



REDEN

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*Come Rain or
Come Shine:*
**Archer M. Huntington
between Spain and
the United States**

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Come Rain or Come Shine: Archer M. Huntington between Spain and the United States

ABSTRACT

Archer M. Huntington (1870-1955), the museum-builder and founder of the Hispanic Society of America in New York, had a lesser known complementary dimension as a cultural bridges-builder between Spain and the United States in moments of conflict and diplomatic tension. With an approach based on his social relations rather than on his artistic collections, this article offers an alternative reading in which Huntington emerges as a friendly figure in bilateral relations who did not passively accept the status quo and who, from the standpoint of culture, contributed to modifying the image of Spain that prevailed in the United States.

Key Words: Hispanism, Hispanic Society of America, Archer Huntington, Spanish culture, cultural diplomacy, bilateral relations

INTRODUCTION: TO FACE THE CLIMATE

As it is hard to see the forest for the trees, it seems particularly hard to envisage more than an exquisite art collector in Archer Milton Huntington (1870-1955), the founder of The Hispanic Society of America. The collections he amassed in the museum he founded in New York in 1904

Fernández Lorenzo, P. "Come Rain or Come Shine: Archer M. Huntington between Spain and the United States". *REDEN* 1:1. (2019): 8-26. Web.

are unparalleled in their scope and quality: holding more than 30.000 objects including paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, ceramics, ironworks, textiles, jewellery; 175.000 photographs of Spain and Latin America and a library with more than 250.000 books and newspapers, including 15.000 volumes printed before 1701 (Coddington). Works by Velázquez, El Greco, Goya and Sorolla hang on its walls today while a copy of *El Quijote*, unique in the world, is kept on its shelves. It is a collection of incalculable value that covers almost twenty centuries of Iberian history and addresses nearly every aspect of culture in Spain, as well as a large part in Portugal and Latin America. Thanks to Huntington's diaries (1898), we know today that he took on this project guided by the romantic aspiration of condensing the soul of Spain in a museum: "It must condense the soul of Spain into meanings, through works of the hand and spirit"¹.

With deep determination and commitment, he advanced Hispanic Studies in the United States more than any other individual during the first half of the twentieth century. Under his own supervision, exhibitions of Spanish artists such as Joaquín Sorolla and Ignacio Zuloaga were presented and more than 200 monographs of Hispanic issues from international scholars were

With deep determination and commitment, he advanced Hispanic Studies in the United States more than any other individual during the first half of the twentieth century.

published by the Hispanic Society of America as well as through other international magazines he financed. Although he preferred anonymity, it was known that he was also the benefactor of many other cultural institutions and museums through gifts of land and endowments (Mitchell & Goodrich). The editors of the *Hispanic Review* summarized his life's work: "There is a massive uniqueness about his long, creative life. It constitutes a single, shining act of unselfish devotion to the civilization of another country and perhaps no other country has been so honoured" (Prose 27).

Nevertheless, apart from the cultural legacy he left, his remarkable accomplishments to improve the relationships between his own country and Spain far exceeded his expert-eye in art collecting.

¹ Huntington Diaries, 1898. Hispanic Society of America: New York. The Diaries are located in the Huntington Archive at the Hispanic Society of America and archived chronologically so date citations are the only form of reference made to these sources.

Apart from the cultural legacy he left, his remarkable accomplishments to improve the relationships between his own country and Spain far exceeded his expert-eye in art collecting.

There are two relevant dates to frame this analysis:

- 1898: The year in which Spain and the United States confronted each other in the Spanish-American War. A young Archer Huntington, aged 28 years, finds himself travelling in Spain doing archaeological excavations in Seville.
- 1953: The year of the signing of the Pact of Madrid to restore relations between Spain and the United States after the period of diplomatic tension that followed the end of World War II. Despite being eighty-three years old and in poor health, Archer Huntington remains a symbol for Spanish culture in the United States and Spanish institutions attempt to regain the American friendship for the Spanish public sphere.

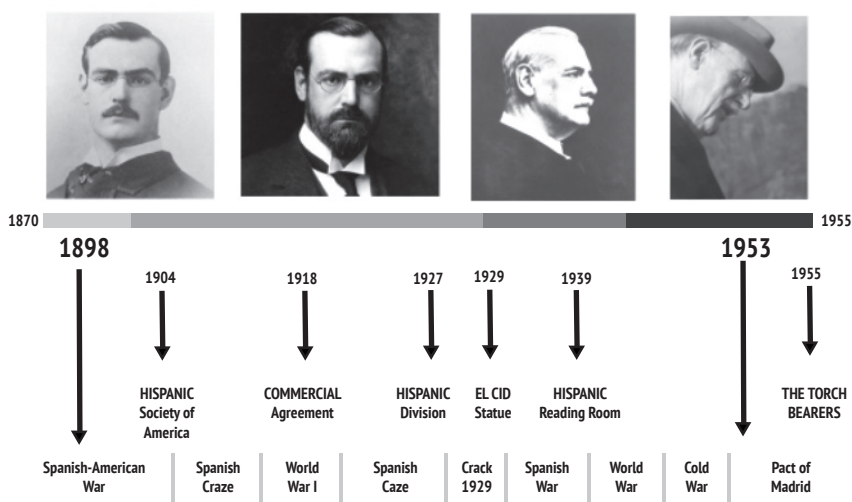


Figure 1. Huntington's time-line

Between the two dates there are almost 60 years of encounters and misunderstandings, of admiration and rejection between the two countries; a period that covers the entire adult life of Huntington. At certain times he stepped forward while, at others, he maintained a more withdrawn stance. His way of dealing with circumstances or, symbolically speaking, to face the climate, is crucial in defining both the character of his Hispanic legacy and its significance in Spanish cultural history.

BLACK CLOUDS - THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR OF 1898

Archer Huntington, the only son of one of the richest men in America, Collis Potter Huntington -builder of the Central Pacific Railroad and the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company-, had already concluded at the age of twenty that he had little interest in the family business, so he dedicated his life to Hispanic Studies and to his project of a Spanish Museum instead. The influence of his devoted mother, Arabella, was decisive on developing his artistic interests.



Figure 2. Huntington in Spain, 1892. Source: Courtesy Hispanic Society of America

With this idea in mind, he made his first journey to Spain in 1892; he wanted to see the country and meet its people first-hand, following the steps of the medieval hero El Cid Campeador, whose *Poema del Cid* he translated into English (Huntington 1897). Coming back to Spain in 1896, he became aware of the emerging climate of tension between Spain and his own country, due to the dissident movements in Cuba and the sympathy the Cuban cause had aroused in the United

States. At such a time, in the midst of the confusion created by the United States' offer of mediation for the negotiation of independence, statements by Huntington from Spain appeared in the *New York Herald* of April 6th, 1896. In the words of the journalist, Huntington was positive in his belief that Spain was right and that her course was perfectly justifiable in the Cuban affair. In case of

Published in 1898, his book *A Note-book in Northern Spain* offered an image of Spain that was very different from the one spread by American newspapers, which was mainly based on the anti-Spanish sentiment known as the "Black Legend"

war, Huntington said, his sympathies would be with his native land but he earnestly believed that the United States was entirely wrong and had no right to interfere in the Cuban rebellion. He was convinced that the United States would ultimately win, but that Spain would put up a good fight (New York Herald).

His controversial statements to the press were not well received either in his country, where a powerful patriotic feeling was emerging, or by his family. However, they have great documentary value in bringing to light the process of growing Hispanophilia that he was experiencing while the US press launched a smear campaign against everything that had to do with Spanish history and the represented culture.

In spite of the circumstances, Huntington returned to Spain in 1898 to carry out archaeological excavations in Seville (Tesoros arqueológicos de la Hispanic Society). Four months later he was forced to leave the peninsula by the declaration of war between the United States and Spain. In the telegrams he exchanged with his mother, he conveyed the climate of concern that, after the explosion of the Maine, many people felt in Spain, although the Spanish press, encouraged by the patriotic outburst, irresponsibly defended the idea that the war could be won with relative ease (Arranz Notario). Huntington went back home, utterly frustrated with the situation as the war, understandably, put an end to his archaeological plans. Nevertheless, vivid impressions of some of the places he had seen on his trips went into *A Note-book in Northern Spain*. Published in 1898, the book offered an image of Spain that was very different from the one spread by American newspapers, which was mainly based on the anti-Spanish sentiment known as the "Black Legend" (Roca Barea).²

² The Black Legend is a term indicating an unfavourable image of Spain and Spaniards accusing them of inhumanity, cruelty, intolerance, backwardness and other failings of the Spanish nation as a whole, formerly prevalent in the works of many non-Spanish historians. The term was popularized by the Spanish historian Julián de Juarín in his book *La Leyenda Negra*, in 1914.

With his book, Huntington proved that he promoted an erudite appreciation and a serious approach to Spanish history and culture. But he also showed concern for the weak national consciousness that existed in Spain due to identity differences between its regions³, which could negatively influence an unstable policy of national unity: "She [Spain] is in more than one sense a composite nation, and such is the more difficult to see and know as a whole. Cataluña, Aragon, Castile, Andalucía, are not mere geographical terms. Each presents its distinct national character" (Huntington 1898: 3). The year 1898 became a symbol of the decline of Spain and of the rise of the United States as a superpower in the international scene, but it was also a crucial moment in Huntington's career as a Hispanist. By that time Huntington knew and loved Spain.

SUNNY WEATHER – THE HISPANIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA AND THE SPANISH CRAZE

Although it seems paradoxical, the height of Spain's cultural influence in the United States took place few years after the brief 1898 war, during the so-called *Spanish Craze* (Kagan). Art, music, architecture, films and literature from Spain fascinated America between 1898 and the beginning of the Spanish Civil war. For the majority of the American collectors of the Gilded Age, to possess the treasures of Spain was a symbolic way to confirm the rise of the new American empire and the decline of the old Spanish one (Jiménez-Blanco). This was not the case for Huntington. The large inheritance he received after his father's death in 1900 allowed him to fulfill his dream: to found the Hispanic Society of America, an institution dedicated to advancing the study of Spanish and Portuguese languages, literature, and history in order to make the patrimony known to the American audience.

As it is known that he toiled over the precise wording of constitution and bay-laws (Proske), a deep study of the text of the Founding deed reveals that his aim was more ambitious: "This instrument provides for the establishment in the city of New York of a public Spanish and Portuguese Library and Museum, to be in some measure a link between the English and the Spanish-speaking peoples".

While the Hispanic Society helped to increase American society's interest in Hispanic culture with Sorolla's or Zuloaga's exhibitions and the publication of books, Huntington established friendly relations with illustrious Spaniards during his trips to Europe. Aristocrats, artists, writers, academics and politicians formed a part of his Spanish friendships. After reading his epistolary testimonies, it is evident that Huntington moved with ease in both court and intellectual circles; if with the former he shared social status and philanthropic aspirations, then with the latter he

³ Huntington's concern nailed down when he commissioned Joaquín Sorolla to decorate the library of the Hispanic Society with fourteen panels representing the different regions of Spain. This mural decoration is entitled *Vision of Spain*.

His high level of interlocution with Spanish elites explains the fact that, at the request of his country's ambassador to Spain, Joseph E. Willard, Huntington participated in the US government delegation to negotiate the trade agreement with Spain of March 7th, 1918, in the middle of World War I.

shared the interests of the scholar of the arts, literature, archaeology or Spanish history. Huntington as patron and Huntington as scholar both had their place in Spain. His financing of the Casa-Museo del Greco in Toledo, the Casa-Museo de Velázquez in Valladolid, the Museo del Romanticismo in Madrid, his donations to the Archaeological Museum of Seville or his participation as patron in the Valencia de Don Juan Foundation were the result of these close friendly relations with the Marquis de la Vega-Inclán, Sorolla, the Duke of Alba, Guillermo de Osma, Gregorio Marañón or Menéndez Pidal, amongst many others. His friendship with the King Alfonso XIII, with whom he had the opportunity to meet on several occasions and from whom he received numerous honours for his services to Spanish culture, is of special interest (Fernández Lorenzo).

With the Hispanic Division in the Congress Library, in Washington, Huntington added a note of excellence to Hispanic studies at a time when they were being questioned if not directly attacked. One again, he lobbied to defend Hispanicism with the weapons he knew best, the academic institutionalization of culture.

His high level of interlocution with Spanish elites explains the fact that, at the request of his country's ambassador to Spain, Joseph E. Willard, Huntington participated in the US government delegation -together with army general August Belmont- to negotiate the trade agreement with Spain of March 7th, 1918, in the middle of World War I. By virtue of this agreement, the Spanish Government, neutral in the conflict, agreed to grant export licences for various articles in order to cover the needs of the American Expeditionary Force during the war, and allowed unrestricted exportation of certain minerals to the United States. In return, the United States authorized the sale of cotton and oil to Spain, which were essential to supply the Spanish industry (Montero Jiménez). Huntington was an illustrious scholar with no political ambitions, but they turned to him to facilitate trade agreements in times of war as much as possible. Perhaps this is the best demonstration of the value his own government placed on the "cultural ambassador" work that Huntington had been doing from the Hispanic Society in the early decades of the century.

The Great War resulted in a decrease of interest in studying German, which directly benefitted the increase in the study of Spanish in the United States. Huntington supported the creation of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish (AATS) in 1916, whose New York delegates held their meetings precisely in the halls of the Hispanic Society. The new demand of teachers for so many students was so unexpected that the *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios* and its delegate in New York, Federico de Onís, also managed to capitalize on part of the language teaching in the United States with teachers from Spain. However, the rapid popularization of

During the Spanish Civil War Huntington assumed a neutral position as he wrote to his friend the Duke of Alba: “As you know, I am forced to be entirely neutral as to Spain- which I am not. But the Hispanic Society is representative of both sides”.

Spanish among the American population made it difficult to combine its populist and functional aspect as a vehicular language for Latin America with the prestige of Hispanic Studies that, at a more elitist level, Huntington and other American Hispanists had been cultivating (Fernández)⁵.

This double approach was also reflected in some public demonstrations in which Spanish was described as a practical and easy to learn language to serve business in Latin America but without a cultural value comparable to French, German or Italian. The teacher of Spanish Henry Grattan Doyle wrote to Huntington in 1926 asking for help to respond to these attacks but in his correspondence Huntington explained which, in his opinion, was the best way to respond to such offenses: “It seems the time for those interested in Spanish to stand together and by example more than advice or resistance to present the cultural and other advantages of the Hispanic field in America”⁶.

The reference to unity of action was symptomatic of the growing division among American Hispanists between those who favored Pan Americanism and those who did not. However, Huntington decided to promote a new project for the institutionalization of Hispanicism in the United States at the highest level by creating the Hispanic Division at the Library of Congress in Washington in 1927.

In 1926 Herbert Putman, librarian of the Congress, published a *desiderata list* with the bibliographical documents that should be represented in the Library of the Congress of the United States. The list, which included, among others, the diary of Christopher Columbus’ first trip to America in 1493, served to focus on the collection of Portuguese-Spanish publications that the Library of Congress wanted to acquire by means of donations and gifts. In 1927, Archer Huntington was the first to make an endowment for the creation of a Hispanic Division for fifty thousand dollars -equivalent to seven hundred thousand dollars today-, to acquire books of art, literature, history and Hispanic culture in general. A year later, in 1928, he made another endowment of fifty thousand dollars to hire a consultant to be in charge of the selection of books in the new Chair of

⁵ Referring to this subject, the historian James Fernández has coined the expression “Ley de Longfellow”.

⁶ Letter of Archer Huntington to Henry Grattan Doyle, March 2nd. 1926. Anna Hyatt Huntington Papers. Special Collections Research Center. Syracuse University Library. Box 31.

The numerous projects he conducted for the internationalization of Spanish culture in the United States and for the revaluation of Spanish cultural heritage made him an unofficial ambassador for cultural diplomacy.

the Literature of Spain and Portugal in the Library of Congress. Huntington offered the position to his friend, the former Spanish Ambassador to the United States, Juan de Riaño (Dorn).

Book purchases for the Hispanic Division were initially restricted to the Iberian Peninsula. This fact was confirmed by the declarations of Riaño's replacement in office, Father David Rubio -librarian between 1931 and 1943 and curator of the Portuguese-Spanish collections between 1939 and 1943-. Speaking of the generous amount donated by Huntington to buy books on art, literature, history and culture of the Iberian Peninsula, he stated that "the other Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities were not included in the original donation clause". In fact, he described how after five years of work in the Library of Congress they managed to amass a collection of one hundred thousand titles by 1935, among which "of Hispanic America there was not even a single volume of Rubén Darío" (Rubio 1957: 35-36).

Having the Hispanic Division within one of the most prestigious institutions in the United States, Huntington added a note of excellence to Hispanic studies at a time when they were being questioned if not directly attacked. Once again, he lobbied to defend Hispanicism with the weapons he knew best, the academic institutionalization of culture.

While this was happening in the United States, an authoritarian regime, led by General Primo de Rivera, had been in place in Spain since 1923, and the position of the monarchy was being questioned by political and intellectual circles. The friendship and respect he professed for the king led Huntington to expressly support two of Alfonso XIII's most important cultural initiatives:



Exhibition of the Project "Ciudad Universitaria de Madrid". Sorolla Room, Hispanic Society of America, 1928. Source: Courtesy Blanca Pons-Sorolla

On the one hand, the works of the new Ciudad Universitaria of Madrid. Huntington became one of his patrons by creating an endowment worth one hundred thousand dollars- equivalent to almost one and a half million dollars today - to finance the works and by setting up an American Poetry Chair at the Central University of Madrid. In addition, the Sorolla Room of the Hispanic Society in New York, where the Panels of the Regions painted by Sorolla were exhibited, hosted the exhibition of plans and models taken to the United States by the University's Construction Board to make the project known to experts from American universities and foundations.



El Cid Campeador by Anna Hyatt. Sevilla

A year later, on the occasion of the 1929 Ibero-American Exhibition in Seville, he also gave clear evidence of his support for the monarch's initiative by giving the city the sculpture of the horseback Cid Campeador, created by his wife Anna Hyatt, which was placed in the square that welcomed those attending the exhibition. The American and his wife attended the inauguration, met Alfonso XIII, donated two paintings by Valdés Leal to the city museum and were named Honorary Citizens of Seville⁷.

Two years later, after the 1931 local elections, the Second Republic was established in Spain and the king left the country on his way to exile.

⁷ Marquis de la Vega-Inclán to Alfonso XIII (note). April 15th, 1927. Archivo General de Palacio. Reinados. Alfonso XIII. Expediente 12422/8.

A PERFECT STORM - THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War posed difficult dilemmas for the scholars who dedicated their lives to the study and dissemination of Spanish culture (Faber). Huntington's case was no different from that of many other American Hispanists who found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being compelled to stand for or against one of the two warring sides: the Nationalists or the Republicans. Taking sides in the Spanish conflict went against the Government's official stance of neutrality even though the Spanish Civil War polarized American society very quickly. In fact, the reluctance of American Hispanists to participate in public discussions about Spain was a common behaviour during the war and, as a result, many of them embraced Pan Americanism and focused their new subjects of study in Latin America.

Huntington assumed a neutral position as he wrote to his friend the Duke of Alba: "As you know, I am forced to be entirely neutral as to Spain- which I am not. But the Society is representative of both sides". He was aware that the Hispanic Society was a cultural institution that could easily be compromised by the propaganda appeals of the two opposing sides. Therefore, from the highest political correctness -and perhaps also from his own conviction- Huntington publicly aligned himself with the majority of American Hispanism that opted for public silence.

During the three years of war he exchanged letters with his Spanish friends who, for different reasons, had been aligned on one side or the other; some remained in Spain and told him about the destruction of the artistic historical heritage such as the writer Concha Espina or the painter José López Mezquita; others announced their exit into exile, such as the painter Miguel Viladrich. Under the new circumstances, the Hispanic Society closed its doors to the public. But after the end of the Spanish war, and on the eve of World War II, Huntington stepped forward and showed that his commitment to the erudite Hispanicism he had cultivated remained alive despite the disastrous circumstances. In 1939 he made the decision to fund the construction of the Hispanic Reading Room in the Library of Congress, a special reading and study room for Hispanists who were not going to find many options for research in post-war Spain.

The Hispanic Reading Room, designed by the architect Paul Philippe Cret in Spanish colonial style, opened on October 12th, 1939. Huntington commissioned a mural with Christopher Columbus' coat of arms for the south wall of the room. However, the room became, through the intermediation of the U.S. Secretary of State, the main iconographic exponent of the U.S. Government to symbolize the Pan Americanist spirit. Nelson Rockefeller, director of the Office for the Coordination of Inter-American Affairs, commissioned Brazilian artist Candido Portinari to decorate the room with murals. His designs plastically constructed a multicultural hemispheric identity and a common past that united all American communities (Serviddio). Although Huntington did not participate directly in these decisions, this circumstance allowed him to demonstrate his patriotism at the beginning of World War II but also allowed him to maintain his independence for the Spanish legacy at the Hispanic Society of America in New York.



Hispanic Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington

Huntington accepted the Secretary of State's proposal that the Hispanic Reading Room focus its bibliographical and editorial interests on the Latin American republics, while the Hispanic Society would focus on Spain and its empire before independence¹⁰. By doing so, he isolated his collection and his New York institution from possible political interference at a time when Washington was not looking favourably on the Franco regime for its ideological approach to the Axis forces.

Given these circumstances, and despite of his disappointment, Huntington's promotion of Spanish studies did not stop. The staff of the Hispanic Society, composed of professional women who were to become experts in their fields, went on with their job under his personal supervision. The news about the outbreak of the World War II depressed him and he decided to move to a country house in Connecticut. From his new emplacement Huntington kept in touch with the many institutions he supported and devoted his time to writing poetry. Some of the titles he published such as *Spain and Africa* (Huntington 1943), *Recuerdos* (Huntington 1949), or *Versos* (Huntington 1952), reveal his constant thought on Spain¹⁰.

⁹ Archer Huntington to Archibald McLeish (letter). June 10th, 1940. Anna Hyatt Huntington Papers. Special Collections Research Center. Syracuse University Library. Box 43.

¹⁰ Archer Huntington published twenty eight books of poetry between 1936 and 1954. He gathered together many of them and reprinted a volume entitled *Collected Verse* in 1953.

A RAY OF SUNSHINE - PACT OF MADRID OF 1953

Relations between Spain and the United States were weakened after the end of World War II and Spain was consigned to international ostracism. However, the Cold War and the desire to stop the spread of communism encouraged the interest of the United States to collaborate militarily with the Franco regime. The signing of the Pact of Madrid in 1953 for the establishment of military bases on the peninsula allowed for new diplomatic channels to be opened.

At that moment, an unexpected interest arose among the Franco authorities to regain contact with the elderly Hispanist and to bring him closer to Spain. References to Spain's beloved American friend began to appear in the Spanish press (*ABC*; *España*). It seems important to point out that, since 1948, Huntington had been awarding the Hispanic Society Medals to Spanish intellectuals, some of whom were in exile in America, such as Rafael Altamira, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Ramón Pérez de Ayala and Pau Casals. He had also rewarded intellectuals who had remained in Franco's Spain, such as Francisco Sánchez Cantón, Manuel Gómez-Moreno, Gregorio Marañón, and others without the deserved recognition, as it was the case of José Ortega y Gasset (Hispanic Society of America). Several exiled intellectuals, professors at American universities, wanted to respond to this gesture by paying tribute to him at Wellesley College, a women's university of which Huntington was one of its most discreet patrons. A volume of *Estudios Hispánicos* dedicated to Archer Huntington on his eightieth birthday was published in Mexico with the contribution of international Hispanists, among them Ramón Méndez Pidal, Pedro Salinas and Homero Serís (Wellesley College).

The Spanish authorities wanted to prevent him from being portrayed as an icon by moderate groups in exile, and the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took steps in order to get closer to the Hispanist¹¹. Huntington was then eighty-three years old, sick and isolated from cultural life in Connecticut, but he had not forgotten Spain. As a result, recognitions and tributes were paid to the Huntington marriage. In Barcelona, a monument in their honour was inaugurated in the Pedralbes gardens (Socias Batet). Shortly afterwards, the University of Salamanca named them both Doctor Honoris Causa, and Anna Hyatt was granted the additional title of Corresponding Member of the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Jorge. The Universidad Central of Madrid inaugurated the Huntington Chair of American Poetry at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature in 1954.

In gratitude, Huntington decided to donate the sculpture of *Los portadores de la antorcha*, sculpted by his wife Anna, to the Ciudad Universitaria of Madrid, as a symbol of friendship between the United States and Spain. Some verses he wrote were engraved on the base of the sculpture.

The U.S. ambassador to Spain participated in the presentation of *Los portadores de la antorcha* in Madrid on May 15th, 1955, along with the ministers of Education and Foreign Affairs, the University Dean and Carmen Polo, Franco's wife. In this act, the ambassador declared that Archer

¹¹ Román de la Presilla, cónsul of Spain in New York, to Juan de Bárcenas, General Director of Foreign Affairs (report). February 2nd, 1954. AMAEC R. 3585, Expediente 28.

Huntington had been an unofficial ambassador for years, dedicated to strengthening ties between the two countries. If the non-presence of foreign ambassadors in Spain had been one of the most obvious evidence of his international isolationism, to evoke the stamp of an ambassador referring to Huntington was to grant him publicity and express recognition by the highest representative of US diplomacy of having been a valuable link between the two countries.



Los portadores de la Antorcha by Anna Hyatt. Ciudad Universitaria de Madrid, 1955.

Source: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo: AECID. Biblioteca (MH-68/47)

After Huntington's death on December 11th, 1955, the Spanish authorities promoted the establishment of the Huntington Foundation in the Ciudad Universitaria of Madrid as a postgraduate center in North American studies, hoping to get funding from his widow, Anna Hyatt. Despite the interest of the project, unfortunately it did not get off the ground.

The erection of a monument in honour of the Huntingtons was another project undertaken in the 1960s. An Interministerial Commission was created at the highest level, chaired by the head of the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica, Gregorio Marañón Moyá, son of the prestigious physician Gregorio Marañón. The sculptor Juan de Ávalos was even commissioned to design the monument. Due to different circumstances, this project did not succeed either.

1960s Spain, wrapped up in its own affairs, was forgetting the philanthropist Archer M. Huntington, the Hispanic millionaire who never sought public recognition but worked to build bridges between Spain and the United States.

