradoxically, their usage in analytical (and theoretical) practice seems to provide the best basis for the understanding of their meaning and application. Even a cursory look at studies devoted to narrative structures will reveal that there exists a tacit agreement—based on the intuitive understanding of the terms, perhaps—that categories of a narrator or a frame narrative are not really applicable to any instance of a fictional character's words being directly quoted, even though the borderline between a character who may be called a narrator and a character who may not is not as clear-cut as one might wish.

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