CONCLUSIONS - *COME RAIN OR COME SHINE*

Archer Huntington was the great American patron of Spanish culture. The numerous projects he conducted for the internationalization of Spanish culture in the United States and

for the revaluation of Spanish cultural heritage made him an unofficial ambassador for cultural diplomacy. The personal relationships that he established and the way that he imprinted his work kept him apart from other collectors and Hispanists who, after a period of great attraction, left behind their love for Spain and chose to embark on other journeys. Unlike them, Huntington maintained his devotion to Spain and its culture despite the circumstances or, as the title *Come Rain or Come Shine* suggests.

In his eighty-five years of life, he launched numerous initiatives to bring the United States and Spain closer culturally, two different worlds that went through moments of closeness and separation, of collaboration and confrontation due to political and cultural circumstances that had a direct impact on the place that Huntington could hold in the changing Spanish scenario. With his actions and omissions, Huntington stands out as a cordial figure in bilateral relations, but also as a personality who did not passively accept the *status quo* and, from the point of view of friendship and culture, contributed to breaking down walls and linking cultures, seeking to modify the image of Spain that prevailed in the United States.

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Traumatic Redemption Chronotope as Theoretical Model to Study Serial Shakespeares

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes a methodology to study Shakespearean intertexts in contemporary complex TV series. While the presence of Shakespeare's inter-texts in contemporary complex TV seems ubiquitous, a sustained and theoretically focused academic study of the impact of Shakespeare in these works has not been produced. Reviewers and social media users' comments have proposed readings of the series pointing at the importance of the series' redemptive qualities. Taking Hannah Wolfe Eisner's "Into the Middle of Things: Traumatic Redemption and the Politics of Form" as basis, I am presenting a theoretical model to study serial Shakespeares, with which I am referring to a limited corpus of American complex TV series appropriating Shakespeare's texts, as narratives embedded in a cultural politics of trauma and redemption. Additionally, it shows that such series potentially work as guidelines to study the overall impact of traumatic redemption in other contemporary adaptations of Shakespearean plays.

Key Words: Shakespeare, Inter-text, Appropriation, Trauma, Redemption

* Huertas Martín, V. "Traumatic Redemption Chronotope as Theoretical Model to Study Serial Shakespeares". *REDEN*. 1:1. (2019): 27-48. Web.

There is consensus that Shakespeare's adapted texts end up being both Shakespeare's and someone else's. Thus, oftentimes Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations are studied alongside conventions of film genres, fictional styles or the narrative procedures of new media, such as web series or vlogs, etc. Yet, the overall impact of Shakespeare's intertexts in complex TV series has been examined only in part. This article reviews criticism situating the Shakespearean intertexts in complex series in a light that makes them analyzable from the lens of traumatic redemption. It sets down the theoretical premises for such a study and provides examples on how it may develop.

Doubtless, complex TV series have followed the 21st century trend to appropriate Shakespearean materials to supply other narratives which rework such texts according to their conventions. Thus, they appropriate Shakespearean narrative structures, themes, characters, textual references, etc. to enrich their own narratives. This has not escaped teachers, bloggers, journalists and artists who make it a point to identify their Shakespearean readings with HBO, Netflix or Fox. As Kinga Földváy suggests, "it is instructive to see what purposes Shakespeare and his characters are made to serve on contemporary American television" (6). Such purposes are necessarily constrained by media features and conventions of genres. In this case, Jason Mittel's description of the features of complex TV –a form of storytelling– occluding "the need for plot closure within every episode that typifies conventional episodic form," that foregrounds "ongoing stories across a range of genres" and deploys "a range of serial techniques" (18)– supplies an overall syntax for series. Thematically, many series engage in dialectics of trauma and redemption. The lack of redemptive closure and the conflicting narrative strands in series –which delay resolution for years– are enmeshed with Shakespearean inter-texts deployed through them.

Culturally speaking, series have constituted a prestige culture which, as the story goes, leaves behind formulaic 20th century television in lieu of ground-breaking creativity and artistic quality¹. Such statements have met criticism. Concepción Cascajosa-Virino critiques the neoliberal policies of private channels and distributors who, disguised as promoters of elite culture, vest their interests on the placement of new technologies and apparatuses. Cascajosa-Virino also exposes contemporary series' perpetuating of gender and race inequalities that are a far cry from the progressive promise they make. A look at the corpus of series confirms that these white male-centered cultural hierarchies remain fundamentally unchallenged. However, these **cultural** hierarchies lay the foundations for narratives energizing a trauma-redemption dialectics by exposing these problematic characters' zig-zagging journeys.

Shakespeare's prestige as an icon of world literature, like the prestige of series, does not work outside ideology. Critics such as Michael D. Bristol and Susan Bennett have observed that Shakespeare's cultural capital has been used to perpetuate economic inequalities via distribution and dissemination of prestige culture. Yet, Bristol himself and others, such as Denise Albanese), admit that audiences have been able to find genuine value in their experiencing of Shakespeare

¹ As Christopher Anderson puts it, "In the case of HBO dramas, the aesthetic disposition brings to television the cultivated expectation that watching certain television series requires and rewards the temperament, knowledge, and protocols normally considered appropriate for encounters with museum-worthy works of art" (24).

Complex TV series' constant associations with Shakespeare present the same ambivalent picture. Starting with George Anastasia's statement, "If Shakespeare were alive today, he'd be writing for The Sopranos", a plethora of catchy phrases arouses the suspicion that Shakespeare's cultural capital is being used just to indicate that the product is high quality.

even in ideologizing contexts. Complex TV series' constant associations with Shakespeare present the same ambivalent picture. Starting with George Anastasia's statement, "If Shakespeare were alive today, he'd be writing for *The Sopranos*", a plethora of catchy phrases arouses the suspicion that Shakespeare's cultural capital is being used just to indicate that the product is high quality. Nonetheless, I suggest that we take such contributions seriously, for they, as I will show, offer powerful insights to understand Shakespeare's relation to series.

This research owes, in fact, much to such contributions. TV serials such as *Rome*, *Deadwood*, *Empire*, *Succession*, *Sons of Anarchy*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Game of Thrones*, *House of Cards* or *Westworld* insert Shakespearean quotations, references and allusions and use Shakespearean themes and narratives to reinforce stories of traumatic redemption. Trauma culture, as recent critical writings show, gained resurgence after the disaster of 9/11 in the US and, arguably, it spread across continents². Cultural memory, collective and individual suffering and pain as well as different forms of redemption and emancipation are of interest in the narrativization of trauma and the search for affirmative outcomes to the suffering that trauma provokes. A crucial question to answer is whether Shakespearean texts strengthen the healing of the pain or provide forward gazes out of the traumatic experience. Since the question of how we heal is as crucial as *the goal* of healing, we think that Hannah Wolfe Eisner's model provides an adequate lens to think of Shakespeare's contribution to redemption in dialectic, not absolute, terms.

CRITICAL REVIEW

In her analysis of *Deadwood* made through the lens of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Susan C. Ronnenberg identifies a "response to 9/11, seeking removal from the present given horrific national trauma, but choosing an historic setting that would permit exploration of some aspects of national anxiety regarding American values and identity related to that event" (25). Such trauma she associates to both works, for, as Ronnenberg later argues, characters in them are "predicated on their pasts, forcing them to return to their own personal histories in an attempt to negotiate their problems in the present" (26).

Other essays engage with serials as appropriations of Shakespeare's plays, often setting the foundations for further exploration through the lens of trauma-redemption dialectics. In her analyses of *Rome*, Sylvaine Bataille departs from the premise that Bruno Heller and the creators resisted Shakespeare's legacy. Yet, as Bataille suggests, the ghost of Shakespeare often appears (2008). In a later essay, she shows the strategies followed by *Rome*'s creators to dialectically engage with Shakespeare through the series' negative portrayal of the ruling classes, using offensive un-Shakespearean language and graphic sex and violence to clear the story from the dust of bookish

¹ See Kaplan, E. A. *Trauma Culture (The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature)*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press, 2005. Print.

On Shakespeare and the culture of trauma, see Silverstone, C. *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance*. New York; London: Routledge, 2011. Print.; Hawkes, T., M. Biberman & J. Lupton. *Shakespeare After 9/11 (How Trauma Reshapes Interpretation)*. New York; Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011. Print.

graveness (2009). I suggest that Bataille's presupposed audience knowledge of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* – expressed, for instance, via self-conscious omissions of some well-known passages (e.g. 'E tu Brute') (2009) – be further explored. Also, Bataille hits on the nail when she points at the series' emphasis in both essays on the role played by the People of Rome in the narrative. Such a role which has produced a massive corpus of speculation in Shakespearean criticism and which, largely, remains undefined by Shakespeare. Thus, *Rome* aligns Shakespearean intertexts with a set of conventions identified by Russell Jackson's description of Holly Rome's metanarrative: the struggle of the People of Rome to be free. *Rome* combines the audience's knowledge of Shakespeare – a play culturally, ideologically and politically relevant for the configuration of the US state – and a shared culture based on US Roman narratives, which have traditionally linked Christianity to freedom and a democratic *ethos* (2008).

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Analyzing *Sons of Anarchy* (SOA), Katarzyna Burzynska (2017) pairs Shakespeare's and Sutter's works as models for patriarchal familial ideologies, upon whose structures lies stability in both fictional worlds. Doubtless, such an essay studying the cultural transposition of the patriarchal hierarchies in *Hamlet* to the contemporary context of SOA helps rethinking the series' problematizing of these structures. Bataille (2008) identifies Jax's hesitation on the course of action to take and his changes of heart as fundamental to his construction as a modern Hamlet. However, the imperative guidelines of complex TV, as Bataille suggests, force the hero to be proactive, a fact which has been problematic to develop this idea properly. To tackle these, as she continues, Sutter deployed a repertoire of narrative strategies dulling the literary classic, transforming it into a narrative memory for another age and, for that purpose, elements of *Hamlet* are appropriated (2008). Thus, Jax Teller's journey involves exploration of the sources of his anxieties as well as his

desires to provide his family with a better future. Nonetheless, such exploration goes alongside the hero's apparent inability to escape his outlaw fate.

Many contributions by bloggers and social media users engage in the complex interpretive activity of using Shakespeare's play to predict the series' outcomes, which often leads to imaginative and convincing predictions. But, most important, some attention has been paid to the redemptive features of the series. As Sutter indicates in interviews, "This [season seven] is the season coming up where Jax needs to decide. There is no more debate. I think it's the season where he's in or out [of the club]" (Ford n. p.). Not all interpretations in these sense associate Teller with Hamlet but rather with a Christ-like sacrifice figure. Joanna Robinson eschews debates on obvious Shakespearean references and stresses this aspect of Jax's characterization:

Sons of Anarchy was so enamoured with the idea of Jax as Jesus that they packed the [final] episode to the gills with references to his martyrdom. Any one of these Jesus references might have been a nice touch, but the frenzy of imagery just made Jax's end ridiculous, rather than tragic. (Robinson n. p.)

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Robinson refers to Jax's suicide riding his bike, opening his arms wide right before clashing with a truck in the middle of the road. The last shot reveals Jax's blood and a piece of bread getting stained with it. Robinson's critique on this labored ending points precisely at what makes Jax's redemption story relevant, for Sutter self-consciously heightens this excess of Christian associations in ways that incite skeptic readings on the meaningfulness of Jax's sacrifice. Troy L. Smith reads SOA as a story which is "also about love, loyalty and people trying (and failing) to find the right way to do the wrong things. Just like 'The Walking Dead' is about humankind being its own worst enemy, 'Sons of Anarchy' is about reconciling who you are with learning to live with it" (n. p.). In a post-industrial context in which the US working-classes need to find their way out of under-education, Smith's analogy of mankind turning against itself while trying to survive gains weight and significance in the political and ideological worlds depicted in these series.

Amidst a plethora of GOT reviews which mostly deploy character parallels and interpretations of Martin's quotes as Shakespearean paraphrases, it is significant that the series' motto –the motto of the House Stark– ("Winter is coming") bears resemblance to the opening sentence in Shakespeare's *Richard III* ("Now is the winter of our discontent"). R. R. Martin identifies

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The geopolitical context of the series, immerse in global conflict, terrorism, a lack of faith in the institutions – particularly the Presidency of the US – and, importantly, the risk of socioeconomic exclusion affecting the US and the world's working classes should, in principle, make us think of complex TV works as politically concerned and progressive in their criticism of leading institutions, surveillance, financial capitalism and sustained irresponsible economic growth reliant on predatory practices such as gentrification and the state's involvement in public scandals.

winter with a “deeper metaphorical meaning generally expressing the sentiment that dark periods occur in life. Even if things are currently going well in your world (“summer”), this won’t last forever. There will eventually come a dark period, a coldness, when events turn against us (“winter”) [...] nobody is ever safe or comfortable for too long” (Saporito n. p.). Yet, such a winter, arguably, precedes a change and redemption or new beginning marking a recovery of faith and hope. At least, this goes for some of the identifications established between GOT and Shakespeare. As Matt Amarall, whose associations between GOT and Shakespeare include passages from *Othello* or *Antony and Cleopatra*, says, “In their characters [Martin’s and Shakespeare’s] we see ourselves, in their struggles we see our own, and in the unjust world in which they live we still see hope... If you want to know how it all ends [in Martin’s work and HBO’s series], you might want to revisit the old Bard, because I can tell you –there are hints everywhere” (n. p.). Indeed, the clues for such hopeful readings may indeed lie in the series’ possible associations with Shakespearean romances. Also, these expectations may explain why many fans were disappointed with the ending of GOT. As Slavoj Žižek says:

The stakes in the final conflict are thus: should the revolt against tyranny be just a fight for the return of the old kinder version of the same hierarchical order, or should it develop into the search for a new order that is needed? The finale combines the rejection of a radical change with an old anti-feminist motif. (2019: n. p.)

Literature, enlightenment and emancipation forces in Westworld wave Shakespearean flags.

Westworld (Lisa Joy and Jonathan Nolan, 2016-), based on the film written and directed by Michael Crichton in 1973, has attracted public attention using Shakespearean quotations and the uncanny reworking of neo-baroque meta-theatricality as an oppressive metaphor. Yet, it is possible to think of emancipatory readings too. Fans have contributed to develop insightful interpretations of the quotes across the episodes of the first series. Peter Abernathy, a host programmed to have been a teacher and an ex-member of a theatre company, combines two fractured quotes from Shakespeare: ‘By my most mechanical and dirty hand’ (*Henry IV Part 1*) and ‘I shall have revenges on you both’ (*King Lear*). Many commentators have pointed at the redemptive potentialities underlying sustained reading of the quotes, though some voices, such as Daniel Pollack-Pelzner’s, disclaim such potentialities.

For Pollack-Pelzner, Shakespeare served capitalist ideological purposes for those taking part in the Westward movement who carried copies of Shakespeare's works with them. This may be so, but some narratives propose alternative readings. Helen Wickham Koon's study, *How Shakespeare Won the West (Players and Performances in America's Gold Rush, 1849-1865)*, shows how miners and workmen travelling westward attended Shakespearean performances as "enlightenment to the spirit" (1989: 4). This idea may be equally applied to *Westworld*. As David Rodemerk suggests, when combining the quotes in *Westworld*, the effect is that the mechanicals, figures generally scorned in Shakespeare's text, now are ready to lead a rebellion. As Noel Ceballos affirms, Abernathy, in his remembering of his acting days, fathoms an emancipatory force which comes associated with his memories of Shakespeare in the theatre. As Janey Tracey says, in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Lear earns an 'enlightened soul' through suffering. In this way, "the androids may achieve enlightenme The Wire nt through their traumatic reveries – and through their exposure to literature" Furthermore, as Matt Patches suggests, "the series' delving in trauma is not a cynical study but a recognition that "Grief, and the little voice in [the human] head who wrestles with those though situation, is what makes us human" (n. p.). Kathleen Walsh's explanation of the show's quotes of *Romeo and Juliet* suggests another emancipatory movement lying ahead once the hosts – symbolizing the alienated underdogs of mankind in the era of neoliberalism – violently revolt against those who oppress them. Literature, enlightenment and emancipation forces in *Westworld* wave Shakespearean flags.

THEORETICAL MODEL: CHRONOTOPE OF TRAUMATIC REDEMPTION FOR SERIAL SHAKESPEARES

The geopolitical context of the series, immerse in global conflict, terrorism, a lack of faith in the institutions – particularly the Presidency of the US – and, importantly, the risk of socio-economic exclusion affecting the US and the world's working classes should, in principle, make us think of complex TV works as politically concerned and progressive in their criticism of leading institutions, surveillance, financial capitalism and sustained irresponsible economic growth reliant on predatory practices such as gentrification and the state's involvement in public scandals.

David Simon's *The Wire* has been signalled as representative of this phenomenon. For Xavier Antich, *The Wire* diagnoses the social failure of the capitalist system. What in 2008 showed the realities of a poor town in the US, today represents where we are" (2011: n. p.): For many, this could be summarized as a global apparatus in which financial capitalism has purchased enough public power to block significant social transformations. Analysing the series, Žižek revises how recent cultural critique against capitalist culture is based on practices of resistance against the market's aggressiveness, although he identifies in the series instances of utopia and points at examples of radical honesty in the story (2012: 97). Nonetheless, the show ultimately fails, as he argues, to transcend the limits of social realism and, this way, it does not present the abstract motions of capitalism, for which an entirely – perhaps a more Brechtian or Chapliniesque – different turn would have served (Žižek 2012). The only choice left for individuals seems, as Žižek continues, to be patient resistance to the inevitable workings of the state apparatus and the

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aggressiveness of financial capitalism (2012). Against this, Žižek proposes stopping all resistance to the dominant *dispositif* (2012), for acts of resistance only “keep the system alive” (2012: 109). Žižek’s conclusion on the series is that: “Whatever the outcome, one thing is clear: only when we fully embrace Simon’s tragic pessimism, accepting that there is no future (within the system), can an opening emerge for a radical change to come” (2012: 111).

In more positive terms, Hannah Wolfe Eisner traumatic redemption as a narrative experience which, fundamentally, does not dodge the ethical question of analysing the nature of pain. She defines trauma as an event which suddenly rips “its victims out of their lifeworlds.” Trauma is “so sudden and violent that it cannot be fully processed in the moment,” but it is remembered “in fragments through a mixture of disembodied and highly visceral sensations” (3). For Eisner, trauma and redemption should be studied within a relational rather than a linear framework. It does not presuppose a reconstitution of stability and order after disorder and instability (Eisner10-11). Instead, Eisner’s non-linear angle favours close analysis of trauma in its concrete expressions. Her appropriation of Bakhtin’s chronotope theory allows the arrangement of trauma-redemption experience in terms allowing their study. Rather than straightforward attention to healing, Eisner’s model proposes to first take the effects of trauma seriously, exposing trauma’s multiplicity and making of disorder part and parcel of the narrative.

For that purpose, she provides two sets of variables which can, as I will show, be used to explore redemption in complex TV series. Eisner differentiates “space-time” and “time-space” variables. The former denotes the material in which one’s body and the rest of the universe exist. The latter denotes a world system in which narrative comes into play. The former applies to material

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reality, the latter to epistemology and ideology – or even teleology. These two inform about the range of nuanced interpretive possibilities within traumatic redemption. Crucially, time-spaces translate as conversations about trauma allowing individuals to develop different perceptions, memories and interpretations on their experiences and, also, to discern how these interpretations affect social interactions and social organizations (Eisner). Trauma is, thus, experienced differently by individuals and characters. Consequently, characters’ individual redemptions take idiosyncratic forms.

Eisner inherits an additional set of variables from Theodore Adorno’s essay “Commitment” from the *New Left Review*. On the aesthetics of sacrifice and suffering, Adorno claims that “The aesthetic principle of stylization, and even the solemn prayer of the chorus, make an unthinkable

fate appear to have had some meaning; it is transfigured, something of its horror is removed. This alone does an injustice to the victims" (85). Eisner defines Adorno's term "transfiguration" by relating it to the transformation in an external appearance glorifying a given process. Seen from this angle, suffering and pain are elevated and sorrow serves a high purpose. Clearly, this is a narrative that many post-colonialist, feminist and classical Marxist scholars, artists and writers may challenge. Eisner also uses Lawrence Langer's concept of "disfiguration," i.e. the conscious and deliberate alienation of the reader's sensibilities from the world of the usual and familiar disorienting her/him and, arguably, eliminating the possibility of aesthetic pleasure³. These two variables allow us to think of imaginative ways of representing the unrepresentable specificities of trauma. At the same time, they allow us, following Eisner's suggestions, to reconcile these representations with forms of narrative that represent ultimate forms of healing.

THEORETICAL MODEL: CHRONOTOPE OF TRAUMATIC METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATION: *ROME AND JULIUS CAESAR*

Both sets of variables can be used, as I intend to show, to describe the characters of Titus

...two variables allow us to think of imaginative ways of representing the unrepresentable specificities of trauma. At the same time, they allow us, following Eisner's suggestions, to reconcile these representations with forms of narrative that represent ultimate forms of healing

Pullo and Lucius Vorenus in *Rome* (BBC/HBO 2005-2007), written by Bruno Heller, John Milius and William J. MacDonald. The characters are based on two real centurions described by Gaius Julius Caesar in *De Bello Gallicum*. In *Rome*, they represent two differentiated ideological types despite their soldierly status and, as the series' progress shows, such ideological inclinations are determined by class. Naturally, their views on progress and redemption differ. Pullo, the son of a slave, is a simple soldier and Vorenus, coming from a wealthier but still non-aristocratic family, is a centurion

³ See *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

who quickly becomes prefect of the *evocati*, later a senator, later captain of the Aventine Collegium. Their characters might well serve to embody the two ideologies that Shakespeare presents in the first act of *Julius Caesar* when the Cobbler and the two tribunes confront each other over Caesar's triumph. For the tribunes Flavius and Murellus, the Cobbler and the other citizens should rather be at work whereas the Cobbler and the crowd would rather celebrate Caesar's triumph. Similarly, competing worldviews regarding public responsibility are embodied in the protagonists of *Rome*. In Vorenus' case, a hard-working ethos based on loyalty to duty and to the principles laid down by the founding fathers at the Twelve Tables of the Roman Republic prevail over Julius Caesar's act of rebellion against the Republic. In Pullo's view, such acts of defiance are justified on the grounds of pure desire, buddy-boy camaraderie and the seemingly unstoppable power logic of testosterone. Pullo himself explains his worldview in the first episode: "I like to kill my enemies, take their gold, enjoy their women. That's it". Rather than the emulation dynamics which define their rivalry in Caesar's account of the Gallic Wars, these two characters' conflict has to do with class and education. Most of their mutual attacks, scorns, fights and struggles amplify the taunting and bantering going on between the respectable tribunes, deeply devoted to the state and to the discipline required by office's dignity, and the scallywags who rejoice in Caesar's trampling over their brethren's corpses in Shakespeare. Oftentimes, Vorenus admonishes Pullo for being unreasonable, imbalanced, disobedient and unnecessarily violent. Pullo resents Vorenus' self-importance, his coldness, and, especially, his rapid promotion. Not accidentally, scene one in the series commences with a fisticuff exchange between Pullo and Vorenus in the middle of a skirmish with the Gauls after Pullo disobeys Vorenus' order to be back into the line. Vorenus' interpellation to Pullo echoes Murellus' command to the Plebeians:

Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude. (1.1.53-56)

Contrarily to what happens in Shakespeare's plays –in which the mob irrationally kills Cinna the Poet–, *Rome* allows the People of Rome moments to be at peace with themselves. As the series progresses, Pullo and Vorenus' bonds of friendship and brotherhood acquire more and more depth. If there is anything that Pullo and Vorenus' friendship symbolizes is the emancipatory possibility of union of peoples belonging to different social ranks in order to oppose or, at least, contend against the ideological, coercive and military forces that the state displays over the population.

Yet, such redemptive story is filled with dark stretches. Despite the simplicity with which he presents himself, Pullo's deep pain –much of which he recurrently recalls via storytelling about his parents– have hardened him and made him ready for dangerous situations. He only realises that something is going wrong with his own world when he decides to marry. Unconsciously, his own courage leads him away from the means to carry a genuinely happy existence in the terms he later pursues. For, despite their clear similarities in soldierly value, Vorenus quickly ascends through the political ladder and he does not. Pullo's plight is not unlike that of many US citizens belonging to depressed areas who, until the industry fell and the current financial crisis started, thought there would be always time to find the way to settle down. While some of them were hard-working, lucky, or clever enough to move up the social ladder, others did not have access to the means to do so.

Pullo's suffering during the last episodes of series one develops through the steps in the process of ideological obfuscation identified by Žižek, whose borrowing of Elisabeth's Kliiber-Ross's classification may be of help here. Firstly, "denial" defines the individual's perception (2010: xii). "Anger" follows this first stage, which, in Pullo's case, is burdened by his awareness of his disadvantaged educational position. While Vorenus' parents raised horses in Mutina, Pullo, the son of a slave, has known no other trade except violence.

The radicalization of *Rome's* exploration of the Plebeians in Shakespeare's tragedy lies in its engagement with social, ideological and cultural divisions outside the Senate and the aristocracy. When Pullo is about to ask Eirene the slave's hand in marriage, he discovers that she is already engaged with another slave in Vorenus' house. Social difference reveals itself even there, for Pullo lacks the means to raise a family even with a slave. He belongs neither in communities of racialized freed people nor in the Roman elite. After killing Eirene's fiancé and being expelled from Vorenus' house, he engages in criminal activity and is arrested by the authorities. In the face of death, he undergoes the last stage Žižek points at. Disinterested in defending himself in trial or in fighting for his life, he develops "acceptance," which, for the Marxist philosopher, allows the subject to discern "the signs of an emerging emancipatory subjectivity" (2010: xii). Once he stops fighting against his own apparent doom as an outcast veteran without a future, he manages to win Eirene's forgiveness and her hand in marriage. As Monica S. Cyrino says, while Vorenus' downfall occurs in the last episode of season one, "Pullo is redeemed by his indissoluble bond with Vorenus and his own powerful instinct to survive. Even as Rome falls into turmoil with the assassination of Caesar, the final shot of Pullo walking hand-in-hand with his beloved Eirene, whose name means, "Peace," offers a visual promise of the ultimate survival of the Roman people" (6).

Pullo's redemption is not linear, for more violent episodes involving his wife will follow. Yet, I would like to focus on Vorenus' attempt to redeem himself from doom over season two. This intent is recognized by other characters who describe what he expects from his children once he calms after realising that his jealous rage has provoked the death of his wife Niobe. A solid, practical, hard-working man, his instincts dictate him when honour determines the course of action to follow and when it is best to look to the other side. For instance, though in episode 1 he commands Pullo to respect army protocols in battle, when Mark Antony sexually assaults a shepherdess en route to Rome, he justifies his general's act by saying that, while doing it, he is not under the thirteenth legion's standard. Aware of this microphysics of power necessary to survive in Rome, he thinks of his own and his family's prosperities as a matter of career progress, movement upward in the social scale and political promotion. Such forward-looking principle, which deliberately obscures details, is the one he intends to stick to in order to sort out the self-inflicted pain produced by the death of his wife Niobe. Being informed that Niobe conceived a child with another man when he was at war, Vorenus abandons Caesar, runs into his house and, threateningly approaches his terrified wife, who puts an end to her life by jumping from the verandah. His strategy, during season two, consists of obtaining his children's and his gods' forgiveness as soon as possible. When he rescues the children from slave camp (episode 2, 4), he faces young Lucius, Niobe's son, momentarily. Instead of killing him, as honor dictates following the family's institutional patriarchal rules, he embraces the boy. From the corner of the room, Vorena, his daughter, who has been turned into a prostitute, observes

his father's reactions. Behind her back, a sinister doll hanging on the background produces a disturbing feeling revealing that everything will not be well. In fact, we know subsequently that Vorena and the kids plan to escape from their father as soon as possible. One shot presenting the reconciliation of Vorenus with his child seems to suggest that Niobe's sacrifice was meaningful whereas the disfiguration image of the doll as a marker for future turmoil unravels the optimistic resolution of this progressive affirmative narrative that Vorenus wants this event to be. The conclusion of *Rome* is just as problematic as the conclusion of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*. In Shakespeare's romance, Hermione's apparent resurrection seemingly crowns Leontes' longed-for redemption, though Hermione's silence in the final scene renders this conclusion suspicious. In

One shot presenting the reconciliation of Vorenus with his child seems to suggest that Niobe's sacrifice was meaningful whereas the disfiguration image of the doll as a marker for future turmoil unravels the optimistic resolution of this progressive affirmative narrative that Vorenus wants this event to be.

Rome, the last shot showing Vorena and her dying father in bed is brusquely cut. Thus, we are deprived of definitive conclusions regarding Vorena and Vorenus' reconciliation.

JULIUS CAESAR BEYOND ROME

Complex TV series have had an impact in contemporary Shakespearean performance⁴. A comparative approach to read a corpus of Shakespearean adaptations from the lens of traumatic redemption – and, interestingly, following Douglas Lanier's rhizomatic model, using *Rome* as vantage point – permits examining a selection of adaptations of *Julius Caesar* as trauma-redemption dialectics. As Lanier suggests, the corpus of Shakespearean adaptations, sources, afterlives and scripts do not need to be presented in a hierarchical or chronological order. A dialogue rooted in historical specificity involving all adaptations as well as the original text allows inquiry into the concerns present in *Rome* as these are transferred to other adaptations of *Julius Caesar*. This way, cultural meanings mobilized in *Rome* may be vantage points to study other adaptations.

For instance, the study of *Rome* from this angle would require an engagement with materialist and historicist criticism on the role of the Plebeians in Shakespeare's Roman plays. My analyses should address the question of whether Bruno Heller's show responds to past or current

⁴ Sophie Bourdais mentions a few productions from the 2014 Avignon Festival in which the duration of *Henry VI*, re-designed by Thomas Jolly and La Piccola Familia company, took the shape of two seasons imitating the TV serial format with cliff-hangers and 'rhapsods' summarizing preceding episodes. Other collaborations have taken place between artists of Shakespeare-inflected series and theatre artists. Stage productions of *Hamlet* have been mounted using the

concerns in the representation of the People in *Julius Caesar*.

Rome clearly responds to these concerns ambivalently. For, contrarily to what cultural materialist and to what conservative critics have respectively promoted, it refuses, for better or for worse, to simplify the People of Rome. Instead, it displays the whole social map of *Rome* with all its complexities, its shadows and its lights. It makes the socio-economic differences between centurions and soldiers evident through Pullo and Vorenus' often conflictive friendship. It displays the relations of rivalry and solidarity between women in the series –through the evolving journeys of Atia of the Julii and her daughter Octavia–. Likewise, it stresses the political importance of women in the Roman politics which Shakespeare leaves unattended. It largely represents the ethnic and racial prejudices in the Roman society but, also, it reveals the survival strategies of some of the characters heavily marked by alterity. For instance, the Greek slave Posca at times seemingly emulates Lear's Fool, for he is one of the few characters –together with Antony and Octavian– who speak their true minds in front of Caesar. Timon, a Jewish tradesman and an assassin, trying to pass himself as a businessman –perhaps alluding to Shakespeare's hero in *Timon of Athens*– experiences his own redemption journey via sexual involvement and affiliation with a high-class woman, Atia of the Julii, who hires him to carry out criminal acts. Resentful with his domina, Timon joins a radical group intending to overthrow Roman rule in Israel. Yet, when he has the chance to assassinate King Herod in his visit to Rome, seeing that Atia travels near the Eastern monarch, he chooses to abandon this enterprise, go back to his family and leave Rome for good. As the Roman aristocracy, the Roman plebs are embedded in the power dynamics of Rome, which becomes a

aesthetics of *Six Feet Under* and *24 Hours* (2014). Jonathan Stamp, historical assessor for *Rome*, took part in the writing of the programme for Lucy Bailey's RSC production of *Julius Caesar* in 2009, for which she borrowed the color palette of the series. Also, as she says, she found the show 'astonishingly fresh and tapped into the addictive violence and brutality that I found in the play' (2009). Comments have been made on how the appearance of actors from complex TV series may affect our interpretations of their partaking in contemporary Shakespearean productions. Thus, as Erin Weinberg says, taking into account his role in *GOT*, we could read Robert Pugh's interpretation of Glendower in Richard Eyre's *Henry IV Part 1* from the lens of *GOT*. This way, Pugh's Glendower, influenced by Craster, a character who commands the spirits lying beyond the wall in HBO's epic fantasy, may be read not as a caricature of a magician as Harry Hotspur does but in rather darker and more serious ways (2014). Local and amateur productions of Shakespearean plays have been part of this phenomenon too. We have news of a High School play, *Game of Tiaras*, written by Don Zolidis, adapting *King Lear* with the heritage of Disney and *GOT* in mind. In 2016, the University of Nebraska and Omaha partnered with Creighton University and Nebraska Shakespeare to mount of a production of *The Wars of the Roses* keeping the popular impact of *GOT* in mind. More straightforwardly, in April 2016, a troupe of 36 sixteen- to nineteen-year-old actors mounted a production of *The Wars of the Roses* at Warwick called *Games and Thrones*. Parallels with HBO's work went beyond the cast's youth and the title. As James Rodgers says, Playbox's production wanted to 'fully immerse the audience in the story – which house [would] they support, the red or white rose? Which contender to the throne [would get] their vote? Which acts of treachery and plotting [would] they condone or condemn?' (2016). With this practice, immersive theatre imitated some of the strategies of engagement of complex TV based on the creation of blogs, forums and social networks rallying viewers to speculate, opine and intervene in the narrative. Crucially, this would imitate HBO's practice of transforming audiences into potential judges of characters, as has been the case with the series. An additional example is the *Henry VI* presented by Phil Willmott Company: *HVI: A Play of Thrones*, adapted from Shakespeare's plays by Willmott himself an explicitly marketed as 'The brutal reality that inspired RR Martin's novels' and as 'A passionate accessible take on Shakespeare'. Nonetheless, these *GOT*-based initiatives on stage may fall flat. Icarus Theatre Company makes a point to perform Shakespeares for the HBO generation and to embrace HBO's fantasist conceits.

character in its own right. Thus, rather than choosing to favor any of the two meta-narratives –progressive and skeptic– on the Roman Plebs, HBO embraces a dialectical view and places the People's complexities, virtues and inclinations to irrational violence center-stage.

The recent films *Cesare Deve Morire* (Taviani Brothers, 2012) and *Julius Caesar* (Phyllida Lloyd, 2018), both framed within the genre of Prison Shakespeares, are, like *Rome*, people-centered Shakespearean adaptations in which male and female convicts use theatre and Shakespeare's tragedy to explore their own traumatic experiences. While the Taviani's film stresses the healing, curative and emancipatory potentialities of literature, drama and Shakespeare's words for a group of fairly enlightened prisoners at the institutional penitentiary of Rebbibbia (Rome), the female cast of actresses in Lloyd's film interpret the characters as male, thus engaged with the Brechtian fashion of depicting the brutal, de-humanized and stark macho politics of prison using estrangement mechanisms that disallow affirmative conclusions for the self-proclaimed curative quest the female prisoners seek in doing the play. The realistic documentary style followed by the Tavianis reinforces a redemptive prison narrative in which, after meeting Shakespeare, some prisoners make sense of their life and find ways out of darkness through literature and drama. The Brechtian style in Lloyd's film displays metatheatrical strategies which, by pointing at the performance, depict the details of arbitrary violence in ways that echo the abuse that these female convicts must have suffered. Suffering becomes meaningless, obsessive, not a means to achieve a higher end, but a constant struggle to negotiate the dialectics of hope and suffering.

At a time in which, following Žižek, "the global capitalist system is approaching its apocalyptic zero point" (2010: x), a focus on social division, inequality, rage, suffering, trauma and search for forms of enlightenment seem a fitting choice for appropriations of Julius Caesar. These two films radically engage with the popular *zeitgeist* of *Rome* in order to explore class, education and masculinity issues and, also, to exercise the intellectually and theatrically compelling exercise of having women play male characters in ways that depict, show and expose –rather than encourage identification with– the male characters in the play.

CONCLUSIONS

This essay has shown that, to a great extent, the Shakespearean intertext contributes to add layers of meaning to current redemption narratives. Since trauma culture affects varied geographies and localities, particularly those affected by social division –particularly, regarding gender and ethnicity–, economic hardship and identity crisis, Eisner's theory allows us to think of complex TV series as lenses to look into worldwide Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations.

Furthermore, this may be possible even with complex TV serials whose relations with Shakespeare have been proved only in sketchy ways. Jo Nesbø's *Macbeth* is, resembling the Norwegian author's Harry Hole series, inserted in the grey urban landscapes subsumed in wild late capitalism, political corruption and drug-dealing. Characters are ridden by guilt-atonement and a constant need to make up their minds in the face of a world where honesty inside institutions seems suicidal, especially for working-class types, whose choices are limited by the operating mechanisms of social inequality and educational difference. This novel lends itself to comparison

with the serial format developed by complex TV. Particularly, it lends itself to a reading alongside *The Wire*, for it addresses concerns and questions which Simon tackles. Additionally, it is also worth reading *The Wire* in contrast with Michael Almereyda's film adaptation of *Cymbeline* (2014). Arguably, the setting chosen for this adaptation – a US city in which a gang of drug-dealers (the Britons) constantly fight with the police (the Romans) – might be proposed as a utopian alternative to the insufficient progressive politics of *The Wire*, for conventions of Shakespearean romance indeed, contrarily to *The Wire*, transcend the parameters of social realism. At the same time, *The Wire* and the conventions it develops provide a solid set of guidelines to study the transformations and variations of the conventions of Shakespearean romance embedded in the world depicted by the series. Potentially, Shakespearean romance provides ways out in a chronotope in which Simon's politics falls short.

Reading serial Shakespeares from the lens of traumatic redemption maps the way in which Shakespearean reception evolves across the centuries, for series often draw ideas from Shakespearean reception and performance histories. Observing, for instance, the character of Claire Underwood from *House of Cards* (David Fincher, 2012-2018) in the light of the US's overall interpretation of the Scottish heroine Lady Macbeth in performance, it is observed that the physical and magnetic character played by Robin Wright departs from and radically transforms standing misogynistic representations of Lady Macbeth: a powerful female who, nonetheless, shows too many signs of instability to leave government in her hands. Needless to say, such myth has been used in order to disqualify the potential as leaders of First Ladies such as Hillary Clinton and previous US female political leaders. Claire's characterization seems to run along other characterizations of the Shakespearean heroine which, in the early twenty-first century, have re-considered Lady Macbeth's agency. Sarah Fraser King's protagonist in *Lady Macbeth* is solid, resourceful and capable of military prowess – as this historical novel suggests. Nonetheless, ultimately, her subordinate role is confirmed despite the amount of equality granted to the couple in Fraser King's exploration. Melanie Karsak's four-part saga *Celtic Blood* more radically re-reads Lady Macbeth as a queen-in-the-making who is not only decided to rule but who is also decided to be a mother of many children and, while revengeful, is also capable, thanks to her magical powers and her romantic relationship with Banquo of Lochaber, to create, envisage and inhabit alternative worlds outside the hetero-normative, war-ridden and male-centered kingdom of Scotland.

Reading Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations across geographies and transcending genre-specific –and, as Lloyd's film shows, gender-specific– barriers, we find that serial Shakespeares are barometers of the shape Shakespearean performance seems to be taking in the global landscape. They do so not just at surface level –via the odd casting of an HBO actor in a Shakespearean production, for instance, though this is a frequent strategy– but with regard to their attention to deeper intertextual, political, ideological and cultural meanings calling for cross-media analyses.

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The US American Self-criticism. Stories of Anger and Bewilderment

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The US American Self-criticism. Stories of Anger and Bewilderment

ABSTRACT

Criticism to the system is a core place in the US American culture. The self-criticism gets its roots in the permanent restlessness of the American People, in their fears, in their dissatisfaction, and even in their insane self-destructive behaviour. Many episodes in the American history have worked out from attitudes of paranoia, disgust or anger towards communities or the public administration. The natural rhythm of society in the United States is far from acceptance and calm. On the contrary, the US history is defined by restlessness and dubious sentiments. Thus, one might think that the American dream is fundamentally a state of permanent crisis in which people, unable to deal with their present vital conditions, transmute these conditions into havoc and creation. In the pages of this article, a brief tour into the historical and cultural trend of discouragement is offered. It also pays attention to the American ability to self-analyze its own historical experiences. The fictionalized stories, that come from the imagination but also from people's voices and memories, convey a sense of dissatisfaction and of struggle to improve the American way of behaving. Those citizens, especially uncomfortable with themselves or with the administration, may not be aware that they are precisely those who constitute the best US image abroad. In the ostentation of a self-criticism, of a subversive thought, these Americans, opposed to the official positions, feature the virtue of the relentless self-purge. Therefore, looking at past and present times, this paper is composed by six related arguments

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that rely on both historical events and fictionated stories, with the titles of: “Under the paranoid style”; “The angry nation”, “Hate: Public Limited Company”, “Images of anger”, “Guilty, ashamed and redeemed”, and “The legacy of disenchantment”.

Key Words: United States, history, stories, culture, disenchantment, anger


UNDER THE PARANOID STYLE

In the mid-sixties *Harper's Magazine* published an article by Richard Hofstadter with the suggestive title of “The Paranoid Style in American Politics”. At this point, in the 21st century, we could think that nothing told by Hofstadter would call our attention. We perfectly know how McCarthyism worked in the fifties and how the Cold War acquired, in its ideological dimension, a toxic conspiratorial tone that permeated and decomposed American society. However, it is useful to re-read Hofstadter's text, since it helps to recover


American politics had always been acted as theater scene for angry minds –mainly those very conservative groups who take their anger to the extreme of paranoid style.

certain aspects that seemed non important at the time of its first edition but that nowadays would certainly acquire some relevance. Hofstadter stressed that American politics had always been acted as theater scene for angry minds –mainly those very conservative groups who take their anger to the extreme of paranoid style.

Long before McCarthyism, the political decisions of the administrations attended to this paranoid feeling. The permanent sensation of territorial vulnerability in the first decades of the 19th century favored the growth of the Navy, the building of coastal bastions or the trade agreements that helped to protect the American ships in the Mediterranean Sea from Berber piracy. The slave riots and run aways from the plantations also increased paranoia. White people in the slave states were afraid of the possibility of being slaughtered by a slave at any time while they were sleeping. In the emerging Midwest -the old Spanish Louisiana- soldiers and entrepreneurs felt behind them the shadow of the Indians. Fear of the unknown in the nineteenth century took the form of the runaway masses of Irish migrants: Papists who spoke Gaelic and were meant to ruin the precious American democracy through the devilish alliance with the Vatican. There was a broad record of circumstances that caused fear and, consequently, political decisions inspired by a paranoid worldview.



**Fear of the unknown in
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democracy.**



In the aforementioned Hofstadter paper several cases of the early American paranoid reaction are collected, such as the popular hostility towards the Illuminati and the Masons since the 1820s, or towards the Catholics since the 1830s, with the massive images of aberration and hate. In relation to the panic caused by the alleged subversive actions of the Bavarian Illuminati -linked in America with the French Revolution and with a such bad press in the young republic-, it is to be highlighted that these Illuminati had developed a significant rationalist and anticlerical illustration due to the German Adam Weishaupt in the United States (1776). At the end of the century the Illuminati approached the Freemasons to outline their society model: a highly rational utopia. The text that influenced popular hostility the most towards enlightenment was written and published in 1797 in Edinburgh by John Robison, under the title of "Proofs of a Conspiracy Against All the Religions and Governmets of Europe, Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Mason, Illuminati, and Reading Societies".

Thus, the clergy felt very concerned as they realized that the Enlightenment and the Freemasonry was a full-blown attack to the sources of Protestantism. But hostility towards these trends happened essentially in New England, among the most conservative sectors. From the pulpits and newspapers, Jeffersonian democracy was pointed out as a vehicle for these "anti-Christian" ideas; in the background, the conflict between the Jeffersonians (pro-French) and the Federalists (pro-British), the later being accused of radical Jacobinism by the President. Was the United States being the victim of an international plot supported by the Illuminati, Jacobins, and Jeffersonians? This issue already refers to a feeling of a clear paranoid sign that accuses a political trend of treason to the interests of the nation. And it is that in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, the United States would live an authentic conspiracy mania that could be noticed in the popular classes -these voting segment expanded during the Jacksonian Democracy-, especially in rural areas. The anti-freemasons were also hostile to the restraint of opportunities for ordinary people or to the "aristocratization" of public life. Despite the strength of Freemasonry in the stage of setting up, it was understood that Freemasonry conspired against the essences of the Republic. Freemasons created a system of government in parallel to everyone's system: drawing among its members a loyalty outside the federal system and the states. Seen this way, behaving like a Mason was meant to be punished. So the street claimed jail and death penalty for the freemasons. The anti-Masonic defined Masonry as the most abominable and dangerous institution the humanity had ever known: a "Hell's Master Piece".

Catholics stood above the freemasons in their status as traitors to democracy. The supposed plot of Catholics against American values began its journey in the thirties popular mentality and anti-Catholicism eventually became a way of understanding the nation, linked of course to the general hostility against the waves of Catholic immigrants

-Irish- in the central decades of the 19th century. In 1835 two books argued that a “new” danger against the American way of life had arisen, Morse’s *Foreign Conspiracies against the Liberties of the United States*, and Lyman Beecher’s *Plea for the West*. Morse was none but the inventor of the telegraph and in his book he claimed that there was a conspiracy that couldn’t be defended by the country’s ships or armies. Morse said that the aforementioned conspiracy came from the Catholic and Austrian government of Metternich, which launched its Jesuit missionaries across the ocean to infiltrate and destroy American society. Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s father, said in *Plea for the West* that Protestantism was engaged in a life-and-death war with Catholicism. The aggression, also in this case, seemed


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to come from Europe, as this continent sent a myriad of Catholics to the US in order to undermine its republic and its strength. The migrants brought violence and populated the prisons, obtained the resources for the local poor and, being so many, controlled the vote in some areas. In the stories of these and other authors, the morbid images were surprising. Priests and nuns were described as villains, licentious and murderers; there was even talk about debauchery in convents and monasteries, or about the public danger that one and the other represented for communities of goodness. On the cusp of paranoia, in 1836 the nun María Monk published *Awful Disclosures*, a kind of autobiography about the author’s libertine and criminal life. This chapter of the 19th century paranoias can be closed without concluding. And things would not improve in the twentieth century, when people were frightened by a whole string of fears that had black people as agents, outsiders or foreigners with their large families and their contagious diseases, socialists, or even the cosmopolitan Americans, some of them called themselves ‘pacifists’. Also women with voice, vote, literate and with a paid livelihood. It was interpreted that each of these subjects was a “strange” body in the perfect anatomy of the Republic.


The American culture intend to mean: “we have not been defeated but betrayed”. The perversion that arises from the thinking -unfounded and paranoid- that things are perverted because of betrayal has caused memorable excesses in the history of American power. However, it has also made visible the struggle of those who are hypothetically guilty of treason for wanting to disassemble “the system”. A recent book, *If This Be Treason: The American Rogues and Rebels Who Walked the Line Between Dissent and Betrayal*, shows the effects on history of the thin line between the lack of affection towards the prevailing code and betrayal (Duda). Dissent can be treason, or not. This duel for the honest America is very delicate, a traditional matter of controversy that has been perfectly reflected in the fiction stories (Coale).

The Book of Daniel by E. L. Doctorow, whose release in 1971, coincided with a stage of hopelessness and turbulence in American society, shows the reader the fictional adventures of a central character within a plot that might be pure history (Jeong). Daniel Isaacson is a young man, son of a couple executed in the postwar period on charges of conspiracy to spy on the government and having passed sensitive information to the USSR. It is easy to find out in this plot the reference to the case of the Rosenbergs (Clune), the married couple executed by the federal government in 1953. Through his own experience, Daniel runs into a whole cast of characters coming from a frightened and paranoid society. He faces the critical questions of what it is to be a good American or if a citizen can be a patriot being disloyal to the administration. May be an Alter Ego of Isaacson, Doctorow reasons that every man must become an enemy of his own country and that every country is an enemy of its own citizens. Nevertheless, he does not establish any causal link between both sentences. Even if one is linked to a country, countries are not persons. So, the fact that “my” country is related to other countries does not mean that I am. How to understand that governments, if armed, are willing to give their citizens to death just for their benefit? How to understand betrayal within the People’s Common Sense?

Betrayal is a crime defined by the Constitution and consequently no one can be convicted of treason without the forced testimony of the witnesses or its own confession. The novel refers to the work of Nathaniel Weyl, *Betrayal: The Story of Disloyalty and Betrayal in American History*, pure controversy about what it means to be a good American or a bad one. Weyl, a writer and relevant economist in his time, is also well known for his conservative positions in the fifties, despite having recognized himself as a member of the Communist Party in the thirties (in 1939 he left the party), a young activist at Columbia University and a member of the self-appointed *Ware Group*, a cell of the Communist Party in Washington DC, linked with Soviet intelligence. Weyl became as well famous for testifying against Alger Hiss, a former left-wing colleague accused of spying in 1950, who was a State Department official and who was finally convicted for perjury in 1950 and sentenced to forty four months of imprisonment.



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THE ANGRY NATION

The American system, which in its initial conception can be valued as meticulous, shows traces of change in the expression of criticism and the desire of self correction. So, somehow the good American is the one who shouts the clumsiness of the system and intends to straighten it. The workers, the entrepreneurs, the students, the pioneer women, the minority groups... Those that are definitely least favored by the administration in each period, do not just rest meditating at home. They express their frustration and anger at the lounge activism or in the street, through philanthropy or arts, with their voices and actions. The perception of this factor in the American society leads Charles Duhing -in a recent text for *The Atlantic*- to argue that America has always been an angry nation, and that unease and anger are classic trends in United States history. In the beginning of the Revolution, the enormous discomfort against certain colonial habits of the English administration was expressed. Surely, diminishing the War of Independence to an effect of people's anger is an exaggeration that cannot be historically hold. But not because of its weakness as an historical cause, it is less certain that, in fact, the first revolutionary movements in the United States harbored much of popular helplessness and unease at the inflexible wall that was the British system.

It has been detected how disappointment, rage and even hate are conditioning the way of doing in American politics. A vibrant example has happened with the appointment of Judge Brett Kavanaugh as a member of the Supreme Court of Justice in 2018. Throughout all the procedure, attitudes of rage and histrionic rhetoric coming from defenders and detractors of the judge could be seen (Hemingway & Severino). The breakup in public opinion was measured by the intensity with which goodnesses and evils of the candidate

were shouted. The American authors handle the phenomenon of emotional support to a political candidate regarding people's frustration and resentment. But also, being it referred to more delicate issues at the heart of the process: for example, the brutalization of people in terrible childhoods or life traumas. Although not always for the better, the thought that collective anger can be a powerful lever for social change comes to mind. Anger -psychologists argue- is one of the clearest forms in people's communication because it broadcasts a lot of information about the individual. A 1977 study -at the University of Amherst, Massachusetts, suggested by James Averill- based on data from the Greenfield 18,000 inhabitants, the average American (if there exists an average American!) was shown in a permanent state of irritation and defensiveness. Everything seems to indicate that Americans have always been irritated by their political system, with which they remain angry or suspicious. In order to understand the collusion between personal anger and the social movements, social and scientific branches also point out that the phenomenon of

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emotional voting in elections are due to frustration and resentment. Anonymous American's rage is a behaviour at which travelers, journalists and writers have paid attention. Recently, slogans such as "Jews will not replace us" or "White lives matter" have been heard, some others urging to defeat the "Fascist Liberal Democrats", the protesters on the street asking those enemies to be replaced in institutions by "people like God commands" (Nice Guys). These are the Alt-right movements pride on the white ethno nationalism and the so-called Western Civilization. But certainly neither the Alt-right movements nor Presidencies as the Donald Trump's have invented the use of anger to make politics. In the nineties, the American policy had in the Newt Gingrich -head of the Republicans in the House of Representatives and nominated to the Presidency for his party in 2012- a pioneer in the use of histrionics, rage, and even intimidating messages (Packer).

About the current intimidating rhetoric, historians have seen some parallelism with several precedent states of affairs: for example in the 1850s (Freeman). Paradigmatic in this field, the thirties showed the world that the social rage that overflowed the codes, was also part of the American style. In the field of fiction, the book *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (1939) dived into the daily routine of universal issues such as war, totalitarianism, hunger, unemployment, despair... The anger exposed by Steinbeck was reduced to the substratum of proper names, experiences; it was tangible, human, much more real than the anger of the faceless people taken the Winter Palace in 1917. The dogma of American democracy was irrelevant to the starving Americans. Nor was there any interest in defending universal causes as the self-determination of the people and nations that were a target of discussion in the international interwar scene. Until reaching the narration of anger, Steinbeck had taken the path of despair in US. He covered -helped by the superb work of the photographer Dorothea Lange (Spirn) to whom the Government commissioned to make a photographic report between 1935 and 1936 (Quirke)- the crisis of farmers migrating on foot to California due to the effects of the Dust Bowl (Gregory). During the Depression famine and dust storms had primed with the agricultural population of the Midwest, in the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Nebraska, South Dakota and Colorado. A wave of migrants, homeless people, itinerant ones of all ages, sex and condition, systematically moved westward, leaving behind them their belongings first, and then their lives. Children are born dead, grandparents pass away while walking, those who live starve themselves to death, the dignity of migrants is stunned by pain and fear, finally by absolute helplessness and shame. John Steinbeck describes the situation in seven articles for the *San Francisco News*. This work form a book entitled *The Harvest Gypsies* (Steinbeck 1936). Those immigrants who go to the "haciendas" -says Steinbeck-, are first used to serve the Californian agricultural industry, and then rejected: unnecessary ones, they become homeless. Even though in their pain, they are also hated by the local population: because they are dirty and ignorant, they bring diseases and insecurity.

The American optimism cracks when it comes to considering the behavior of power. When anger rises to the category of social fury and some kind of rebellion erupts, the offense of power to the people takes the form of a moral truth. Such situations have occurred in matters of race and civil rights, in the abolitionism during the first half of the nineteenth century (Harrold), or in the civil rights movement between the 1950s and 1970s (Burrogh). Also in the anti-nuclear and environmental protection campaigns in the East and in California from the sixties to the eighties: transversal activisms regarding the ideological and social origin of the activists, even though the conservative media have characterized them as "liberal" or lefties movements.

Most times American vote against an option, not in favor. One recent example has been carried out by the citizens opposing to Trumpism in the Mid Term, 2018. Anger is seen in the voter's reactions to state legislative elections in many occasions. A relevant percentage of the population considers this institution systematically harmful with their particular interests. Voting in anger is channeling through the vote the feeling of affront and the desire of revenge from policies that we believe to be harmful for us. Getting angry and showing myself as such is easier than deciding which option is the least attentive to my interests. But the anger vote usually gives ephemeral or pernicious results. In Carnegie Hall, February 1968, in reference to the radicalism that distilled people's fury, Martin Luther King addressed the audience warning that "being angry is not enough".

HATE: PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY

Throughout contemporary history, popular anger takes its shape in groups and political parties whose purpose is to destroy the current system. Fascisms, dictatorships, cesarisms, authoritarianisms, etc. are usually the culmination of mass movement processes guided by populism -but not only this: revolutionary governments as well. Populism,

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apart from the nuanced definitions handled by political scientists, is sometimes not so easy to discern. José María Lassalle (Lasalle) suggests that today there is a "sociological right" that lives "frightened by the cultural changes of the 21st century" in addition to "a transverse apoliticism that brings together a multitude of discomforts against the hegemonic intellectual left". The fear of change and transversal apoliticism demand "moral order" and mostly a range of simpler political options. The sociological right would have experienced a deep discomfort with postmodern images: pluralism, heterodoxy, relativism,

fragmentation, identities... This could be interpreted as a reprehensible expression of the prevailing disorder. Americans, following populism or sociological right, voted in 2016 with a large percentage in favor a candidate who, like them, felt excluded from the current system. However, "Trumpism" should not be considered as a historical exception; it founds its dogma on bringing the "plebs" to the very heart of the political regime obviating as much as possible the institutional intermediations of democracy, pretending to lighten the weight of the legislative power in favor of the executive. The leader "understands" the needs of the people and pretends to produce laws bypassing debate and consensus. This is not new, nor is it that populism flattens the intellectual horizon of citizens by nullifying their expertise to overcome the distance between what is wrong and what is right, what is morally reprehensible or what is not.

Once the political correctness has fallen, the abundance of media – mainly through social networks- and the speed with which messages are spread accelerate the transition to violent forms: without biting our tongues, without distance of reason and moderation, losing empathy and tolerance. When it is the group who defames or insults, this action becomes a powerful weapon that breaks coexistence. Maintaining the forms, the second half of the twentieth century society has raised taboos about some differences such as skin colour, clothing style, language, religion, sexual orientation... Sociological right-wing parties, brutalized, have expressed their disgust and immediacy in political action: steady hand beating the problems -most of them being not temporary and that cannot be solved through specific actions. The paradox is that the postmodern condition of immediacy is empowering the ideological profiles that precisely detest postmodernity. I will evoke that Trump's hand gesture underlining vigorously two words: "right now!"

The most recent American sociological right-wing party appeals to the fantasy of a world prior to the digital revolution, a recognizable place in history to the American hegemony. However this self-proclaimed party calls for a closed and clear order in which national facts can only be interpreted in the category of myths. The chimera shows the blue-necked America, the industrial America that imposes its patents and products on the rest of the world, coinciding with the more youthful stage of Trump's life: a man in his old age who resists recognizing the current world, and who makes no effort to empathize with that large portion of citizens who have not voted for him. The American Alt-right Movements surfaced a decade ago in local politics, and are by no means an updated form of American conservatism, which Dan T. Carter already analyzed in his book *The Politics of Rage. George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Carter). There is not a direct link between recent sociological right movements and more or less recent past radical conservatisms. The Alt-right emerged around 2008 mainly in postmodern sites like Twitter. The groups make use of social networks and television

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channels to attract new members: both young people living in the virtual world and their grandparents who do not separate from television and who mishandle the Internet. Since its inception, they have been shaping their slogans taking the ongoing events as targets to harass: one day they may be the Refugees from Syria, another one the Black Lives Matter movement, the feminist movements or the LGBTI activism. The Alt-right prides itself on the common ethno white nationalism and the so-called Western Civilization, but it should not be confused with a specifically Southern or Midwest expression: that of the angry impoverished people, separated by the system from all the goodness and benefits of their country. Each expression of the Alt-right has got its peculiarities, although all groups agree on the fact that the classical Republican Party does not represent their interests, and that it has betrayed them. The slogans shouted by the members of these groups in their public rallies and demonstrations do not express specific demands, only anger and resentment (Milburn & Conrad), especially against those who are neither angry nor resentful.

No one has explained these movements -historically speaking- with the logic of changing the demographic and social configuration of the country. The American whites have lost positions in the control of the structures that manage power, and consequently they felt displaced, demoralized and “dispossessed” of the United States, a country they consider they have the right to rule. In fact, this perception has emerged cyclically in the country. As the extreme right movements did in the 1920s, these groups of outraged citizens proclaim the right to an insurgent activism, on the idea that the current political culture does not defend but hurts their interests, making them strangers in their own country. The Alt-right was accompanied by attitudes in favor of the self-defense rights, and the particular use of weapons invoking the Second Amendment of the Constitution. In colleges and university campuses -for example the riots in Charlottesville, in the state of Virginia (August 2017)- it was not unusual to hear young people chant frivolously: “Hail Trump”, “Hail our people” or “Hail victory!”. The documentary entitled *Alt-right: Age of Rage*, by Adam Lough (2018) is a credible account on the nature of this movement, whose name was coined in 2008 by one of its most popular leaders, Richard Spencer. Jared Taylor with his book *Racial Consciousness in the 21st Century* (2011) invokes the creation of an ethno racial state; or *The American Renaissance* magazine, now renewed into a website, which defends the idea of a white community pride.

After a decade of intense activism, analysts suggest that the Alt-right is declining due to internal divisions that make a dent in the strength of its actions. In addition, the arrival of answering groups, the Antifa or Antifascists, also has an impact on the supremacist movement. The American Antifa, inspired by the thirties anti-fascist movements in the Europe, has been object of attention in crucial foreign media such as *The Guardian*. The BBC Channel at the beginning of 2017 claimed that a battle between two opposed poles

was taking place in the United States: *Antifa V Alt-right* (Yates), and the supremacist leader Spencer himself recognized that the Antifa was seriously undermining them. Both positions, Alt-right and Antifa, have reminded people of episodes that took place in the thirties and that nobody wanted to be reminded of. After the start of the Trump Presidency, supporters and detractors of the new president literally stuck in the street, and there were hundreds of detainees for their violent actions throughout the country.

With the citizenship severely divided, many analysts would rate the year of 2017 as one of the darkest eras remembered in the United States due to hate and violence (Roberstson). In short, as the analyst Fareed Zakaria warned in 2017, the Trump presidency lead to an emphasis of the social polarization. In a kind of little virtuous revival, citizens seem to seek their place in society by defining themselves through personal identity elements such as race, gender, sexual orientation... Wealth and poverty accompany these characterizations, but are not substantial when it comes to the understanding of the situation. In the last decade, Americans -especially young people- did not define themselves

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by a political choice. Social classes are no more clearly denoted. However, cultural distance between non-university rural space and university and professional urban elites can be observed. The problem –as Zakaria pointed out- is that identity, culture, or creeds are not “reasonable” aspects, or a matter of negotiation and social commitment. The Administration could negotiate about material matters or economic differences, and agreements aimed at social peace. The investment in resources fitted the solutions in a range of possibilities from zero to ten. Satisfactory action plans could be achieved in the middle of this scale. But this is not possible when identity comes the matter of the negotiation. At this point, the positions have irreducibly developed.

IMAGES OF ANGER

Over the decades, actions linked to social frictions have diversified their forms. Americans have for example burned their flag more often than we usually imagine if we take into account that this country displays a flag in every corner because US Americans love their colors. The constant dialogue between acceptance and rejection with this symbol is one of the symptoms of their identity. In the act of burning the American flag -protected by the right of free expression- a radical complaint which would be defined as anti-American was raised. In November 2016, after Trump's victory, at the sight of a country in hands of a leader considered by many people dishonest, quirky, liar and a lot of other nasty things, the streets of the United States were filled with frightened citizens. We recover the archives of the country's press editing images of large groups of people around a burning American flag. The staging of this national disgust was to attack the most efficient symbol of Americanism: the flag. This action expressed the feeling of disaffection and helplessness in which a remarkable part of nation find themselves after Trump's victory. The number of riots that included the vexation of the flag increased.

Students from Hampshire College, Massachusetts, withdrew the national flag of the institution, an example that was followed by other schools all across the country: "If my flag represents 'this', it is no longer my flag: Shame on us!" The war of the flags spread like wildfire when the reaction of the groups considered the self-defenders of national symbols broke out. Some devastating slogans in the style that crowned the head of The Washington Post on November 9, such as "Democracy Dies in Darkness", helped to justify the "anti"outbursts. Defenders and critics with these angry actions invoked similar arguments. The triumphant America and the loser one reproached each other for the lack of morality and respect, as well as for behavior unworthiness. If for some individuals the Trump Presidency was moral and aesthetically ugly, for others the burning of the flag was dishonest, a treason to the nation. In both positions there was a kind of panic, but only the defenders of the sacred sense of the flag (Welch, 2000) above the individual right to free expression criminalized the protest actions of the losers at the polls. The United States has been an inspiring nation for the youth all over the world that, even if censoring the presence of the United States outside its borders, has imitated those rebel styles with which young Americans have fully engaged activism against the system.

The Getty images archive keeps images of Americans of all ethnicity, gender, and condition rallying for the defense of civil rights (Speltz) and burning the symbols of the homeland. Burning flags was a national sport in the years of struggle between Unionists and Confederates; throughout the nineteenth century, the followers of political foes burned partisan flags. Some years later, in 1967 a United States flag was burnt in Central

Park. And American pop art in the fifties -Jasper Johns (Israel)- used the flag at will. Later, in the eighties, the artist Dread Scott (remember that Dred Scott, without the “a” was the name of the slave who, in the 1850s, took a pulse to the entire American legal system for the recognition of his free man condition), displayed an American flag on the floor of an exhibition asking the public what was the correct way to display a flag (1989, School of the Art Institute of Chicago) (Vile). The advertising companies that began to promote the products of modern America at the beginning of the twentieth century placed the (very colorful) flag on the product label, where they thought it would have a favorable effect on sales.

It is worth to recall that, on the matter of how and where the flag can be deployed, there is a protocol in the United States. This issue is so important that there is an extensive literature on the controversies about the misuse of the American flag. In his book, *Burning the Flag: The Great 1989-1990 American Flag Desecration*, Robert Justin Goldstein investigates the controversy that, between 1984 and 1990, went into Court. Eluding the details about the particular case of the flag burned in Dallas (1984), the fundamental question was whether to lash out against the flag was acceptable (and consequently legal) as a form of political protest. In 1989 the Supreme Court recognized that burning the flag constitutes a merely cultural act, a form of discourse and not a violent or a criminal gesture, thus giving arguments in favor of those who defended the right to express themselves according to the dictates of the culture of the protest.

GUILTY, ASHAMED AND REDEEMED

We are used to thinking that Americans approach to universal moral values from the peculiarity of the so-called American values. From this perspective, the US American “subjectivity” has won the battle to the universal values. But also, American history has revitalized a type of individual conscience that, tormented by shame (Stearns, *Shame: A Brief History*) and blame about the damage committed by administrations, seeks the way to promote empathy with the heirs of victims and tries to recompose the moral damage with current actions. The history of collective feeling of shame in the United States shows highs and lows. The illustrated revolution in America at the end of the 18th century highlighted human dignity. Benjamin Rush stated that “it is universally recognized that shame is a punishment worse than death”. Throughout the nineteenth century, the virtue of shame was abused, to the point that it acquired a relevant position in private space under the guidance of Puritanism, of course not in the field of public and institutional activities. The ominous slavery institution remained for a long time and, once done, the American nation preferred not to assume any kind of regret or shame. Afterwards, during the highlights of

the American project – *the Gilded Age*– self-confidence and arrogance prevailed. According to the scholars, in the splendid decades of Pax Americana -1940s and 1970s- the lowest levels in the citizenship tendency to feel shame were appreciated. Scholars stated that nevertheless, from the nineties, the American society would have significantly increased that feeling of shame. Nowadays, the *Shame's Revival* (Stearns, “Does American culture shame too much –or not enough?”) suggests that US Americans discover a certain empathy with the harms of others, especially those related to the reprehensible actions of their ancestors.

Actually, the feeling of guilt and shame is perhaps more rooted in the Catholic culture than in the Protestant one. We perfectly know that Protestant ethics eludes both feelings, guilt and shame, when the damage emanates from actions over which the individual has no control. This is obvious in the case of the ominous past of the powers, which in the United States clearly refers to the original American populations, massacred or cornered in the Indians reserves during the 19th century. However, there is also a feeling of responsibility due to an unhealthy heritage, especially in response to

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those government actions that injured human rights in their most universal aspects. This kind of attitude involves many US citizen activisms inside and abroad the country. This progressive activism (inspired by the thinking of the unnatural disorder or the world), that blamed of unethical the Administration actions, was known as Folk Politics. This activism rallied the criticism of the government's warmongering attitude or the bankruptcies of the constitutional legacy of civil rights. The term *Folk Politics*, which became very popular was coined by Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams to refer to a type of protest that, in their opinion, came ineffective to modify things. The protesters did not understand, they said, the real and complex nature of the problems that aroused them. Today, protest movements, continued Srnick and Williams, are isolated, without a logical structure or clear objectives

of change in the style of those of the twentieth century. Somehow, the culture of the recent American protest resembles those of the last third of the nineteenth century. However, the atomization of critical movements within the country also manifests the style of doing things in the current times: fractured, if compared with those of the late twentieth century. The issue of inherited guilt (Pettigrove) -away in almost in most epochs of the history- sneaks into American public debates with more or less intensity depending on the nature of times. Attempts have been made to close the historical processes by requesting the forgiveness of the still alive victims, for example of Japanese-born Americans interned in camps during World War II (Presidente Reagan in the US Congress in 1988). This process was followed by an economic endowment of more than a billion and a half dollars to compensate the victims and their heirs. Furthermore, the responsibility for the extermination of the Indians has been a recurrent topic from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, having achieved some kind of recognition of the damage that, without satisfying the descendants of the victims, tends to close the issue. But it does not happen the same with slavery: a

Attempts have been made to close the historical processes by requesting the forgiveness of the still alive victims, for example of Japanese-born Americans interned in camps during World War II (Presidente Reagan in the US Congress in 1988).

wound is still open (Davis). In 1998, during a tour in Africa, President Clinton repeatedly apologized for the slave trade. But on Clinton rained all kinds of criticism in the United States: for apologizing in countries such as Uganda or Rwanda, which had not been a source of export of slaves to North America, for acting on the basis of the political interests of the United States in African countries, for not apologizing directly to the community of afro descendants in the United States, for not remembering that slavery was also then a plague in many areas of the African continent...

Certainly, for decades the black community in the United States has been demanding the recognition of inherited guilt and the subsequent reparations. In 2007 the Virginia legislature adopted a resolution of apology for slavery, which was followed by other historical slavery states: Arkansas, Florida, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, and

North Carolina. But most important, the Legislative Chambers passed resolutions asking for forgiveness about the role played in the slavery maintenance processes during the first decades of the 19th century. Of course, these acts of formal request for forgiveness have never been verified by any executive branch. The recent apology, during the presidential campaign in 2015, of the Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders, is surely the result of a virtuous ethic but also of a political opportunity. The important question is that it exemplifies the collective unavoidable feeling of guilt of an entire country. As a way to collective redemption, people are assuming the ominous ancient events they hardly know. Public actions intended to ask for forgiveness tend to deal with matters that do not correspond to the actions in question. For instance, Reagan apologized for the collective hysteria that took thousands of Japanese-American citizens in concentration camps, but he did not do so for the civilian deaths resulting from military actions during his tenure such as the nearly three hundred passengers of an Iranian flight who lost their lives due to a US missile. The Obama era (2008-2016) was the opportunity to address discursively the question of the recognition of the harms and to ask for forgiveness, but the geopolitical relevance was not alien to this peculiarity of the stage in question. On the contrary, Obama did not apologize in his visit to Japan in 2016 for the facts of annihilation of the civilian population because of the launching of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the total amount of victims is unknown but it is thought to be about one hundred and fifty thousand people. Therefore, although with exceptions, the United States does not reconsider the political and military decisions taken in times of war, as Jennifer Lind explained in *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics*.

In relation to individuals, the American citizen may offer finance and life in the service of humanitarian causes. It is observed that those citizens apologize for belonging to a country overflowing with resources, for feeling immensely favored by a fate that they believe they do not deserve, or for feeling the punctual vital restlessness unavoidable for people overwhelmed by everyday lacks and dangers. In a good novel published just over a decade ago, *Returning to the Earth*, the author, Jim Harrison, drew a character that is precisely the embodiment of the American unselfconfident but also capable of loading with all the negative actions of the American history. David is an apprehensive man who emerges from sadness to provide material supplies and devices, bought with his inherited assets, to those who illegally cross the Mexican and continue northward. But faith in the authenticity and sense of this humanitarian cause falls apart when David proves that, by integrating other activists into his project, a huge NGO emerges, and consequently, it becomes to work more efficiently, "in the American way", as a company. David feels defeated in his interest in correcting the global evil just by doing the right thing, by doing something good.

THE LEGACY OF DISENCHANTMENT

Disenchantment, hopelessness, lack of faith in themselves... No one better than Americans to tell the great deception of the American dream. Pessimism is part of the tone in the American cultural legacy: the disaffection for the group to which one belongs, the self-destructive air of the characters, the warnings, the conspiracies and prophecies, the hidden organized crime, the insignificant heroes... Just a disgression. Despite the weight of this narrative tendency that underlines the disappointment, not Americans but Canadians are those who better embody the rhetoric of defeat and loss. This thesis is well developed in the work of Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide. The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada*. American identity has incorporated the dogma that the country comes from the "winners": the uprising settlers against the English tyranny. Meanwhile the Canadians founded their country on the basis of the Legitimists losers that fled to the northern British colonies, in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Two classics with a very different literary profile, both Nobel Prizes for literature, give us solid examples of the cultural weight of American moral dejection. When in the early twentieth century Sinclair Lewis dared to denounce the very unimpressive daily life of the Midwest in his book *Main Street*, describing the abulia and the vital poorness, the public opinion understood he was little less than committing treason. Lewis had little success among the readers of his time, but nowadays we appreciate in the book the harsh exposure of purely American stocks, mistakenly imagining that the author radiographed Americanness in its purest state. Decades later, I turn again to the work of John Steinbeck, in this case with the title *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1960), which clearly expresses the feeling of helplessness in the face of the great lie of the American dream in the fifties. In the society portrayed by Steinbeck nobody and nothing is what it seems to be; money is the essence of each other's interest, immigrants cheat on the administration, vendors bribe for getting a customer, and even friends and siblings denounce each other in anticipation of a reward. Envy, jealousy, lies... all these impoverish the human quality of relations between relatives and comrades. Where is the social optimism that it used to be in America at the end of the Second World War? Where is the morality that corresponds to American democracy?

But in the same way that the American licks his wounds, he narrates the titanic efforts to get out of the hole, to overcome frustration and anger. Literally speaking, as if the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001 had been a transcript of Vesuvius eruption that took Pompeii and Herculaneum ahead, in the cultural images about the horror of 9/11 we find out this idea of an inadequate and finalized world from whose ashes a different America will arise. The unjustifiable attack could also be seen as an opportunity to amend

mistakes. In Jay McInerney's novel, *The Good Life*, the reconstruction of New York City from the attacks is proposed as a window, an opportunity to improve the unsatisfactory lifestyle of Manhattan people: the wasteful and obscene abundance conceived in the nineties. The feeling of rebellion implies becoming aware of oneself, in an intimate way first, then in community. And this critical, radical or delicate attitude, perhaps labelled as anti-American (Huguet), deeply differs from conventional regenerations.

In the disgust for the US America in progress, dystopia unfolds with many curious examples of the Americans self-critical attitude. I will just mention Colson Whitehead's book, *Zone One*. The central character in this book, named Mark Spitz, cleans the streets of Manhattan, and while doing so he goes back to the past. In that place there was an instant when human civilization jumped through the air -humanity as a whole, or humanity as the American civilization?, we may wonder. Immersed in self-pessimism, in *White Noise* (Don de Lillo) one can clearly see the critical feeling about what we have become. In De Lillo's story, the action takes place at the East Coast, in the north of New York. In this dystopia there is no longer a "clean" place in America where to take refuge from the environmental

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catastrophe that lurks. When the average citizen contemplates the television screen, his attention is captured, says De Lillo, by a constant flow of words and images, graphics and particles. This image of America becomes even more devastating when De Lillo says that people suffer from cerebral wilting and predicts that a catastrophe is needed from time to time to interrupt the ceaseless bombardment of information. And all of that in 1985, when digital revolution had not appeared! A decade earlier, in 1976, Sydney Lumet directs *Network* (Itzkoff), a satire on the dark world of television. Being selected in 2000 for preservation in the National Filmography Registry, the movie presents the system -television- as corrupt, terrifying, and unforgiving. No one can emerge victorious from the contact with it. There is not a great difference with the Edgar Allan Poe's tales, which precisely subverted the triumphalist discourse of success and prosperity, of full self-confidence in the ability of American society to transform itself (Tally).

Finally, in the traditional national literature of losers and defeated since the Great Depression (Hearn), the United States is no longer a country of opportunity, a place that drives the ragged social foundations toward the tops of abundance and well-being. On the contrary, it is a stark country in which the best that can happen to those who arrive with their hands in their pockets is to realize in time that America deceives them, and to be in a hurry to return home.

To close this article, quoting Dos Passos in his *Manhattan Transfer* is perhaps to mention the evidence, a testimony that nevertheless continues being very useful to understand the self-criticism in America. In Dos Passos novel, the America imagined by migrants is just a postcard. The real America are the humiliating medical inspections before leaving the ship that takes us to its coasts, the devious officials we do not understand, the infected neighborhood near the port that, perhaps, we will never reach, the working hours –if there are jobs– demolishing people for unsatisfactory wages... America does not work for everyone, because in fact it has never been of great use to those who could not know how to take advantage of it.

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Hildreth Meièrè: Connections to Spain Before and During the Spanish Civil War

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Hildreth Meière: Connections to Spain Before and During the Spanish Civil War

ABSTRACT

The prestigious American Art Deco artist Hildreth Meière provided humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Spanish Civil War and in the Second World War. Acting as the vice-president of the American Spanish Relief Fund created in 1937 and run by P. Francis X. Talbot, S. J. with the goal of helping people affected by the war in the Franco zone, and to also deliver medicine and medical supplies from the United States through diplomatic channels.

She visited Spain in 1925, 1938 and 1961. On the first trip she came to see the works of Spanish painters and made contact with important aristocratic families of the time (the Duke of Sotomayor, the Marquises of La Romana and Arcos, the Duchess of Vistahermosa, etc.). In 1938 she started humanitarian aid, collecting money and donations from New York society for orphans of the civil war and acted as a propaganda distributor for the Francoist cause in the United States. On this occasion she met with people familiar with the situation in Spain to solve the problems of humanitarian aid: Luis Bolín, Pablo Merry del Val, Cardenal Gomá, Carmen de Icaza, and Mercedes Sanz Bachiller.

Meière actively participated in providing humanitarian aid in the Franco zone during the years of the civil war while also acting as a staunch supporter of the Francoist cause. After the civil war she continued her collaboration to alleviate aid deficiencies in Spain by facilitating the transport of anesthetics, medicines, surgical materials, etc, but her

* Orduña Prada, M. "Hildreth Meière: Connections to Spain Before and During the Spanish Civil War". *REDEN*. 1:1. (2019): 75-94. Web.

perspective towards Francoism was changing and gradually her ties to Spain weakened. It was only three years before her death in 1961 that she made one last trip to Spain.

Key Words: Meière, Spanish Civil War, Humanitarian Assistance, Second World War

INTRODUCTION

Hildreth Meière was one of the most prolific American artists of the Art Deco period, with a career that lasted nearly up until her death in 1961. Born in New York, she had a studio in Manhattan. She was trained as an artist in Italy and in the art schools of New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. Besides being a pioneer in the application of different artistic techniques (especially murals) throughout her life, she won various prizes and awards and was the first woman admitted to the New York City Art Commission. Among her numerous art projects, she was commissioned eight projects for the Nebraska State Capitol and various church decorations, such as the mosaics in St.

Hildreth Meière was one of the most prolific American artists of the Art Deco period.

Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue in New York City, the ceramic in the ceiling of The University of Chicago's chapel, the reredos in St. Paul's Chapel of Cranbrook, Michigan, and the mosaics in the Temple Emanu-El in New York City. She also designed or painted decorations for various banks and theaters, the Radio City Hall in Manhattan and the Rockefeller Center Promenade Café¹.

On her first trip to Spain in the 1920's, not only did she establish family contacts, her artistic side led her to discover some of the artistic landmarks in Spain such as the Prado Museum or the Monastery of El Escorial. She also visited some private collections of portraits of Spanish aristocracy. As she did throughout her life on numerous trips around the world in search of new artistic skills, learning new painting techniques and discovering new artists were all reasons for her travels to Spain.

Apart from her artistic life which was studied in detail by Coleman and Murphy, from 1936-1945 Meière was deeply devoted to organizations that benefited civilian victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War. Her dedication to such organizations had important links, especially in the case of the Spanish conflict, to her identity as a practicing Catholic. She was involved (often with a role such as a vice president or treasurer) with many humanitarian aid groups, one of them being the American Spanish Relief Fund, the Committee to Send Medicines and Anesthetics to Spain, and the French Civilian Relief.

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It will be necessary for this study to explain what the American Spanish Relief Fund was. It was founded in May of 1937 with the idea of giving aid to the people most affected by the war in the Franco's Zone and was run by a Jesuit priest named Francis X Talbot. The goals were to "Collect funds to be used for medical aid and assistance in Spain or for food or clothing" (Talbot, Letter to Secretary of State Cordell: 2)². This assistance was primarily destined for Franco's Spain because, as Father Talbot himself pointed out in a request for funds "The proceeds will be applied to the American Spanish... While the Leftists and Communists are sending over hundreds of thousands of dollars to Red Spain, we Catholics have contributed only a few thousands of dollars for our people in White Spain" (Talbot, Letter: n. p.)³.

This organization was established after the creation of the American Committee for Spanish Relief which had emerged in the shadow of the American Catholic bishops and whose donations were sent to the Red Cross for later distribution in Spain. However, donations made to the American Spanish Relief Fund were both used and distributed by the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy (González Gullón 322).

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And the Committee to Send Medicines and Anesthetics to Spain was founded in June of 1940 during the Spanish post-war period "to send medicines, drugs, anesthetics, vitamins, etc., to Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Weddell for distribution through the American Embassy in Madrid" (Meière 1942: 2)⁴. The idea was that the United States would obtain medicine and send it to Spain through diplomatic channels. Taking into account the dramatic situation and the shortages in Spain, it was logical that supplies were asked for instead of money. Having the funds did not guarantee that Spain could buy medicine.

² Rev. Francis X. TALBOT, S.J. Letter to Secretary of State Cordell (May 11, 1937), Georgetown University Library. America Magazines Archives. Spain Material-America Spanish Relief Fund (1936-1937), Box 20, folder 16.

³ Rev. Francis X. TALBOT, S.J. Letter (November, 10, 1937), Georgetown University Library. America Magazines Archives. Spain Material-America Spanish Relief Fund (1936-1937), Box 20, folder 18

⁴ Dissolution of the Committee to Send Anesthetics and Medicines to Spain, December 8, 1942. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Box 5, folder 5.35, (2 of 2). Civilian War Service Records. Spanish Civil War. Committee to Send Anesthetics and Medicines to Spain, (1940-1943).

The official position of American Catholics in relation to the Spanish civil war and the parties to the conflict was formed during the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) with US bishops. However, it was Catholic newspapers and magazines, with some exceptions, who carried out propaganda tasks for the Franco regime among Catholics (González Gullón 21).

One of the best examples was America Magazine which, during the years of the Spanish Civil War, was not only a platform for the transmission of anti-communist slogans and texts in favor of Franco's Spain, but also published editorials, announcements, or letters from the editor with requests for donations and funds to help Spanish Catholics.

Meière was a tireless traveler who toured nearly the whole world during her life.

Meière was a tireless traveler who toured nearly the whole world during her life. She made three trips to Spain, the first being largely related to a relationship she had established with a part of Spanish society, namely her family. Her visits to Spain took place during three distinct moments: under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in 1925, during the Civil War in 1938, and finally under the Franco regime in 1961⁵. This paper examines what Meière perceived regarding the reality of Spanish society during the two significant periods in Spanish history in which she visited Spain, specifically her the first two visits in 1925 and 1938. It also examines the family connections she established which were fundamental in her decision to become involved with humanitarian aid during the Civil War.

FIRST CONTACT WITH SPAIN

In 1925, with the approval of King Alfonso XIII, the first stage of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (a military directorate) gave way to a Civil Directorate in an attempt by the dictator to institutionalize the regime. This same year the regime also started to take measures to boost the political and economic life of Spain (Jover Zamora, Gómez-Ferrer & Fusi 563).

⁵ Regarding her third visit, in the Hildreth Meière archives there is no written documentation of this trip, only photographs and slides of her visits to cities such as Granada or Sevilla.

The first objective of Hildreth Meière in her visit to Spain in April of 1925 was to see firsthand some of the primary Spanish monuments and the works of great Spanish painters so as to continue her artistic training in different techniques. Meière also wished to establish contact with members of the Spanish aristocracy she was related to. Her visit to Spain was preceded by a letter addressed from her uncle Thomas McKean Meière to the Duke of Sotomayor, Pedro Martínez de Irujo. This letter not only announced the visit of Meière and communicated her interest in the portraits of Gilbert Stuart which the Duke owned, but it also let them discover their family connections. In fact, they were kin of Thomas McKean, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, represented by the Count of Delaware and later the Governor of Pennsylvania. In addition to detailing issues about the branches of the family tree that they had in common, McKean invite the Duke to visit the United States mentioning, "and if you should do so, I, and your many cousins here, would certainly like the pleasure of seeing you in Baltimore" (McKean 2)⁶.

Meière and Louise Hamilton (her friend which accompanied her on the trip) were received by the Duke of Sotomayor and with him they called on various family members and visited the Prado Museum, The Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, the Monasterio de Guadalupe, and Toledo. Besides her visit to the Prado Museum which made an impact on her as an artist, another activity that interested her greatly was attending a polo match at the Club de Campo Villa de Madrid. There she had the opportunity to meet, thanks to the Duke, members of the royal family⁷. Specifically, she met Infanta Isabella, the Prince of Asturias, and the Queen which she described in letters as, "looking as smart and young and pretty as possible" (Meière 1925: 1)⁸. In those years, despite the fact that Alfonso XIII as King was not exempt from controversy or difficulties (Seco Serrano), the presence of the royal family in Madrid's social life was something quite habitual though it was still very surprising to the American artist.

The correspondence that Meière maintained with her family in the United States during her visit mainly consisted of descriptions of new family members she met in Spain, along with some mentions of places she had visited such as Segovia or Burgos. Apart from mentioning the Duke, his wife, and some of his children, she also met other family members such as the Marquesses of Romana, the Maquis of Aros, the Marques of Lamberty, and the Duchess of Vistahermosa. The latter,

⁶ Letter from Thomas McKean to the Duke de Sotomayor, March 23, 1925. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.35. HM correspondence with Spanish Relatives, 1925-1939.

⁷ She had previously expressed her interest to the Duke, "I said I was very anxious to see the King, and the Duke said he would take us to the polo on Saturday". Letter from Hildreth Meière to Thomas McKean, April 10, 1925. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.35. HM Correspondence with Spanish Relatives, 1925-1939.

⁸ She had previously expressed her interest to the Duke, "I said I was very anxious to see the King, and the Duke said he would take us to the polo on Saturday". Letter from Hildreth Meière to Thomas McKean, April 10, 1925. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.35. HM Correspondence with Spanish Relatives, 1925-1939.

⁹ Letter from Hildreth Meière to Thomas McKean, April 10, 1925. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.35. HM correspondence with Spanish Relatives, 1925-1939.

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sister of the Duke of Sotomayor, was described by Meière as someone, “who is a Lady-in-waiting to the Queen Mother, and she would try to get all the McKean descendents to meet me” (Meière 1925: 2)⁹.

For an American in the 1920's, the experience of meeting members of the Spanish aristocracy, some of which she was related to, suddenly became more important than the artistic pursuits that had originally inspired her trip. In fact, the documents surrounding Meière includes numerous letters where she describes her various trips around the world, the countries she visited, and the economic, social, and political¹⁰ climate of each as well as various works of art that she felt could serve as a reference for her artistic techniques. However, in her first visit to Spain are no such references.

In reality this first contact with Spain permitted her to establish a connection which resulted in a rich correspondence with some members of the Martínez de Irujo family, especially Pedro de Sotomayor and Isabel de Vistahermosa, with which whom she exchanged information about the situations in both Spain and the United States starting in the year 1925. In the United States they referenced the economic crisis which gave rise to the Great Depression and in the case of Spain they mentioned the supposed arrival of the Republic and some of the key events surrounding it such as the revolution of October 1934¹¹.

In the same way the relationships forged during this initial foray were crucial in converting Meière into an active defender of the Francoist cause during the Spanish Civil War and was also the impetus for her second visit to Spain.

MEIÈRE AND SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Meière's second visit to Spain took place during the war, in August of 1938. She was acting as a representative of the American Spanish Relief Fund. This trip, in addition to allowing her to reunite with her family, was fundamental to her humanitarian activities. Up until this visit, Meière had carried out an important role in collecting funds and donations among New York society with the aim of assisting orphaned children by the Spanish Civil War and as a promoter of the Francoist cause in the United States. It was usual for her that during that period to have gatherings in her

⁹ Letter from Hildreth Meière to Thomas McKean, April 10, 1925. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.35. HM correspondence with Spanish Relatives, 1925-1939.

¹⁰ For example in 1934 while she was doing some paintings in Baviera (Germany), she wrote to some friends in the United States relating with detail the sensation that she noted in the Germans who were anticipating a visit from Hitler. Apart from being a complete physical description, Meière indicated “I suppose I have the average American attitude and antagonism and prejudice about him, but I admit I was rather impressed by him [...] It's as though Lindberg at his greatest popularity and Babe Ruth were combined and had been elected President at home”. Letter from Hildreth Meière to Ellie Lloyd, August 13, 1934. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.65. Correspondence Business.

¹¹ Isabel de Vistahermosa wrote “We had a very bad time all over the country since October last”. Letter from Isabel de Vistahermosa to Hildreth Meière, January 27, 1935. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, folder 3.41. Correspondence with Spanish contacts.

studio, which were attended by architects, other artists, and members of New York high society. At times Father Talbot attended himself and made fierce defenses of the Francoist cause, influenced by his Catholic formation with anti-communist influences¹².

It must be taken into account that the news that arrived in the United States about the Spanish Civil War and its effects on civilians gave rise to an important mobilization between different sectors of society.

The position of the Roosevelt administration was largely responsible, as pointed out by several scholars¹³ because not only did they maintain an embargo on the sale of arms (Thomás), they also made it difficult to provide any sort of humanitarian aid to Spain. The neutrality policy which the Roosevelt administration had maintained since the beginning of the Civil War was questioned a year later, and there was an intense debate between pro-loyalists and American Catholics who supported Franco. In the case of Catholics, it was especially evident from the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the body responsible for official positions and in relation to the conflict. The Roosevelt administration's defense in the maintenance of neutrality was reflected in the publication of a memorandum which reached a wide audience¹⁴.

Thus mobilization took place around associations and organizations of a humanitarian nature. Some groups refused to take sides and provided humanitarian aid from a neutral stance, such as the Quakers. The lack of public funds and government support from the United States to finance humanitarian aid destined for Spain were deciding factors for these associations and organizations to carry out the important tasks of collecting donations and delivering food, clothing and humanitarian material in general (Smith).


Meière was able to enter Spain during a moment in which the State Department was especially selective when granting passports and permits to travel to Spain because she was traveling as a representative of the American Spanish Relief Fund. The passport request was submitted by Father Talbot as the head of the humanitarian organization¹⁵. Francis X Talbot was editor of American Magazine between 1936 and 1944 and during years of Spanish conflict he was a strong defender of the Francoist cause, publishing numerous articles in which he mixed his Francoist sympathies with anti-communist Americanism (Chapman). Talbot's close relationship with the diplomat Juan F. de Cárdenas should also be taken into account. Cárdenas acted as the official agent of Franco's government in the United States and was a supporter of America

¹² Although in 1934 during a stay in Germany she traveled to Oberammergau specifically to see Hitler's entrance at a rally, there is no record that possible fascist influences were decisive in her support for the Francoist cause. Although she acknowledged that she was impressed by the paraphernalia and the environment in which people were waiting for the Führer, she indicated that "I suppose I have the average American attitude and antagonism and prejudice about him." Letter from Hildred Meière to Ellie Lloyd, August 13, 1934. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, Folder 3.65. Correspondence Business.


¹³ This can be verified in Bosch (2012) o Merino (2017).

¹⁴ Memorandum in support of the retention of the Spanish Embargo". Washington, The Catholic University of America. 1939. Library of Congress, Washington D.C Fondo Harvard Library College, Spanish Civil War, microform 84/3771

¹⁵ This is stated in the letter addressed to the State Department with the request. Letter from Francis Talbot to R. B. Shipley, June 11, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.31. Civilian War Service Records. Spanish Civil War. Correspondence, 1938



**She was traveling
as a representative
of the American
Spanish Relief
Fund.**



Since Meière was a supporter of Franco she considered it a very important trip because it would allow her to return to the United States to offer first-hand information about Franco's Spain after touring different cities.

Magazine. He even suggested that Father Talbot and his colleagues travel to the Francoist zone of Spain “by explaining how Franco was simply attempting to rid Spaniards of a Videous Soviet-direct government” (Chapman 20).

Traveling to Spain from certain countries during the war was complicated. Because the United States had declared a moral embargo, Britain and France had taken positions of non-intervention, and the Spanish Embargo Act had been signed in early 1937 (López Zapico 88), the State Department required that all travelers to Spain register themselves (Del Rey 119). Meière’s passport stated she was “[...] a relief worker on assignment to Spain, and this Passport is therefore valid for travel in that country”¹⁶. The organization of the trip, the journey through Franco’s Spain, and the contacts in the United States were obtained via the official agent of Franco’s government in the United States: Juan Francisco de Cárdenas¹⁷.

Meière had three goals on this trip. The first was personal in nature; she wanted to find her Spanish relatives and see how they were doing in the midst of the conflict.

“I heard that Pedro was a hostage at Bilbao for months; that Maria and Christine were in Embassies as refugees; and that one of the Vistahermosa sons was in hiding in Madrid. They’ve all gotten out now—except the boy who is an Embassy; but Pedro’s oldest son has been killed” (Meière 1938: 7)¹⁸.

In regards to her other goal on the journey, since Meière was a supporter of Franco she considered it a very important trip because it would allow her to return to the United States to offer first-hand information about Franco’s Spain after touring different cities. She considered this crucial in order to get Americans to support Franco. In fact, during her visit even the Duke of Sotomayor supported her in disseminating propaganda: “I am delighted that after your visit to Spain, you are able to give conferences about our real situation” (Sotomayor 1)¹⁹.

Her last goal was what truly linked her work to providing humanitarian aid through the American Spanish Relief Fund. Meière interviewed Cardinal Gomá and discussed with him the use of the different funds that were being sent from the United States and how the association was carrying out humanitarian aid.

The journey of Meière into Franco’s Spain took place between August 8th and 20th, 1938. During this time she visited places such as Irún, San Sebastián, Burgos, Valladolid, Ávila, Leganés,

¹⁶ Passport, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

¹⁷ As she wrote to a friend in France, “He gave me a letter to give to the officer in charge of the frontier at Irún”. In a letter from Hildreth Meière to Marina Hoffman. June 27, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, Folder 3.44. Correspondence Travels. 1938. And as she explained to her daughter, “Cárdenas has written to Burgos about me and has given me several letters of introduction”. Travel diary, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

¹⁸ Travel diary, August 9, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

¹⁹ Letter from the Duke of Sotomayor to Hildreth Meière, December 14, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 3, Folder 3.41. Correspondence Travels. 1938.

Toledo, Salamanca, Bilbao, Durango and Guernica. She entered Spain through Hendaye and faced one final difficulty in her trip: she needed permission from the then United States Ambassador to Spain, Claude Bowers²⁰, who had installed the US embassy in Saint-Jean-de-Luz for a visa granting special to access to Spain from France.

After passing through Irún, she went to San Sebastián where she met the Duke of Sotomayor after three years apart. Besides inquiring about the welfare of the different members of the Martínez de Irujo family, she explained to him the goals of her trip and “the sort of information I wanted to gather about Welfare Work and what I needed by way of help” (Meière 1938: 43)²¹.

The Duke of Sotomayor, through means of a diplomat, was able to obtain Meière an interview with Luis Bolín who was then the head of the National Tourism Service. She also conveyed her interest in interviewing Cardinal Gomá to obtain statistics on the number of orphaned children in the Franco zone and her desire to learn about the needs of children in that area. She also indicated that “I wanted to see, not war horrors but the constructive side of National Spain and to meet people who were directing the social work” (Meière 1938: 44)²².

With the help of Luis Bolín she obtained a pass from the Office of Press and Propaganda and made the first visit to a humanitarian aid institution in Franco's Spain, specifically, an Auxilio Social organization known as The Brotherhood Kitchen. They distributed take-home meals in special containers for the financially needy or sick people (Orduña). Meière described it as “a combination of social service, relief and war-time canteening” (Meière 1938:46)²³.

Meière established a friendly relationship with the diplomat's wife and together they carried out a welfare visit that, although it cannot be confirmed from her account, was most likely through the Delegación Nacional de Frentes y Hospitales since they went to the General Mola Military Hospital where they distributed tobacco among wounded soldiers and wounded prisoners. This hospital was a leader in the field of surgery and anesthesia and had on its team one of the most prestigious American surgeons who collaborated with the Francoist troops in the rearguard, specifically Dr. Joseph Eastman Sheehan, who organized what was the first plastic surgery service in Spain in this hospital²⁴.

To get a better idea of the depth of Auxilio Social, Meière also visited Valladolid where it was founded October 1936, where she had meetings with then General Secretary Carmen de Icaza and with the founder of Auxilio Social Mercedes Sanz Bachiller. Before leaving Spain she also visited a residence for girls taken in by Auxilio Social in Lekeitio. This allowed Meière to approach

²⁰ In 2019 the memories of Ambassador Bowers have been reissued in which his mission during the Spanish Civil War from Saint-Jean-de-Luz is detailed (Bowers 2019).

²¹ Travel diary, August 9, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²² Travel diary, August 9, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²³ Travel diary, August 9, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²⁴ Sheehan studied at Yale, completing his training in cities such as Bern, Paris, London and Heidelberg. (Expósito& Rubio& Solórzano 2012).

To get a better idea of the depth of Auxilio Social, Meière also visited Valladolid where it was founded October 1936, where she had meetings with then General Secretary Carmen de Icaza and with the founder of Auxilio Social Mercedes Sanz Bachiller.

different institutions where humanitarian aid was being provided in the Franco zone and enabled her to acquire information to allow the United States to spread propaganda of the regime.

By way of Pablo Merry del Val, chief of correspondents in the National Press Service with whom she had a meeting in Burgos, helped get a meeting with Cardinal Gomá in Toledo. Through Pablo Merry del Val, chief of correspondents in the National Press Service with whom she had met with his Burgos, Meière was able to obtain a meeting with Cardinal Gomá in Toledo. In writing about this meeting, Meière, who did not normally record minute details, recorded that with the money sent to him, the Cardinal "divides it into three parts: one for children, one for the priests and nuns, and the third for those who are in desperate need and appeal to him"²⁵.

However, there are documents sent by Cardinal Gomá to Father Talbot specifying the amounts sent to different zones of Spain divided into three groups. According to the dioceses their purpose was to alleviate the needs of children orphaned by war and needy people in general.

During her stay in Toledo Meière was able to visit and film the ruins of the Alcázar from both the inside and outside thanks to the permits and safe passages that Merry del Val had facilitated as both a photographic and cinematographic foreign journalist. The visit made a deep impression on her and she describes in her diary practically everything she saw, from the statue of Carlos V, the empty swimming pool they used to bury the dead, the areas that they took refuge from bombs in, or for example indicated that "Here and there were crude crosses, marking spots where different men were killed" (Meière 1938: 46)²⁶.

Meière continued her journey through different cities such as Ávila and Salamanca with the intention of visiting the different members of the Martínez de Irujo family, such as María Martínez de Irujo, the Viscount of Manzanera or Isabel de Vistahermosa. Ever a fan of art, she visited the Cathedral of Salamanca and the Cartuja de Burgos. She also met the painter Ignacio de Zuloaga and admired his sculptural and paintings.

During her stay in Spain she took numerous photographs and also filmed footage in addition to the materials she requested from the photography department of the Delegation of Press and Propaganda²⁸. All of this she sent to the United States along with propaganda posters that she could not take with her to the France because French officials at the border called them "fascist propaganda" (Meière 1938: 184)²⁹.

²⁵ Travel diary, August 14, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²⁶ Travel diary, August 15, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²⁷ Travel diary, August 9, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²⁸ Meière was very clear in the face of her propaganda action in the United States regarding the subjects of the photographs that would help her cause "Red murders, Martyrs and Personalities, Ruined Churches, Leaders, Hospitals, Auxilio Social and Falange". Travel diary, August 17, 1938 p.141. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

²⁹ Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War. Travel diary, August 20, 1938. Hildreth Meière papers, 1901, bulk 1911-1960. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 5, Folder 5.14. Writings. Prose, Spanish Civil War.

Although not addressed in this article, she later used the photographs and footage gathered in Spain to aid her in the telling of her experiences in meetings with members of the American Spanish Relief Fund, on radio broadcasts, or in conferences with the goal of praising the virtues of the new regime that arose from the war and to obtain funds for the provision of humanitarian aid.

CONCLUSIONS

A prolific artist such as Hildreth Meière, with a manifest interest in travel and cosmopolitan in almost every way, offers several perspectives for studying and analyzing her different activities. One of the most interesting aspects of her life was the relationship she maintained with Spain and the links she established with the United States. Those links were, during the late twenties, of a strictly family and personal nature and broadened considerably during the Spanish Civil War. From the beginning of the conflict in Spain, Meière quickly decided to support Franco's cause and to collaborate from a humanitarian standpoint. This, combined with the news she received from her relatives and her practicing Catholicism, could also have influenced her intense participation with Father Talbot not only with the American Spanish Relief Fund but also in an organization called the American Union for Nationalist. Merwin K. Hart, the founder of the New York State Economic Council, was president of both organizations and was also the founder of the American Union for Nationalist. He also traveled to Spain after Meière in October 1938 and published a book about his experience.

Meière was a staunch advocate for the Francoist cause and during her visit to Spain she demonstrated great interest in constructing a story of what she saw in order to later spread Francoist propaganda throughout the United States and acquire American allegiance to the new regime that was dramatically being imposed in Spain. In fact, although her trip was permitted by US authorities because of the humanitarian factor, the only humanitarian aspect to the trip was her visit with Cardinal Goma who was the recipient and distributor of the aid from the American Spanish Relief Fund.

Meière met with the highest Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy in order to learn more about the fate of the funds from American Catholics in Franco's Spain. The visits she made to institutions such as Social Assistance or the Women's Section, rather than verifying the proper use of money from the American Spanish Relief Fund, were, according to her own diary and notes, to praise the work of Franco and exalt figures like Pilar Primo de Rivera or Mercedes Sanz Bachiller. Furthermore, when she arrived in Franco's Spain, the safe-passage was given to her as a foreign photographic and cinematographic journalist.

Additionally, a large part of the places visited by the artist played important roles in Francoist propaganda. For example, she visited Alcázar de Toledo, the story of which was one key forms propaganda and one of the most important sociological myths of Francoism. Also the images she solicited from the Delegation of Press and Propaganda combined her interest of what she saw as achievements of the regime with the destruction on the part of the Republicans. This is why she

was especially interested in pictures of churches destroyed by Republicans and pictures of dead priests in order to generate ill-will in American Catholics towards the Republic, combining it with the anti-communism that formed part of the ideology of most American Catholics at the time. Although her collaboration through humanitarian aid to Spain didn't end with the war as she continued facilitate the acquisition of anesthesia, medicines, different surgical materials and clothing to the Spanish population through the United States Embassy in Spain, her perspective on Francoism did change. In 1942 when the United States had entered into the Second World War she acknowledged in a letter to Javier Gaitán de Ayala, representative of the United States Spanish Library of Information, that despite her initial support for the Francoist cause at start of the Spanish Civil War and her humanitarian relief efforts, she strongly opposed the presence of Falange and the regime because of the similarities she saw with the Nazi party.

After the end of the civil war and her subsequent change of opinion regarding the Franco regime, her ties to Spain were gradually diminished and she only made one more trip to Spain in 1961 before her death in 1964.

Testimonies of individuals disengaged from violent extremism are important to prevent the process of radicalization, testimonies of victims of terrorist attacks. Interreligious activities, fomenting interculturality, involve students' families, working at community-local and municipal level, promote the role of women in the prevention of extremism, control radical speeches and collaborating in projects with mosques, preventing radicalization in prisons with specific programs. Advice through campaigns of the danger of the false online profiles and chats of extreme right, left and religious individuals and organizations. Work in the deconstruction of islamist radical discourses through Islamic law. Keep working on counter-narratives through the internet and in educational centers (Jalloul, 2017).

Putting in force a proper guideline for the prevention of radicalization that leads to violence within governments' policies would mean that we understand the needs of our societies in a successful way, that we fight against violent extremism and terrorism, that we simply fight against the fear of the unknown.

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Writing Conflict
to End Conflict:
Reconciliatory
Writing in Cristina
García's *Dreaming in
Cuban, The Agüero
Sisters*, and *King of
Cuba*

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Writing Conflict to End Conflict: Reconciliatory Writing in Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*, *The Agüero Sisters*, and *King of Cuba*

They are disappearing from the planet, and I wanted to get them in the last throes –chronicle what they were doing in their last days, their last obsessions. For they will pass, and the generations behind them will write their own histories. I also wanted to give a more nuanced voice to the sixty-year shouting match between Cuba and its exiles. (Jorge Santos, "Multi-hyphenated identities on the road": An Interview with Cristina García)

Reconciliation is not only about finding common grounds; it is also about understanding our differences. (María de los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*)

ABSTRACT

The building of bridges between Cuba and the US has been ongoing for a long time, not least by artists. Reconciliation work preceding the commencement of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US encompasses, for example, novelist Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), *The Agüero Sisters* (1997), and *King of Cuba* (2013). I argue that these novels take on the task of lessening polarizations with the aspiration of furthering reconciliation processes through concentrating on the divisiveness between families and politics within the Cuban communities, focusing on the island Cubans and the US Cuban diaspora. García writes conflict to end conflict and this is, I claim, her strongest contribution to the

* Pettersson, I. "Fiction as Close as I Can Get to Understanding Reality": Modes of Translation and Reconciliatory Writing in Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*, *The Agüero Sisters*, and *King of Cuba*. *REDEN*. 1:1. (2019): 96-116. Web.

reconciliation processes. In the last part of the article I briefly discuss how I use the concept of translation to theorize the relationship between fiction and reality.


Key words: Cristina García, reconciliatory writing, Cuban fiction, translation of culture

The building of bridges between Cuba and the US has been ongoing for a long time, not least by artists. Reconciliation work preceding the commencement of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US encompasses, for example, Cristina García's novels that concentrate on the divisiveness between families and politics within the Cuban communities, focusing on the island Cubans and the US Cuban diaspora. Through her characters, most of them indulging in extreme positions regarding Cuba and the Cuban regime, García's fiction gives life to polarized politics. In this article I argue that García's novels *Dreaming in Cuban*, *The Agüero Sisters*, and *King of Cuba* take on the task of lessening polarizations with the aspiration of furthering reconciliation processes. In *Dreaming in Cuban*, my reading highlights the active mediating and translating role of Pilar and I argue that she is a significant figure of reconciliation. In what follows I use the concept of translation, mainly metaphorically, to explore García's writing as "reconciliatory" and as a way to understand how she links fiction and reality. My metaphorical use of translation is influenced by my disciplinary background in an English Department, where my work primarily has been concerned with the socio-cultural and ideological aspects of literature and authorship, linking fiction and reality, as it were. García writes conflict to end conflict and this is, I claim, her strongest contribution to the reconciliation processes. In the last part of the article I briefly discuss how I use the concept of translation to theorize the relationship between fiction and reality.


DREAMING IN CUBAN

One of the complexities involved in Cuban (American) identity is, thus, strongly political, which, for example, political scientist María de los Angeles Torres points out as she protests against "the either/or dichotomy of my identity – a dichotomy that [in Cuban America] demands that I choose sides" (15). In *Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba* (1995), editor Ruth Behar comments on *Dreaming in Cuban*, the novel written more than two decades before diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US were taken up: "In a situation where there is no bridge linking the two sides of the Cuban community, García suggests that women's dreams can begin to heal the wounds of the divided nation" (12). *Dreaming in Cuban* was a finalist for the National Book Award, securing its position within the corpus of US Latina/o fiction. Ylze Irizarry writes in 2007 that the novel "was not only pivotal in the career of its author but also a watershed moment for Latina/o literature" (Irizarry n.p.). In the same year, Marta Caminero-Santangelo finds that *Dreaming in Cuban* is "perhaps the best-known work to date by a Cuban American who is the product of exile from Castro's regime" (177)¹. The novel portrays the divisive effects on families and individuals resulting from the 1959 overthrow of dictator Fulgencio Batista and Fidel Castro's coming to power. There are four main

¹ Cristina García came to the US at the age of 2 in company of her parents who went into exile. Whether or not *Dreaming in Cuban* is a "product of exile" is debatable.



**García writes
conflict to end
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Pilar Puente is often read as García's alter ego, a reading that is not contested by García, who went back to Cuba to meet her own grandmother after 24 years.

characters in the novel. Celia del Pino, *revolucionaria* y fidelista, and her daughter Felicia, who becomes infected with syphilis and commits suicide both live in Cuba. In the US, we find Celia's daughter, Lourdes Puente, and Lourdes's daughter Pilar; Lourdes and her husband finding exile in Brooklyn together with their daughter. The novel spans the period from 1972 to 1980, the year Lourdes and Pilar visit Cuba. Through Celia's letters, which begin in 1935, the novel stretches back to pre-revolutionary Cuban history and society during the regime of dictator Fulgencio Batista. Celia's letters are written to her first lover, Gustavo, a married lawyer from Spain who breaks Celia's heart. The real purpose of the letters is disclosed at the end of the novel, when Celia gives them to her granddaughter Pilar who will, as Celia assures herself, Gustavo and the reader, "remember everything" (p. 245). María de los Angeles Torres even reads Pilar as taking on the role of "remembering for the nation," (164), an active rather than a "passive" representative of those who left their homeland (*ibid.*). Pilar Puente is often read as García's *alter ego*, a reading that is not contested by García, who went back to Cuba to meet her own grandmother after 24 years:

When I finally met my own maternal grandmother in Cuba in 1984, I was flooded with a sense of loss for everything that we hadn't experienced together. I wanted to capture something of that lost connection in the relationship between Celia and her granddaughter, Pilar. (Brown: 250-51)

García's writing in English is, she says, inflected by the Spanish language

Referring to *Dreaming in Cuban*, García has said that "[her] writing in English is an act of translation" (Kevane & Heredia 77), as most of the things that she writes about "would normally be taking place in Spanish" (78). García's professed undertaking of "writing it in English, approximating it in English, trying to rework the English to sound more like Spanish" (*ibid.*) has a clear objective: "I wanted the book to feel as though the reader were experiencing it in Spanish" (Brown 254). García's writing in English is, she says, inflected by the Spanish language: "There's a kind of musicality and cadence in Spanish that works its way into my English" (Kevane & Heredia 78). García experienced that the Spanish translation of her second novel, *The Agüero Sisters*, "felt like more of a restoration than a translation" (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, according to García, translations risk "diminishing" things (Kevane & Heredia 77). In *Dreaming in Cuban*, Pilar articulates the same idea. Being kicked out of a Catholic school and sent to a psychiatrist for the content of her paintings, Pilar is asked about her "urge to mutilate the human form": "Painting is its own language, I wanted to tell him. Translations just confuse it, dilute it, like words going from Spanish to English. I envy my mother's Spanish curses sometimes. They make my English collapse in a heap" (59). Pilar expresses a feeling of never

knowing *fully* what the translation has translated, and that certain things just do not translate (very well). Pilar's envy of her mother's curses in Spanish is somewhat puzzling, given that Pilar's Spanish appears to be good. However, Pilar's fluent *understanding* of Spanish does not mean that she is fluent enough to break out in convincing curses. Nor, perhaps, is there anyone at whom she could curse, convincingly, in Spanish. I understand her feeling of having her English "collapse in a heap" as a feeling of being lost between countries, languages, cultures and politics, matters that the novel sets out to reconcile.

RECONCILIATION THROUGH "MESSAGES FROM THE DEAD"

García has ascertained that "a lot of immigrant literatures are making English do things it hasn't done before" (Kevane & Heredia 78.) In *Borrowed Tongues: Life Writing, Migration, and Translation*, Eve C. Karpinski supports García's idea that writing in English can be "an act of translation":

[T]ranslation in a wider sense involves more than a language transfer in that it also requires a transposition of an entire system of cultural, political, and historical meanings. This tendency to see language as embedded in culture allows us to consider as translations even texts written in English but originating in other than English-speaking cultures – such as immigrant cultures or diasporic cultures... (27)

The idea of translation as transfer and transposition of culture finds its perfect illustration in an early scene in *Dreaming in Cuban*, a scene that critics have paid attention to and that I will come back to. Celia del Pino is on guard for the Cuban revolution when the novel begins. Seated on her porch in Santa Teresa del Mar, keeping vigil of her piece of the coastline, Celia is about to get a visit from her deceased husband:

At the far end of the sky, where daylight begins, a dense radiance like a shooting star breaks forth. It weakens as it advances, as its outline takes shape in the ether. Her husband emerges from the light and comes towards her, taller than the palms, walking on water in his white summer suit and Panama hat. He is in no hurry. [...] Her husband moves his mouth carefully but she cannot read his immense lips. His jaw churns and swells with each word, faster, until Celia feels the warm breeze of his breath on her face. Then he disappears. (4-5)

Jorge's "visit" takes place at dawn and with Celia being on guard all night, her eyes affected by "the sweetness of the gardenia tree and the salt of the sea" (3). A preceding passage states that Celia repeatedly and "like a blind woman" (5) has read a letter which arrived that morning. From the "decay" in the handwriting, Celia understands that "Jorge must have known he would die before she received it" (6). Rubbing her smarting eyes at dawn, we may assume that she is expecting news of her husband's death. As daylight begins, bringing with it changes and phenomena of lights and shadows, the lights play a trick on Celia, producing a visualization of Jorge. Celia, instead of blinking her eyes to have the image of Jorge change (back) into something "real", stays with

the vision and, I suggest, runs with it. Celia's vision is not to be construed as a mental picture, a hallucination, a dream, or a figure of magic realism. Celia experiences something that many people have experienced. Like when the darkness in a room transforms the bookshelf in a corner into a man or the branch outside a window becomes a huge bird thrashing its beak against the window. A common reaction to such a sensation is to blink one's eyes and use rationality to call back the reality of bookshelves and branches. Celia acts differently. She welcomes the vision of Jorge as his visit ends the wait for the announcement of his death. Celia performs an act of translation, one may argue, an act of translating visions and emotional needs into rational behavior. This reading corresponds well with what García has said about the translational aspects of fiction: "I think fiction is translating intuition, dreams, and interior lives" (Irizarry n. p.)³ Appropriately, the first section of the novel that includes Jorge's apparition is called "Ordinary Seductions" and the seduction here, the coming of the daylight and the consequential illusions of both eye and mind, troubles the borders between irrationality and rationality.⁴

The day after Celia envisions Jorge, Felicia learns that her father came to announce his death and to say goodbye. Felicia is right there with her mother on this frequency of communicating with the dead. The ensuing exchange between mother and daughter is an example of how the novel, through its main characters and often in a playful way, crosses and destabilizes borders between rationality and irrationality, with the aim set for reconciliation:

'He was here last night.' [...]

'Who?' Felicia demands.

'Your father, he came to say good-bye.' [...]

'You mean he was in the neighbourhood and didn't even stop by?' She is pacing now, pushing a fist into her palm.

'Felicia, it was not a social visit.' (9-10)

The underlying assumption here, shared by mother and daughter, is that presences of the dead are to be expected in the lives of the living and that communication between the dead and the living is to be expected and dealt with. Going out on a limb, I assert that, generally, Cubans give more presence to the dead than most other people in the Westernized world and García strengthens the ties within the community of Cubans by putting this into words. The subtexts in the brief exchange

³ In the interview, Irizarry asks García whether journalism and fiction "share any affinities" (paragraph). García's answer is that "they are both forms of translation, really." García, having worked as a journalist for a long time, thinks of journalism versus fiction as "an exterior versus interior thing. In fiction, you have both, but you also try to translate those interior worlds, which are not usually the purview of journalism. It is not really why; it is more where and how. In a perfect world, a journalist is not the interpreter. This has changed, though, with Fox news!" (Irizarry, n. p.). As always, García is outspoken in her comments on society and politics.

⁴ "Up to six in ten grieving people have 'seen' or 'heard' their dead loved one, but never mention it out of fear people will think they're mentally ill. Among widowed people, 30 to 60 per cent have experienced things like seeing their dead spouse sitting in their old chair or hearing them call out their name, according to scientists. The University of Milan researchers said there is a 'very high prevalence' of these 'post-bereavement hallucinatory experiences' (PBHEs) in those with no history of mental disorders" (Roberts, 2016).

between Celia and Felicia allow for the interpretation of an endearing and playful contact between mother and daughter, instead of a dead serious conversation. Readers might smile and the scene, which I thus understand as translating a not uncommon Cuban cultural positioning of the dead, testifies to the humour of the novel.⁶

The dead are also present in the lives of the living in *The Agüero Sisters*. Remarkable, and noticed by both sisters, is the circumstance that the face of one of the sisters is replaced by their dead mother's face. To Reina this makes sense: "You think the dead just lie still, Constanca? Coño, just look at yourself" (1997: 275). Constanca, on her side, "is appalled by the tenacity the deceased have for the living, by their ferocious tribal need for reunions" (1997: 259). Possibly Constanca, who has lived in the US for many years, is less comfortable with visits from the dead than Reina who has spent her whole life in Cuba, accustomed to "listening for messages from the dead" (1997: 158).

García's *King of Cuba* equally testifies to contacts between the dead and the living, as when El Comandante (the fictionalized Fidel Castro) ponders yet another intrusion of his (dead) parents, here on a plane to New York:

The pilot announced that they were flying through an electrical storm [...] When Mamá visited the tyrant during thunderstorms, she mostly complained about her inability to track down Papá in the afterlife. 'He's hiding from me,' she would grumble, adjusting her slack, ghostly breasts. 'Probably shackled up with some cualquierita.' The despot had hated hearing about his parents' marital problems when they were alive, much less so posthumously. (2013: 217)


As when Celia visualizes Jorge, we have external conditions, here in the form of an electrical storm, producing all kinds of sensations. The dead appear to have continuous access to their living family members, visiting them as they find appropriate. One of the two main characters of *King of Cuba* is Goyo from Miami, one of El Comandante's arch-rivals, who is also visited by the dead:

About a month after Papá died, he visited Goyo in the middle of the night. His father looked shrunken in his white linen suit [...] mumbling under his Panama hat. 'Where are you going, Papi?' Goyo cried out, but his father ignored him. (2013: 64)


Curiously, Goyo's father's "white linen suit" and his "Panama hat" correspond to the "white summer suit and Panama hat" that Jorge wears as he appears to Celia in the beginning daylight in *Dreaming in Cuban*. Goyo's father appears "in the middle of the night", presenting the same


³ In my article "Telling it to the Dead: Borderless Communication and Scars of Trauma in Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*", I focus on the character of Lourdes who is traumatized by her mother Celia's abandonment of her as a child and the rape she suffered in connection with the appropriation of her husband's property in Cuba. In the article, I read Lourdes's communication with her deceased father as a way of working through trauma.

⁶ There is indeed a lot of humor in García's writing and she refers to it as "the saving grace of humor," offering a version of a common saying in regard to a "Cuban propensity for exaggeration ... If every exile who claimed to have a deed to his ranch on the island actually produced it, the joke goes, Cuba would be the size of Brazil" (Brown 254–55).

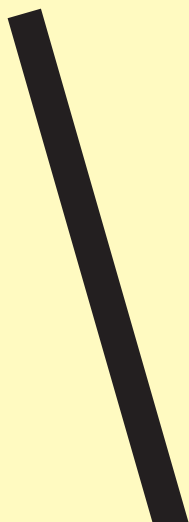


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**A sudden vision caused
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probable imperfection of vision as when Celia visualizes her husband Jorge. A sudden vision caused by the play of light and dark hooks up with a cultural propensity to run with the vision as it makes possible not only the contact with the dead but closure and reconciliation. The same notion, articulated even clearer, is found in García's novel *Here in Berlin* (2017), where one character declares that: "Cubans [...] frequently have trouble distinguishing the living from the dead" (86). *Here in Berlin* has a more rational way of speaking about the dead and their possible activities (the novel is indeed set in Germany), but the link between the desires of the dead and those of the living is clearly present. The "visitor" frequents cemeteries, "imagining the uplifted arms of the dead," hearing "lone syllables, whisperings she couldn't decipher" and she draws the conclusion that ties in well with García's earlier fiction, also regarding the author's poetic skills: "At times it seems to her that the dead were more conversational than the living. Was she meant to escort a few of them to the page?" (2017: 107).

Scenes that require a stretch of the imagination and scenes that verge on the surreal certainly occur in *Dreaming in Cuban*. These passages mostly focus on contacts between the dead and the living and on the impact that the dead have on the living.

Scenes that require a stretch of the imagination and scenes that verge on the surreal certainly occur in *Dreaming in Cuban*. These passages mostly focus on contacts between the dead and the living and on the impact that the dead have on the living. In my understanding, the apparitions of dead people in García's novels have led to a label of magic realism. Kim Anderson Sasser's inclusion of *Dreaming in Cuban* in *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism: Strategizing Belonging* (2014) speaks for itself. Magic realism is, to Anderson Sasser, very "malleable" and in her view "magical realism [...] is flexible enough to structure diverse projects and even divergent, incompatible views" (2). In contrast to my reading, Kim Anderson Sasser reads the scene where Celia experiences a visit from Jorge as magic realism. Furthermore, she also reads Jorge's "magical appearance," as "dramatiz[ing] a communication breakdown" (2014: 173). It must be the fact that Celia cannot read Jorge's lips that leads Anderson Sasser to conclude that this is a "communication breakdown." In contrast, I understand the soundless apparition of Jorge as, partly, yet one more boundary against magic realism. And the many props of psychological nature left lying about by the author, so to speak, trouble a categorization of the event as magic realist. However, as do I, Anderson Sasser lingers with the opening scene of *Dreaming in Cuban* where Celia sights Jorge. Where I find a desirable goodbye scene much needed for Celia, opening a path towards

reconciliation with Jorge's death and their long and cumbersome life together, Anderson Sasser sees "a moment of failed interaction, and thus disappointment" (ibid.). Though we differ in the interpretation of the passage, Anderson Sasser's reading of the scene confirms the importance of the scene and its literary value. Shannin Schroeder also includes García in the North American variety of magic realism but finds that *Dreaming in Cuban's* "link with the mode is most tenuous," qualifying the idea of "tenuous" as that of being "questionable, shaky, fragile, half-hearted" (2004: 70). Schroeder does not elaborate on what García's style really is about but talks about Celia's sighting of Jorge as an "encounter [of] the supernatural in inexplicable ways" (ibid.). My view, as argued, is that Celia's sighting of Jorge is most explicable.

Cristina García has commented on her relation to magic realism: "The South American variety [of magic realism], however, particularly resonated with me and gave me a tremendous sense of possibility. What I liked to explore is the borderland between what is only remotely possible and what is utterly possible" (Brown 254). García credits Gabriel García Márquez for "just inform[ing] everything", admitting that "[i]n some way he seeps into every sentence," giving "total licence [...] to the imagination" (Kevane & Heredia 77.) Cristina García's literary style in the novels is a wink to magic realism but rationality, transparency, and logical explanations dominate these "magic" scenes. To use her own words in her novel *A Handbook to Luck* (2007), García's "magic [is] largely a matter of making ordinary things appear extraordinary with a touch of smoke and illusion" (10).

WRITING CONFLICT TO END CONFLICT

Politically and morally we often associated the term of reconciliation with specific countries; South Africa with the well-known Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have had long-lasting processes of reconciliation processes with the focus on "moral and political issues that arise in the aftermath of wrongdoing and conflict between persons and groups" (Radzik & Murphy). Cuba and its conflicting history in connection with and after Castro's revolution, and the decades-long exodus from the island, might still be far from real and realistic reconciliation processes but there are attempts made in that direction. 2003 saw the publication of *Cuba, la reconciliación nacional. Grupo de Trabajo, Memoria, Verdad y Justicia*, also translated into *Cuban National Reconciliation. Task Force on Memory, Truth, and Justice*. There is a paperback from the same year in Spanish, but the English version is only available on the Web. The project was carried out by Cuban scholars not living in Cuba, and this at a point in time when, in contrast to the countries mentioned above, a change of regime in Cuba had not taken place: "We were not a truth commission. Deciding whether or not to convene a truth commission will be the prerogative of Cubans on the island once a transition from the current regime is in process" (*Cuban National Reconciliation* n.p.)⁷ I understand Cristina García's three novels to further the

⁷"Our aim was to do some of the background work that might prove useful to those who actually engage these matters in the future. Only then and by them will it be possible - responding to new political realities in Cuba - to determine what course to follow regarding past human rights violations" (*Cuban National Reconciliation*).

idea that the national reconciliation regarding Cuba must be preceded by a healing of the divided nation. Through her fiction, García takes active part in the processes of reconciliation, advancing an improvement in the realms of behavior, interactions, attitudes and expectations (Radzik & Murphy).

Cristina García grew up in New York, after coming to the US at the age of 2. In 1987, as a journalist for the Miami Bureau Chief for *TIME Magazine*, she felt that her limitations of “one-page articles” would not suffice to describe her new experience in Miami of “being an exile within an exile community”:

I'd never been so shunned in my life as I was in Miami among the Cubans. [...] I had thought in a weird way it would be a kind of homecoming. I mean, I understood the exile, the trauma, from my parents, but to be surrounded by it, that was a whole other order of asphyxiation. [...] It was so striking to me that I think that's what made me want to start writing. (Wallace)

In *Dreaming in Cuban*, García starts writing conflict to end conflict, with young Pilar shouldering the task of moving reconciliation forward by identifying conflict in order to end conflict.

García's fictional chronicling of unsolvable conflicts testifies, I argue, to the desire to end conflict. In *Dreaming in Cuban*, Celia and Lourdes represent two extreme political positions regarding the Cuban socialist regime. Celia's position is crystal clear at the very opening of the novel:

Square by square, she searches the nights for adversaries [...] No sign of gusano traitors. [...] From her porch, Celia could spot another Bay of Pigs invasion before it happened. She would be feted at the palace, serenaded by a brass orchestra, seduced by El Líder himself on a red velvet divan. (1992: 3)

Celia is devoted to the Revolution, honoured by the “neighbourhood committee” having chosen her house as a “primary lookout” (ibid.).⁸ Celia's daughter Lourdes, exiled in New York, fiercely expresses her resentment to everything connected with socialist Cuba throughout the novel. At the end of the novel, Lourdes is back in Cuba, visiting Cuba so as not to lose her daughter Pilar who, above all,

⁸ The passage also alludes to the cult around Fidel Castro as the supposed object of much female Cuban sexual desire.

is the character dreaming in Cuban. Lourdes's position is, just as Celia's, crystal clear; Lourdes is a die-hard anti-Castro Cuban also in the streets of Havana:

'Look at those American cars. They're held together with rubber bands and paper clips and still work better than the new Russian ones. *Oye!* she calls out to the bystanders. 'You could have Cadillacs with leather interiors! Air conditioning! Automatic windows! You wouldn't have to move your arms in the heat!' Then she turns to me, her face indignant. 'Look how they laugh, Pilar! Like idiots! They can't understand a word I'm saying! Their heads are filled with too much *compañero* this and *compañera* that! They're brainwashed, that's what they are!' (1992: 221)

Lourdes's view, now directly expressed to Cubans in Cuba, is familiar to Pilar, a die-hard position shared by many exiled Cubans in the US. Listening to her mother roaring to an audience of a few Cubans in the street – and obviously Lourdes's tirade is in Spanish substantiating García's feeling that her novel was "an act of translation" – Pilar takes in the situation, pulling her mother from "the growing crowd," thinking that "[t]he language she speaks is lost to them. It's another idiom entirely" (1992: 221). Pilar's desire is to bring together both parts of her existence, the Cuban and the New York identities. She strives to move beyond the conflicts by acknowledging and articulating the very same conflicts. To Pilar, the conflicts between Cuba and the US are embodied by her grandmother Celia and her mother Lourdes. The reconciliation is, however, already begun through Pilar's witnessing of the event and her empathy towards her mother. As a result of her visit to Cuba and to Abuela Celia, Pilar reconciles the divisiveness regarding her own belonging. She concludes that she belongs both in Cuba and the US: "I'm afraid to lose all this, to lose Abuela Celia again. But sooner or later I'd have to return to New York. I know now it's where I belong – not instead of here, but more than here" (1992: 236). Pilar, Lourdes and Celia appear to be inspired by García's experiences of having a family in the US who was "frothing-at-the-mouth anti-Castro," and of her meeting in Cuba in 1984 with her grandmother with whom she developed "a strong relationship" (Kevane & Heredia 70). Through the contact with her grandmother, García has stated that she understood that many accounts that she had heard from her mother in the US were "distorted" and that "nostalgia and anger had clouded her [mother's] vision of events" (ibid.). Fictionalizing the experience, I say that *Dreaming in Cuban* translates the original experience: "It's not just our personal history that gets mangled. Mom filters other people's lives through her distorting lens" (1992: 176).

In *Dreaming in Cuban*, García starts writing conflict to end conflict, with young Pilar shouldering the task of moving reconciliation forward by identifying conflict in order to end conflict. There is, thus, a definitive aspiration of moving beyond the conflicting views. Ellen McCracken presents a very different view in her influential work *New Latina Narrative: The Feminine Space of Postmodern Ethnicity* (1999), finding that "García emphasizes a postmodern indeterminacy, 'grayness,' and multivocal presentation of reality" (23). McCracken fails, in my opinion, to detect the determination and the very opposite of "grayness" in, for example, Pilar's actions and thoughts. McCracken's postmodern reading of *Dreaming in Cuban* is set on an "unfinalizability of the text

[which] parallels its refusal to invoke the closure of a single truth about the Cuban Revolution or the Cuban experience of exile in the United States" (23). McCracken's way of reasoning is highly debatable given Pilar's intention of finding (political) closure. Certainly, Pilar's closure might mean an acknowledgment of the conflicting views but, nevertheless, Pilar's yearning for "going south" should not be seen as a wish to find "a single truth" about Cuba and about the realities of Cubans in Cuba – Pilar travels to Cuba to find out not only where she belongs but to understand better the very essence of the conflicts. Pilar has a conclusive observation on the hardships of people in Cuba: "I have to admit it's tougher here than I expected, but at least everyone seems to have the bare necessities" (234-35). Pilar went to Cuba to find facts and a personal understanding of Cuba and the Cuban society, and her visit is, partly, motivated by her wish to experience a counterpart to her mother Lourdes's total rejection of the Cuban socialist society. Contrary to my understanding of *Dreaming in Cuban* as presenting, or translating, political polarizations in order to acknowledge and move beyond these polarizations, McCracken sees the "multivocality" of the novel as "facilitat[ing] a range of reading positions that, by pleasing many sides, helps to sell books" (24). In McCracken's reading, García's first novel is a "postmodern commodity, a novel in which truth is decentered and political correctness eschewed, a book in which people of diverse political persuasiveness can find perspectives with which they agree" (ibid). In *Dreaming in Cuban*, in McCracken's view, everything goes. Marta Caminero-Santangelo shares my view in *On Latinidad: U.S. Latino Literature and the Construction of Ethnicity* (2007) where she understands the multivocality as "presenting a 'progressive vision against which the various positions on Castro are measured': 'García presents a nuanced portrayal of Castro's revolution as addressing certain problems (for example, those of extreme poverty) while remaining seriously flawed according to other liberal/progressive criteria (e.g., with regard to civil liberties)' (177-178).

García, thus, voices the extreme dividing lines between Cuban *revolucionarios* and die-hard anti-Castro Cuban exiles. She does it in *Dreaming in Cuban*, and no less in her second novel, *The Agüero Sisters* (1997). Visiting her sister Constancia in Miami, Reina reflects on how politics are expressed through choice of words:

Reina likes to listen to the reactionary exile stations in Miami best. They play the best music and the most outrageous lies on the air. [...] The minute anyone learns that Reina recently arrived from Cuba, they expect her to roundly denounce the revolution [...] These pride-engorged cubanos want her to crucify El Comandante, repudiate even the good things he's done for the country. What's the use of learning to read, they say, if all you get is that comiemierda propaganda? Of course you get free health care! How else can you afford even a measly cotton swab on your salaries de porquería? The other day, Reina's vernacular slipped, and she called the Winn-Dixie cashier *compañera* by mistake. Well, all hell broke loose on the checkout line, and a dozen people nearly came to blows! *El exilio*, Reina is convinced, is the virulent flip side of Communist intolerance. (196-97)

Reina's daughter Dulce blatantly accounts for the state of affairs through grim examples: "I heard of one family committing their grandmother to an asylum to get her apartment in Old Havana, of a brother killing his twin over a used battery for his Chevrolet" (56). Dulce Fuerte, her last name translating into "strong", also comments on the currency of sex in Cuba: "it takes an occasional

novio [boyfriend] to get by" (52), positing that "[s]ex is the only thing they can't ration in Havana" (51). The inclusion of the Cuban *jineterismo* testifies to García's familiarity with the contemporary Cuban society.⁹ Written 5 years after *Dreaming in Cuban*, *The Agüero Sisters* demonstrates more concrete knowledge of experiences and realities of Cubans in Cuba. In this novel, there is less dreaming and more reality. *The Agüero Sisters* voices harsher criticism against the Cuban regime, without necessarily letting this criticism come from die-hard anti-Castro characters like Lourdes in *Dreaming in Cuban* or Goyo in *King of Cuba*. Dulce, exhibiting "explicit exhaustion and impatience [...] with the revolution" (Kevane & Heredia 80), voices an understanding and somewhat reconciliatory voice: "Mamá isn't the most fervent revolutionary on the island, but she's basically tolerant of the system" (García 1992: 52).

AFTER THEY'RE GONE

Over 600 attempts were made to assassinate Fidel Castro.¹⁰ He died of old age and sickness in 2016. In *King of Cuba*, Goyo Herrera, an octogenarian exiled in Miami, lives to see his nemesis dead, following "the tyrant's" daily health:

His daughter often accused Goyo of staying alive for one purpose only: to celebrate the news of the tyrant's death. He couldn't deny it. Goyo subscribed to an exile website – Hijodeputa.com – that charted, hourly, the Maximum Leaders' body temperature (it was 99.6 degrees the last time Goyo checked, at 7:00 a.m., the apparent result of a minor ear infection). (2013: 16)

Goyo feels betrayed by his daughter, "a blatant liberal who argued against the 'futile' trade embargo" (19). Goyo's sole purpose left in life is, in the first hand, killing the tyrant himself, and, in the second hand, getting news of his death. Goyo is counterposed by the fictionalized Fidel who in García's novel comes across as ludicrous and dangerous. Death is "a fate for lesser men" in the eyes of "the tyrant" who proclaims that he has got rid of the *gusanos* in Cuba, if not in the US, and the fictionalized Fidel is content for having "left his mark on history with ink, and action, and blood" (3-4). The novel presents no (partial) defense of *La Revolución* in contrast to, I would say, *Dreaming in Cuban* through Pilar. Again, García directs the headlamp at the unbending political views that have divided families. In *King of Cuba* there is no (fictional) room for any processes of reconciliation without certain figures gone.

Thus, proposing reconciliation by death, García's *King of Cuba* (2013) does away with irreconcilable principles by having the two protagonists, the fictionalized Fidel Castro and an exiled octogenarian, die at the end of the novel. A gun shot and possible heart attacks leave the reader certain of only one thing, the arch enemies have both died, one of them representing

⁹ Julie Rausenberger provides a good explanation of *jineterismo* in "Queering Jineterismo: A Genealogy of Sexual Politics in Touristic Cuba": "The colloquial term *jineterismo* refers to the 'riding of tourists' which can include any activity or behavior associated with tourist hustling, including transactional sex" (n.p.)."

¹⁰ In the preface to the second edition of *The Cuba Project: CIA Covert Operations 1959–62* by Fabián Escalante, Javier Salado Villacín states that "638 assassination attempts [were] planned against Fidel Castro" (6).

himself and the other one representing a long collective anti-Castro hatred and bitterness. *King of Cuba*, as I see it, puts forth the idea that certain people must die, both literally and figuratively, before reconciliation can begin. Boldly, one could argue, García kills the fictionalized Fidel three years before the actual death of Fidel Castro. However, García started plotting against the life of El Comandante already in *The Agüero Sisters*. Dulce reflects on the state of things in Havana:

Men from all over the world tell me that Havana is the most beautiful city they've ever seen. So when will we get it back? When will it be truly ours again? *Coño*, El Caballo has four broken legs, and no one has the courage to put him out of his misery. (1997: 53)

"El Caballo," one of the nicknames of Fidel Castro, with all his legs broken, is wanted dead by Dulce for change to happen. Just like *Dreaming in Cuban*, *The Agüero Sisters* and *King of Cuba* form part of García's literary project of writing conflict to end conflict. "Processes of reconciliation are designed to contribute to the improvement of relationships damaged as a result of wrongdoing" (Radzik & Murphy). García moves forward with processes of reconciliation regarding communities and individuals, not with reconciliation as an outcome which stipulates the inclusion of "apologies," "memorials," "truth telling," "amnesties," "trials and punishment," "lustration," "reparations," "forgiveness," and "participation in deliberative processes" (ibid.).

I turn to the words of political scientist María de los Angeles Torres, who writes about the politics of the Cuban exiles, and who, like Cristina García, came to the US as a child: "Reconciliation is not only about finding common grounds; it is also about understanding our differences" (21). García gives voices and bodies to characters for the "understanding of differences," but what about the "common grounds" needed for reconciliation? Are these taken as obvious? Of course, there is kinship, cubanía, and, above all, language.¹¹ But is language, here Cuban Spanish, enough for the sharing of "common grounds"? In *The Agüero Sisters*, García draws attention to how the Spanish language differs from Cuban to Cuban, depending on geographical, historical and political location. Reina Agüero arrives in Miami in the community of exiles and reflects upon which language she should best use to make herself understood:

Reina wonders if her English will serve her better here than her quotidian Spanish. In Miami, the Cuban Spanish is so different, florid with self-pity and longing and obstinate revenge. Reina speaks a different language entirely, an explosive lexicon of hardship and bitter jokes at the government's expense. And her sister sounds like the past. A flash-frozen language, replete with outmoded words and fifties expressions. For Constanca, time has stood linguistically still. It's a wonder people can speak to each other. (1997: 236)

Perhaps more than language, the "common grounds" consist of the sharing of culture, partly the culture in which the dead are sought by and understood as seeking the living. Three years after *Dreaming in Cuban* was published, cultural critic Coco Fusco gives a prominent position to García

¹¹ Coco Fusco emphasizes García's cubanía: "The cubanía evoked by Cristina García in her novel *Dreaming in Cuban* floats effortlessly across borders, as family members separated by geography, politics, and even death communicate with one another" (20).

and her novel as advancing reconciliation processes: “That a generational split distinguishes political and cultural sensibilities inside and outside Cuba is now undisputable; those involved in culture are not waiting for political change to happen first” (19).

Cristina García gets the last words in this section on reconciliation work. In an interview in 2016 she speaks about the inspiration to *Dreaming in Cuban*, but her words certainly harmonize with *The Agüero Sisters* and *King of Cuba* as well:

What inspired me was the fact that my parents’ generation is on its last legs. I wondered if anyone, aside from their own self-aggrandizing, had really chronicled them or done them justice in fiction. Of course, I couldn’t help skewering and parodying them a little – it was too irresistible; I’m only human. But it was time. [...] I also wanted to give a more nuanced voice to the sixty-year shouting match between Cuba and its exiles. (Santos 207)

Between the covers of her novels discussed here, García stages this “shouting match,” chronicling the “last obsessions” of (arch) enemies (*ibid.*). And consistently, alongside her “skewering and parodying,” García shows sympathy and understanding for her characters and for their need to hold on to certain (political) opinions: “Mom’s views are strictly black-and-white. It’s how she survives” (2016: 26).

CODA: FICTION AS A TRANSLATOR OF REALITY

As an immigrant in the US, Lourdes’s heart goes out to that which is left without translation:

She ponders the transmigrations from the southern latitudes, the millions moving north. What happens to their languages? The warm burial grounds they leave behind? What of their passions lying stiff and untranslated in their breasts? (García 1992: 73)

Cristina García comes to the protagonist’s rescue, translating passions and languages through her fiction. To claim that fiction is a language of its own is not uncommon and not contentious. To claim that fiction translates reality, however, is less common. Ideas of reality as *interpreted* or *represented* by fiction respectively translated by fiction all originate from the notion that there is a relation between fiction and reality, that fiction and reality hook up in certain ways. (I simply skip over the poststructuralist model which, generally and unreservedly, severs text from reality). I understand García’s novels here discussed as a sort of “life writing”, and Karpinski’s *Borrowed Tongues: Life Writing, Migration, and Translation* provides support for my model of seeing fiction as translating reality: “In the landscape where migrancy and translation are inextricably linked, people affected by larger historical shifts, past and present, turn to life narrative as a means of translating their lived experiences into texts” (1). Karpinski stresses that “[t]he act of translation is necessarily dialogic” and that, and here Karpinski invokes Ricoeur, the “translator who recognizes the absolute otherness of the other” will be rewarded (35). García excels, I believe, in recognizing the “otherness of the other.”¹²

¹² Karpinski writes that “[a]ccording to Benjamin [Karpinsky references Walter Benjamin’s essay “The Task of the Translator”], translation is transformative rather than imitative in that it makes the target language ‘grow’ at the same time as it ensures survival of the original by making a foreign text perform new meanings in the target culture” (8).

In contrast to an interpretation, a translation signals its otherness. Similarly, fiction signals its otherness regarding reality, without necessarily renouncing its close relation to reality. My model makes it possible to speak of an improved precision between fiction and reality precisely through the signaled "otherness" of the translation. At one point in *Dreaming in Cuban*, Pilar's words on her mother Lourdes' English express this idea of an enhanced precision through translation: "And her English, her immigrant English, has a touch of otherness that makes it unintentionally precise" (176-77). Lourdes painstakingly translates words from Spanish into English and the "precision" that Pilar finds in her mother's English comes from the words and phrases being stripped of embedded cultural and linguistic structures. Pilar's observation reflects the idea of a translation always signaling its own otherness, or foreignness, while still maintaining its faithfulness.¹³

Fiction is an art form in which realities thrive. With Helena María Viramontes, Chicana author and essayist, and author Doris Lessing, I attempt to close in on the link between fiction and reality. And just as a translation refers to an original, I see fiction as referring to reality. Viramontes has an elegant way of articulating the vulnerable but tenable link between fiction and the world outside of fiction. In her essay "The Writes Ofrenda," Viramontes writes about a fear that she shares with many women of color and the many hardships the communities of color – among these the Chicano/a community – face: "My brothers and sisters suffer the scourages (sic) of alcoholism; drug, child, physical abuse; domestic violence; police brutality; unequal access to healthcare and education; environmental racism; toxins from the burning of other people's profits, and on and on" (128). Viramontes sees her writing as standing between hope and hopelessness: "Writing is the only way I know how to pray" (ibid.). The connection between fiction and reality that she experiences is distinctly expressed: "Fiction is as close as I can get to understanding reality" (127). As little as Viramontes expands on this, what she invokes is what could be called the power of fiction. Doris Lessing, a master of many genres, hints at what one could think of as the same power of fiction. She is no more explicit than Viramontes as to why fiction has its special power: "I have to conclude that fiction is better at 'the truth' than a factual record. Why this should be so is a very large subject and one I don't begin to understand."¹⁴ In *The Golden Notebook*, Lessing, among other things, examines the relationship between language and experience and finds language faulty as she finds that "there is a thinning of language against the density of our experience" (273). Though frustrated with "words," I understand Lessing to hold fiction as being more reliable than other modes of language when it comes to transmitting and knowing "the real experience":

Words. Words. I play with words, hoping that some combination, even a chance combination, will say what I want. Perhaps better with music? But music attacks my inner ear like an antagonist, it's not my world. The fact is, the real experience can't be described. I think, bitterly, that a row of asterisks, like an old-fashioned novel, might be better. (549)

¹³ As far as I understand, the matter of whether a translation of, for example, a poem or a novel should signal its "otherness" regarding the original is debatable.

¹⁴ Lessing's words come from her 1993 "Preface" to *The Golden Notebook* and are also quoted in the "Biographical Sketch" that forms part of the Harper Perennial Modern Classics edition published in 2007 (10).

Lessing understands experience to surpass words but not its knowing. Her struggle is to find words, patterns, and structures that render the knowing of the experience. Despite the somewhat enigmatic connection between “asterisks” and a “novel,” Lessing must be understood as regarding the novel as being her best mean to “describe” experiences.

The idea that (the language of) fiction translates (the language of) reality is, I propose, viable and applicable. Invoking Viramontes and Lessing, I posit the reader as competent in both “languages,” the language of fiction and that of reality. This competence makes it possible to assess the translation, for example a novel like *Dreaming in Cuban*, and, to speak with terminology from translation studies, to assess the correspondence between the so-called source language (reality) and the target language (fiction). Importantly, one should bear in mind the vast difference between translating, for example, a scientific report versus a poem. Correspondence between the source language and the target language is important in both cases but the correspondence takes different forms. Also, the more proficiency we have in reading, writing, and understanding (the language of) fiction, the easier it will be for us to assess the translation, that is, the adequacy of fiction in its mode of translating reality.¹⁵

The model of fiction as translation of reality is, of course, an aspiration to get intimately close to reality, through words. To venture into discussions around the nature of reality and the ways we dispose of to “read” and understand reality would entail depths and lengths of discussions that fall beyond the scope of this article. Whether (the language of) reality *can* be accessible in other ways than in translation is not the topic of discussion here. So, should my interest in seeing fiction as a translator of reality be regarded as an attempt at “upping” the status of fiction as a means of expressing a close(r) relation to reality? To a certain extent I would say yes. I believe that this model is more successful than ideas of *representation* and *interpretation* that, I suggest, practically have played out their roles due to a maze of connotations and explanations of how, exactly, these link fiction to reality.

Dreaming in Cuban started out as a poem and after writing about a hundred pages the author was “surprised” to find out that she was working on a novel (Brown 249). García describes that “the sense of not fitting in either in Havana, or in Miami, the heart of the Cuban exile community, made me start questioning my own identity. Where did I belong? What did it mean to be Cuban? And the poetry made me feverish to write” (ibid.). In this interview, García also clearly lays down what being Cuban means to her: “There are many ways to be Cuban and I resist the notion that to be Cuban is to hold particular political views or act in certain circumscribed ways” (ibid.). Critics, scholars, politicians deal with realities and reconciliation work, and, as I have argued, so does Cristina García in her fiction.¹⁶

¹⁵ Translation studies and theories include an abundance of ideas on the relation between an original and its translation. Karpinsky goes through theorists like Paul Ricoeur and his ideas on “equivalence without adequacy” and “equivalence without identity” and Derrida and his thoughts on “the performative dimension of translation” as opposed to “the representative or reproductive” (Karpinsky, 2012, 8–9). The concept of “equivalence without adequacy” belonging to Ricoeur’s essays *On Translation* and cited by Karpinski would certainly be worth exploring in an extended exploration of fiction as a translator of reality (35).

¹⁶ I wish to acknowledge and thank the two anonymous reviewers of my article for their very constructive and helpful suggestions for improvements. My gratitude also extends to all the scholars who attended my presentation of an earlier version of this article at the IX International American Studies Association World Congress (IASA) in Alcalá de Henares in July 2019. Their engaging and insightful comments greatly inspired me to write this article.

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Bridging the Gap Between Expectations and Teaching on the Field Practice: Instituto Franklin-UAH as Intercultural Mediator for Language Assistants in Spain

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Bridging the Gap Between Expectations and Teaching on the Field Practice: Instituto Franklin-UAH as Intercultural Mediator for Language Assistants in Spain

ABSTRACT

Basic research has shown that some differences between educational aspects of Spanish and American culture, such as perceptions about roles, attitudes, communication, teaching methods and even expectations, can manifest into actual academic difficulties for American Language Assistants in Spanish bilingual schools. This paper will focus on describing the elements that, when analyzed, outline the role of Instituto Franklin-UAH as an intercultural and academic mediator between two cultures and education systems (Spain and US) and the context that justifies the different measures taken to attend to the particular needs or circumstances of the agents involved (students, teachers and academic advisors). Two perspectives will be included: a) a historical one, related to Instituto Franklin-UAH's background and context related to bilingual teaching; b) an analytical one, focusing, on the one hand, on the perception of the agents involved and, on the other hand, on the actions that have turned Instituto Franklin-UAH into an actual mediator between its students and the schools where they act as Language Assistants. Ultimately, the paper underlines the difference in terms of the perception

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of the same aspects by the groups involved and the need for measures to improve the communication process between American LAs and Spanish lead teachers in bilingual schools.

Key words: intercultural mediation, Language Assistants, Instituto Franklin-UAH

INTRODUCTION

Instituto Franklin-UAH (IF-UAH) has offered, for more than ten years, a program of master's degrees that train American students and, at the same time, place them in bilingual schools in Madrid (Spain) to act as language assistants (LAs). In this context, IF-UAH has balanced and adapted to the needs of the agents involved (in this case, American students-LAs and Spanish teachers) in order to provide an effective training and teaching environment in bilingual schools. At the same time, IF-UAH has worked to help its students anticipate and counteract potential challenges they might face during their training period and in the actual teaching environment in Spain. On the other hand, specific basic research (Vescan & Vitalaru 2017; 2018; Vitalaru & Vescan 2017)² has shown that some differences between the Spanish and American cultures considering educational

IF-UAH has balanced and adapted to the needs of the agents involved in order to provide an effective training and teaching environment in bilingual schools.

aspects, such as perceptions on roles, attitudes, communication, teaching methods these aspects can result into actual academic difficulties for English-speaking/American³ Language Assistants (LAs) in Spanish bilingual schools. In this context, Instituto Franklin-UAH has played an essential role from two points of view. First, as an institution that offers a postgraduate teacher training opportunity for English-speaking LAs. Second, as an intercultural mediator between the English-speaking students/LAs and the bilingual schools who rely on those LAs as important agents in the implementation of their Bilingual Program that the Spanish Regional Ministry implemented in the Madrid region in 2004.

² There are very few studies that focus on aspects related to the LA's activity or role in Spain. One that is of particular interest is Espigares- Espigares' graduate final paper (2017) *The effectiveness of assistants to improve foreign language development in education*, which focuses on showing the positive effect LAs have in the learning of English.

³ The program is addressed to native English language speakers although the majority of the students in the program are Americans due to the fact that Instituto Franklin-UAH is a Research Department at Universidad de Alcalá that focuses on American Studies. 2% of students in the program come from Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the UK.

Most of the times, as the practicum advisors' reports at Instituto Franklin-UAH show (section 5.2), students require assistance and support from the university academic advisors in order to face the challenges the reality of professional teaching in Spain, to avoid misunderstandings and even deal with anxiety. In fact, in the context of the general gap between academic expectations and teaching in the field practical requirements, as Linda Darling-Hammond points out, "The teaching practicum is important for bridging the gap between what student teachers have learnt in the program and the reality of teaching practice in schools" (cited by Azkiyah & Mukminin 2017). This importance is why LAs who lack specific teaching practice in Spain tend to experience a certain anxiety associated with teaching practices, at least at the beginning of their training process. In fact, in the 'Teach & Learn in Spain (TLS)' program itself, 90.5% of the total 105 students in the 2016-2017 cohort lacked specific teaching practice before enrolling. This implied a certain level of stress that required mediation from IF-UAH university advisors, as shown in the latter's own testimonials. Moreover, the exposure to a different culture, which is reflected in the educational

**"The teaching practicum is important for bridging the gap between what student teachers have learnt in the program and the reality of teaching practice in schools".
(Linda Darling-Hammond)**

and communication settings as well, can potentially result as or increase the amount of cultural shock experienced by students-LAs who are not properly exposed to the differences involved in living in a new country. According to the theory of culture shock, moving to a different country, in a different ethnic and cultural environment and distant from familiar behaviors, images and expectations, can cause feelings of loneliness, helplessness, anxiety, frustration, and symptoms of depression (Oberg 2006: 142-143). Culture shock⁴ is a key concept in fields such as psychology, anthropology, and intercultural communication, and is commonly used in "orientation and reentry training" in "education abroad" and in a "corporate context" (La Brack).

In view of this context, this paper will focus on describing the elements that, when analyzed, outline the role of Instituto Franklin-UAH as an intercultural and academic mediator between two cultures and education systems (Spain and the US) and the context that justifies

⁴ Originated in the 1950s by Cora Dubois and expanded by Finnish-Canadian anthropologist, Kalervo Oberg (La Brack).

**Moving to a different country, in a different ethnic and cultural environment and distant from familiar behaviors, images and expectations, can cause feelings of loneliness, helplessness, anxiety, frustration, and symptoms of depression.
(Oberg 2006: 142-143)**

the different measures taken to attend to particular needs or circumstances. For this purpose, two perspectives will be included:

- a) a historical one, based on research about the origin of the institution, which has operated at the *Universidad de Alcalá* since 1987, and its specific training program for LAs in Madrid in the context of the Bilingual Education Program in Spain and European policies regarding teaching and learning foreign languages; and
- b) an analytical one, focusing, on the one hand, on the perception of the agents involved and, on the other hand, on the actions that have turned Instituto Franklin-UAH into an actual mediator between its students and the schools where they act as Language Assistants.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Intercultural Mediation: Definitions and Perspectives

The term ‘mediation’ can refer to two perspectives that are significant in this study as both of them involve the knowledge of communication and cultural patterns and background to have an effective outcome.

One of the meanings is specific for the legal settings and refers to the “voluntary and confidential process” in which a “neutral third party” helps disputants come to an agreement that is fair and acceptable for those involved. Understanding the cultural background and characteristics of the parties involved and even communication factors is, thus, key for the professional mediator to achieve a successful outcome (Sgubini & Simon 2006; *People’s Law Dictionary*).

In the general sense, mediation is defined as “a tool that helps to ‘bridge the gap’ between differences, and this requires knowing and respecting the culture of people that you meet” (Sgubini, 2006). In fact, mediation can be used whenever communicative and cultural obstacles occur, especially if we consider that each culture has its own communication methods and strategies depending on a variety of factors that form its historical and social development:

Communication methods vary from country to country, depending on the historical development, legal systems, and ethnic and cultural background of each area. The key to make mediation successful globally is to understand the cultural effect on both business negotiation and communication techniques (Sgubini 2006).

Intercultural mediation, on the other hand, is studied from three perspectives (Cohen- Emenique 2003, as cited in Díaz Pena et al., 2014: 6):

1. Situations in which a third party makes a complicated communication possible or facilitates it.

2. Conflictive situations in which a mediator helps the parties agree and solve the conflict.
3. Transformation process in which the mediator promotes important social or structural changes (e.g local policies).

Other significant definitions underline its characteristics as a process of particular social relevance:

- A “process that contributes to improving communication, the relationship and the intercultural integration between people or groups of people from a territory and that belong to one or several cultures and that have different cultural codes” (Grupo Triángulo 2007).
- “an intercultural mediator [...] is an operator in charge of facilitating communication between individuals, families, and community as part of measures to promote and facilitate the social inclusion of immigrants” (Catarci 2016: 128).
- the mediator promotes “the removal of cultural and language barriers, the development of a culture of openness, inclusion and the advocacy of rights, and observance of the duties of citizenship” (Catarci 2016: 128).

Finally, Eugenia Arvanitis (2014: 3-4) discusses mediation from three perspectives that show its central role in “an inclusive and pluralistic society” as: a process that helps “negotiate differences in a cohesive society” in an effective way, a “reflexive and dialogical process” that provides the opportunity for intercultural exchange and a process where “the devolution of social, personal and cultural responsibility takes place in the context of civic pluralism.”

In terms of mediation's main functions, they can be indexed into three types based on Cohen Emenique's classification (1994, 2003)⁵, which has been extensively used by many authors that researched or analyzed the topic⁶. Although it has mainly been applied to communication with foreigners in public services (European project TIME project partnership 2016: 22) and has specifically been explained with examples from the healthcare settings based on several studies (Díaz Pena et al. 2014, 7-9)⁷, mediation can be applied to any field where cultural differences influence a conflict (Urruela Bolaños 2012: 121):

1. **Preventive**, with the purpose of preventing potential conflicts and misunderstandings by answering questions and clarifying aspects and context apart from translating message in a contextualized way, adapted for the agents involved. In this context the mediator also helps with administrative formalities.

⁵ See a more detailed new version in Cohen-Emerique (2007). “Intercultural Mediators: Bridges of Identities”. *InterCulture*, 153, p. 7-22.

⁶ The following studies include several references.

⁷ See a more thorough analysis in Díaz Pena et al., 2014.

2. **Rehabilitating**, in which the mediator is a consultant for both parties to help solve a conflict between public service staff and foreigners by eliminating cultural barriers.
3. **Transforming**, referring to social mediation in general, which focuses on changes in regulations to include intercultural aspects; or in the mediation between associations, healthcare services and foreigners' communities (Díaz Pena et al. 2014: 7-9; European project TIME project partnership 2016: 22).


Combined, they reflect the pre-requisites that public policies on intercultural counselling entail in general: equality, inclusion, active participation and an intercultural goal (Giménez 2010: 37 as cited in Díaz Pena et al. 2014).

Thus, it can be said that the mediator is perceived as an educator him/herself, since he/she "plays an educational role" (Catarci 2016: 129) and requires a solid linguistic and cultural knowledge base, as well as "adequate communication, relationship and conflict management skills" (130). Generally, the abilities required to be an effective mediator are specific to the application of several principles and practices in intercultural mediation settings, so as to "create an operational intercultural space of mutual understanding, empathy and collaborative ethos using culturally appropriate behaviors": *flexibility, tolerance, hope, respect and reciprocity, inquisitiveness to learning* (Townsend 2002: 4).


The mediator is perceived as an educator him/herself, and requires a solid linguistic and cultural knowledge base, as well as "adequate communication, relationship and conflict management skills". (Catarci 2016: 129)

Finally, in the education context, authors such as Bilgehan (2012: 1125) highlight the potential that communication has in solving conflicts in the context of mediating in education settings: "Mediation education is based on focusing the communication skills on resolving problems and involves negotiation and conflict resolution education as well". It necessarily includes a negotiation process, through specific meetings aimed at resolving difficulties and strengthening collaboration. Finally, a specific strategy recommended for training programs in universities to make mediation effective "include[s] the griefs of world nations in the training process" (1126) since empathy is key for solving (political) disagreements and conflicts in general. Thus, redefining each party's perception of the conflict and creating a new story that is acceptable for both parties, as well as "Sharing each other's griefs" and "Owning other's grief for a while" are essential for solving situations of disagreement.

**Redefining each party's perception of the conflict and creating a new story that is acceptable for both parties, as well as "Sharing each other's griefs" and "Owning other's grief for a while" are essential for solving situations of disagreement.
(Bilgehan 2012: 1125)**



**In the region of Madrid,
the local government
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Madrid in 2004.**



The Bilingual Program and European Policies: Bilingual Schools in Spain & Madrid

Two aspects are particularly relevant in the context of this paper and for explaining the actions taken to implement the use of Language Assistants in bilingual schools:

a) The linguistic policies developed in 1995 by the European Union focusing on the improvement and diversification of language learning and teaching within the Education systems of the EU. Its original goal was to: “provide a basis for reflection on how the educational systems themselves can continue the construction of a Europe without internal frontiers, and strengthen understanding between the peoples of the Union” (Council resolution March 31, 1995).

As stated in the above named law, the emphasis was, for the first time, on promoting the qualitative improvement of language knowledge, focusing especially on the development of communication skills and on increasing the diversification of the languages taught from school to higher education as a strategy to offer EU citizens the opportunity to become proficient in several of the EU languages.

For the current analysis, it is important to underline the fact that the law actually establishes a high priority in EU actions on the beginning of foreign language learning during childhood and specifically mentions the need to encourage learning in primary schools (Council resolution March 31, 1995). The Council resolution also emphasizes the need to promote actions directed towards the contact with native speakers of the languages studied through programs such as, for instance, mobility programs or language visits. The stress on bilingual teaching through “the teaching of classes in a foreign language for disciplines other than languages” and the provision of an exchange of teaching staff that are native speakers are extremely significant as they explain the current situation characterized by the teaching of content core subjects (“Content and Language Integrated Learning” or CLIL) and the use of Language Assistants, some of them through the ‘Teach & Learn in Spain’ program at Instituto Franklin-UAH.

b) The implementation of the Bilingual Programs in Spain, particularly of the Bilingual Program in the Region of Madrid, our main focus, based on the basic principles established by previous European policies.

In the region of Madrid, the local government started to implement the Bilingual Program in Public Bilingual Schools run by the Department of Education (*Ministerio de Educacion*) and the Education Department of the region of Madrid (*Consejería de Educación e Investigación*) in 2004. Since then, the Public Bilingual Schools are required to have Language Assistants (*auxiliares de conversación*) (*Orden 162/2011, de 21 de enero*). Moreover, this requirement was extended to the charter and private schools in 2008 (*Orden 9932/2012, 30 de agosto*). Linares and Dafouz (2010) provide a detailed description of the CLIL programs/projects in the Madrid region and some of its outcomes and challenges.

In accordance with the before mentioned European policies and regulations, the main goals of the Bilingual Program are twofold: to improve the communicative skills of students in schools and to provide cultural references related to English speaking countries through contact with English language native speakers and by implementing mobility programs for teachers and students (Education Department of the region of Madrid).

METHOD

As mentioned in the introduction, the objective of this paper is to describe the elements that, when analyzed, outline the role of Instituto Franklin-UAH as an intercultural and academic mediator between two cultures and education systems (Spain and US) and specific details. The two following perspectives will be included:

a) The historical perspective, related to Instituto Franklin-UAH's background and context related to bilingual teaching. The main research method is the systematic review of the main theoretical background that is relevant considering the IF-UAH's activity and context regarding the Bilingual Program in Spain. Further information will be included in section 4.

b) The analytical perspective, focusing, on the one hand, on the perception of the agents involved and, on the other, on the actions that have turned Instituto Franklin-UAH into an actual mediator between its students and the bilingual schools where they act as Language Assistants. For this perspective, the following methods are used to gather data:

b.1. Analysis of regulations and guides that were designed by the Ministry of Education and the regional government in order to regulate the role and responsibilities of the LAs (in Madrid) were analyzed from a qualitative point of view considering the reference to roles and responsibilities in the classroom (section 5.1.1).

b.2. Questionnaires sent to LAs from the 2016-2017 cohort as a mid-term assessment during the month of February, aimed to gather information about their perception regarding several concepts related to what we defined as 'role,' 'communication,' 'culture' and 'perception of difficulties,' among other aspects (section 5.1.1).

b.3. Questionnaires sent to lead teachers at schools, as mid-term assessments of LAs and that were analyzed from a qualitative point of view. The analysis focuses on the lead teachers' perspective regarding the LAs' role at school and their performance regarding the collaboration with the teacher, preparing classes, teaching cultural aspects, improvising, creativity, or being proactive (section 5.1.3).

The objective of this paper is to describe the elements that, when analyzed, outline the role of Instituto Franklin-UAH as an intercultural and academic mediator between two cultures and education systems (Spain and US) and specific details.

b.4. A qualitative analysis of university practicum advisors' observation reports. This analysis focuses on a selection of the most common causes of difficulties that required mediation in the academic course 2016-2017, with 59% of the students identifying the following as the most common needs for mediation: class management strategies, class management collaboration, collaboration in planning, planning meetings and giving feedback to students.

Finally, the observations will be based on both quantitative and qualitative data obtained through the different tools described and a proposal regarding possible solutions will be made.

INSTITUTO FRANKLIN-UAH AND PROGRAMS: DESCRIPTION

Historical perspective and context

The historical perspective offers a deeper understanding of the analytical analysis of the gathered data. The historical context regarding the origin and goals of the Instituto Franklin-UAH's program provide an insight into the shaping of this institution as a cultural mediator, which promotes an intercultural dialogue between its students and bilingual schools where they act as Language Assistants.

Instituto Franklin-UAH (IF-UAH) is a research department at Universidad de Alcalá, which has a multidisciplinary focus and serves as a cooperation platform through the celebration of conferences and events, publications, research projects, collaboration agreements between colleges and universities and the organization of training programs offered for North American students. It was originally founded in 1987 by the President of the Universidad de Alcalá at that time, Manuel Gala, who was also chosen as the first director at Instituto Franklin-UAH.

The original name of the institution was CENUAH (*Centro de Estudios Norteamericanos*) and its goals were to foster links between Spain and the United States and to establish actions that would promote the exchange of knowledge between both countries.

Its name changed to *Instituto Universitario de Estudios Norteamericanos* (IUIEN) and finally, in 2009, the name "Benjamin Franklin" was approved by the Academic Board; since then it has been known as "Instituto Franklin-UAH" (IF-UAH website a). The name was mainly chosen as it represents the multidisciplinary nature of the institution in the same way Benjamin Franklin shapes a multidisciplinary person as politician, inventor and writer. In fact, Benjamin Franklin was also known as the first Ambassador of the United States in Spain, who initiated the first Spanish teaching course in the US in his Philadelphia Languages Academy (IF-UAH Website a), promoting Spanish language and culture.

When founding and creating the curriculum for the Philadelphia Languages Academy, Benjamin Franklin had an innovative idea: to promote "an education that stressed practical skills that would serve students regardless of the line of work they took up" (Penn University). Following its mentor's model, IF-UAH offers a practical perspective for its Study Abroad programs by offering both hands-on training and practice and, at the same time, focusing on the reinforcement of

the relations with the US. The main academic programs offered are 'Study Abroad Program' and 'Teach & Learn in Spain' Master's Program. They both represent IF-UAH's main goal to focus on the promotion of knowledge between Spain and the United States. This paper will focus particularly on showing the role the second program plays in the context of the mediation nature of the IF-UAH itself.

'Teach & Learn in Spain' Master's Program

The 'Teach & Learn in Spain' Master's Program was created in 2008 by Instituto Franklin-UAH. The objective of the program, as stated on IF-UAH's website (b), is "to offer native English speaking students the opportunity of studying a Master's Degree and be a language assistant in a bilingual school of the region of Madrid." The program combined, until recently, four master's degree courses (one academic year duration) with the acquisition of practical teaching experience as a Language Assistant in bilingual schools in the region of Madrid:

- Master in Bilingual and Multicultural Education
- Master in International Education
- Master in Teaching
- *Master en aprendizaje y enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera* (in Spanish)

Students in the program need to complete an amount of 30 credits throughout the academic year for their teaching practicum experience in bilingual schools in Madrid as language and culture assistants (IF-UAH Website b) through the Bilingual School Program implemented by the Spanish Regional Ministry in 2004-2005.

In terms of the type of schools where they act as LAs, there are two options in the program: charter and private schools (18 hours or 25 hours/week) or public schools (16 hours/week).

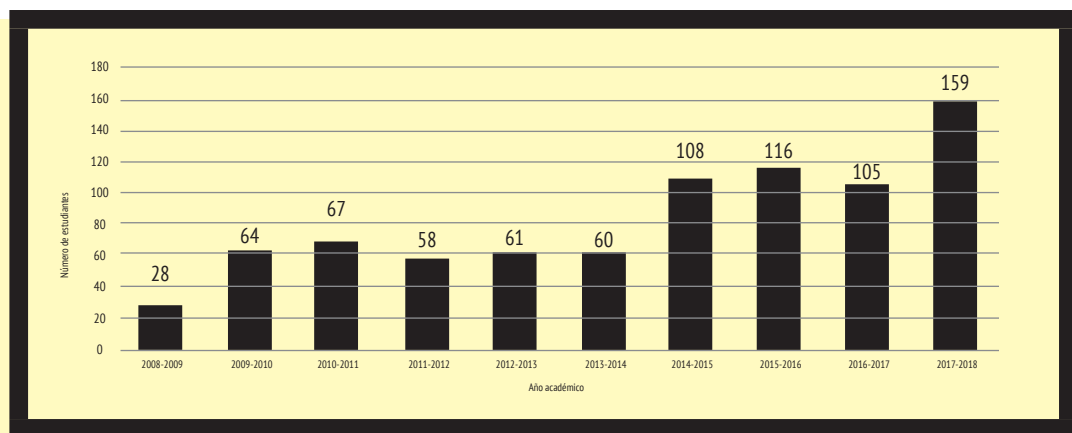
The program has had a total of 826 students since its origin in 2008 and the number of students has increased gradually from 28 to more than 60 students in the consecutive the next five consecutive academic years (except in 2011-2012, when the number was slightly lower) and to an average of 110 between 2014 and 2017. Finally, it had 159 students in the last academic year, showing a fivefold increase compared to the initial interest in this program in its beginnings (Figure 1).

INSTITUTOFRANKLIN-UAHANDINTERCULTURALCOMMUNICATION: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Perception of roles and communication

"The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place"
(George Bernard Shaw cited by BookBrowse)

FIGURE 1
Students in the
'Teach & Learn in Spain' Program. 2008-2018



The data analyzed in the current paper comprises students from the 2016-2017 cohort, which consisted of 105 students with a specific profile, as explained in section 5.1.1.

The program has had a total of 826 students since its origin in 2008 and the number of students has increased from 28 to an average of 110 students between 2014 and 2017.

A previous study (Vescan & Vitalaru 2018) showed that there is a difference regarding the perception of the role of the Language Assistants in Bilingual Programs in Madrid in the 'Teach & Learn in Spain' Master's Program, each one associated with the agent involved: American/English-speaking Language Assistants (LAs) and Spanish Lead teachers at schools. On the one hand, we observed that the role of the Language Assistants is not equally defined and perceived by the agents involved in the Bilingual Program and, on the other hand, that this perception is due to the differences between the education systems involved, which are reflected in several aspects.

In fact, several observations based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from regulations and guides, questionnaires to LAs, school's assessment reports on LAs' activity, and university practicum advisors' observation reports reflect the aspects that are differently perceived as part of what is considered 'role' and 'responsibilities'.

First of all, it is important to clarify the meaning of the concept of 'role,' since, in spite of its outward simplicity, when discussed in the context of education, it seems to be quite subjective and difficult to define. When analyzing this concept, we will be using two criteria: specific content-related functions, referring to the type of content taught as well as skills developed, and class responsibility, referring to the extension of control and limitations over the class and students. 'Communication,' on the other hand, is used to refer to the process used to discuss details about the content, methods, type of exercises, functions during lessons and to provide feedback or impressions after the class on a systematic basis.

Analysis of current regulations

The current regulations significant regarding the functions and role of LAs can be observed in Table 1:

A deeper insight into aspects such as the level of responsibility regarding planning, decisions regarding content taught, skills to be developed, assessment and class management (Table 2) shows that the LA has responsibility in four of these aspects and no responsibility in terms of planning, assessment and class management.

First, it is important to mention that 'planning' as a concept used by the authors in Table 2 refers to the taking of responsibility for the development of the syllabus, lesson planning and evaluation. This task is not actually the LAs responsibility as stated in *Orden 2670/2009, de 5 junio*.

Second, the main observation we can draw from the analysis of the current regulations and guides in Table 2 is that they are rather limited as to the specific information that can help students-LAs and teachers understand the extent of their functions and responsibilities.

TABLE 1
Basic regulations

LAWS AND REGULATIONS	GUIDES
Agreements between: Spanish Ministry of Education and British Council (1996) Spain and USA (1995 and 2005)	- Guía del Tutor. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte Programa de Auxiliares de Conversación en España 2017-2018
Orden 2670/2009, de 5 de junio, por la que se regula la actividad de los auxiliares de Conversación seleccionados por el Ministerio de Educación y por la Comisión de Intercambio Cultural Educativa y Científico entre España y Estados Unidos de América, en centros docentes públicos de la Comunidad de Madrid. Boletín Oficial de la Comunidad de Madrid.	- Guía del Auxiliar. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte Programa de Auxiliares de Conversación en España 2017-2018 - Spanish Language and Culture Assitants Program: Guidelines for Teaching Institutions in the United States and Canada 2017-2018. MECD
ORDEN 161/2011, de 21 de enero, por la que se modifica la Orden 2670/2009, de 5 junio	

Particularly, the content-related function mentioned in Section 3, as expressed in *Orden 2670/2009, de 5 junio* and *Guía del tutor*, 2017-2018 (2018) focuses on the teaching of cultural aspects, representing English speaking countries: language & culture and developing students’ oral skills. As far as the second parameter, which we tagged as ‘responsibility,’ the reference is

TABLE 2
Basic aspects and laws

ASPECTS	RESPONSABILITY	
	YES/NO	SPECIFIC ASPECT IT REFERS TO (Orden 2670/209, de 5 junio)
PLANNING	NO	
TEACH	YES	To assist the lead leachers in the classroom Collaborate with teachers in creation of teaching materials
CONTENT	YES	To teach cultural aspects
	YES	To represent English speaking countries: Language & Culture Bring them closer to geographical, social, cultural and economic aspects
SKILLS	YES	To develop oral communication skills Correct grammar and pronunctiation
ASSESSMENT (evaluation, grading, exams)	NO	
DISCIPLINE	NO	

Source: Vescan & Vitalaru (2018)

twofold although basic: on the one hand, to assist the lead teachers in the classroom and, on the other hand, not to take full responsibility in the classroom and no responsibility in terms of assessment (evaluation and grading and preparing or correcting exams), discipline, planning or the final year report.

We may say that in the case of both parameters the tasks are quite general and open to interpretation for both agents. ‘Cultural aspects’ can refer to a variety of elements (more or less related to the topics of the course subjects) and ‘assisting’ the teacher depends on several factors such as the type of subject and specific requirements considering the variety of subjects taught in English as part of CLIL (from Arts to Sciences), the teacher’s experience and work method, knowledge of co-teaching strategies, planning strategies, communication system, to name a few.

This means that, in order for collaboration to be effective in terms of teaching a class in which both teachers and assistants feel that they have fulfilled their role, these elements have to be considered by both agents prior and during the program.

In light of the above mentioned synthesis and bearing in mind the data provided by all stakeholders involved in the teaching experience in the TLS Program (Language Assistants, lead teachers and university advisor's feedback), a more specific analysis which provides a deeper analysis has been included in Section 5. Starting from the current regulations, specific examples regarding the different difficulties experienced by the groups involved have been provided:

- The differences in the perception of LA's role at the school and in the classroom.
- Different interpretations of related regulations.
- Differences of communication styles rooted in cultural differences between both systems in an education context and more specifically in the classroom collaboration.

Analysis of 2016-2017 students' profiles and their perception

In this section two aspects will be discussed: on the one hand, aspects related to the students' profile and, on the other hand, to the results of the questionnaire that gathers information about their perception regarding different aspects.

First, the profile of the 2016-2017 students is essential to understand the context regarding training and needs. Therefore, aspects such as admission criteria, the field of their previous training (Bachelor degree major), prior teaching/education training, and student teaching practicum experience will be briefly discussed.

Regarding the admission criteria, the following criteria are essential: academic achievement, previous experience or interest in education settings, university studies related to teaching or languages, and additional training related to intercultural communication.

Considering the students' previous degrees or training, the fields are quite varied, as shown in Figure 2.

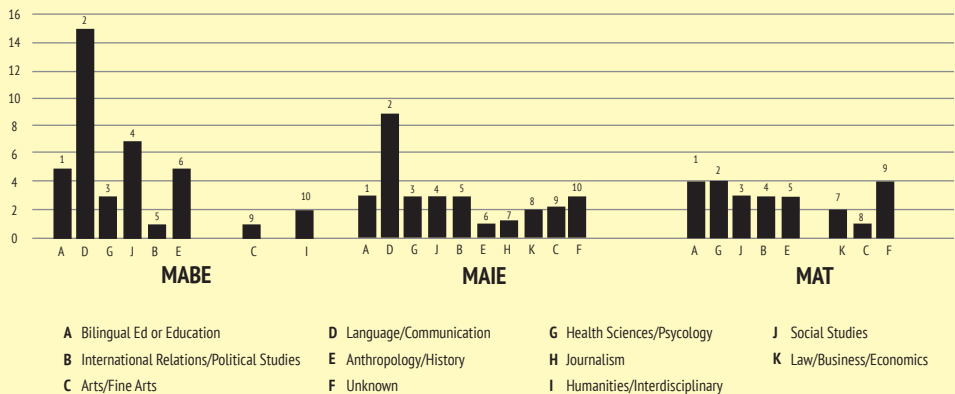
As observed, the fields with a higher percentage are Language and Communication, with 28 (31%) students in the three programs (15 in MABE, 9 in MAIE and 4 students in MAT); Social Studies, with 13 (14.4%) students (7, 3 and 3 students in the same respective MAs); Health Sciences, with 10 (11.1%) students (3, 3 and 4 students); Anthropology/History, with 9 (10%) students (5, 1 and 3 students); and Education, with 8 (8.8%) students (5 in MABE and 3 in MAIE).

Moreover, considering prior student teaching practicum experience, only approximately 10% of the students completed one, specifically those who majored in Education. Therefore, as mentioned in the Introduction, in the Teach and Learn program itself, 91.2 % of the total 105 students in the 2016-2017 cohort lacked specific teaching practice before enrolling.

In this context, the second research method used to gather data for our analysis was a questionnaire with 25 questions sent to LAs in the academic year 2016-2017. Its objective was to provide quantitative and qualitative information about aspects such as the students' impressions about their experience at the schools up to that point, the teaching methods used, their expectations

FIGURE 2
Students' profiles in the three programs

Students degrees profiles by master's 2016-2017



about relationships and collaboration with the lead teachers and staff, positive aspects as well as challenges and possible improvements of their experience at the schools. Its specific focus was on their perception regarding several ideas related to what we defined in Section 5.1 as 'role,' and 'communication,' as well as their perception of difficulties. The analysis of this paper focuses particularly on the following elements:

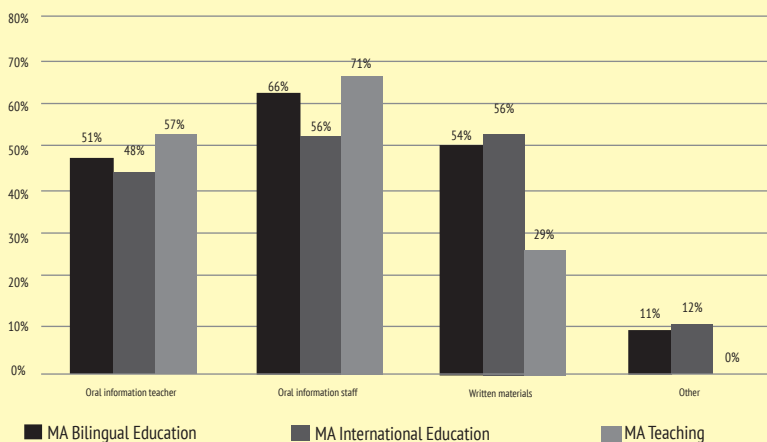
- How information was provided by the schools.
- Information about LA's roles and responsibilities.
- Feedback provided to teaching strategies.
- Responsibility: classroom management/discipline.
- LA's perception of potential causes of the difficulties/differences.

The results from the academic year 2016-2017 showed that, in spite of the general good results for 74 of the students (70%) in terms of the communication between teachers and assistants and their task completion, the perception of that communication process was very different for the teachers and LAs involved. In fact, there seemed to be a gap between the LA's expectations considering the communication system and the actual manifestation of their role, which affected their level of satisfaction with the completion of the task. Specifically, results from the academic year 2016-2017 in the MA in Bilingual Education reflected that, although most LAs had been given information at the beginning of the school year by the schools, only half of them

had received specific information on aspects that would facilitate coordination with the teacher, such as their role and that of the teacher, the system that would be used for communication during classes, and the planning of sessions and meetings for feedback, among other aspects (Vescan & Vitalaru 2018). If we compare the three MA programs taught in English, we can observe, in Figure 3, that the results are similar, showing that an average of 52% received more or less specific information on these aspects orally from the teacher and/or from another member of the school staff (64%) and 46% through written materials (brochures, leaflets, syllabi).

FIGURE 3
MA in English 2016-2017

Information at the beginning of the course



Moreover, the results to the question on aspects that need improvement considering the three MAs show the students' perception as to the success in the communication process. Figure 4, below, shows two of the aspects they listed within this topic, planning system and communication.

In all these programs, 'communication' and 'planning' were chosen as deficient from a list of six aspects⁸ by more than half of the students in each MA, with 76% and 77% for 'communication' in two of the programs and with 68% and 71% for 'planning' in the same programs. The total number of students who completed the questionnaire in each program is of 35, 25 and 14 (in the same order from Figure 4), which means that 53 students (72%) of a total of 74 underlined 'communication' and 48 (65%) underlined 'planning' as deficient. This suggests that expectations regarding roles were quite different and more specific than one would believe. An example of a comment from an MA in International Education student (Table 3) gives a clearer idea of the specific expectations students had particularly about the definition of their role and knowledge of the teacher's expectations.

⁸ Class management, disciplining, teaching methods and other.

FIGURE 4

Communication and planning needs.

Students' perception

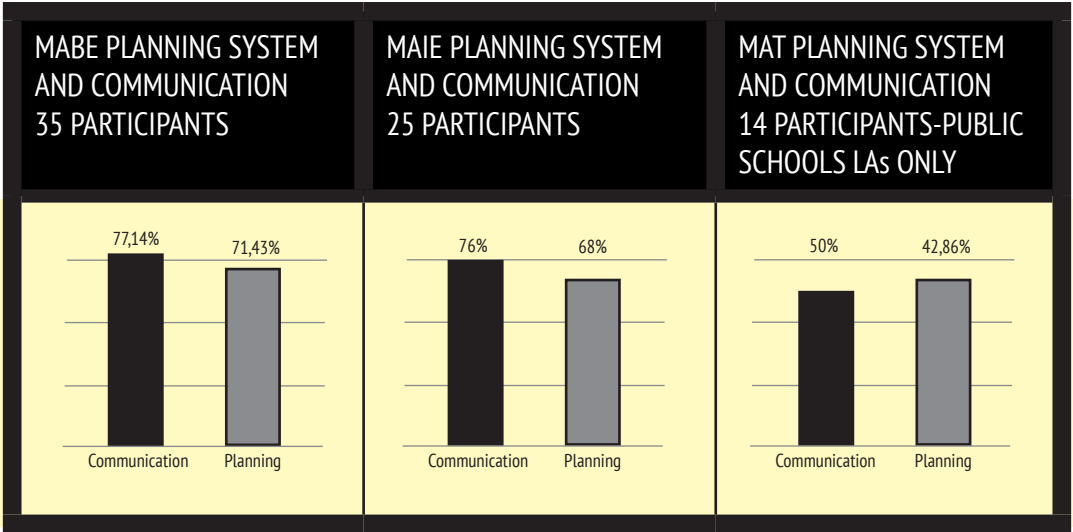


TABLE 3

Comment student MA in International Education.

(Questionnaire to students, 2016-2017)

In general, it was a good experience and I had a good relationship with the teachers. The staff and the teachers were nice and very welcoming, they made us feel comfortable at the school. The only problem as I mentioned various times it was unclear what their expectations were and they did not communicate on a regular basis what they wanted me to plan or prepare. I believe with more effective communication and more prior planning the lessons would of been smoother and more valuable. I also had new substitute teachers come in throughout the year with made it more difficult to adapt to the teacher's expectations, since it was various individuals. Individuals who also seemed to be unclear of my role as an assistant.

Further examples of comments included in Table 4, in this case, from the Advice for other LAs section of the questionnaire, show their impressions about the communication system in general. They encourage future LAs to be proactive, ask questions and not expect to be informed as specifically as they might be used to in the education system of their home country.

Finally, a specific question from the same survey allowed us to underline the perception LAs had regarding the causes of the difficulties they experienced due to cultural/educational differences. The high percentages in Figure 5, below, suggests that, in fact, the most frequent causes in the same three Master's were related to the LA's role (43-80%), the teacher's role (56-64%), communication (50-80%), general expectations (50-74%), and specific expectations (43-64%).

TABLE 4
Advice for future LAs

Be prepared for a lack of clear communication from staff. If you have a pending question, **make sure to ask the staff instead of waiting for them to tell you.**

Take initiative!

Yes, you have to **be proactive in your job.** They will really appreciate you.

Set up clear expectations from the beginning, ask a lot of questions about your role and define your role with them. Request meeting with the coordinator and follow up, because she won't. **Ask for what you need until you get it.**

Ask questions to the teachers, coordinators, everyone. **If you don't ask, nothing will be told to you.** Be relaxed and go with the flow because the school is in a difficult area and many of the students and families have difficult home situations.

Listen to the students's ideas on how they want to learn. They'll probably be vague, like "videos" or "games", but each class is different **and it is up to you to work with the teacher to bring an interesting lesson.**

Analysis of lead teachers' perspective

Two other sources of data for analysis were the school/lead teachers' assessment of LAs' activity at the schools and the university practicum advisors' observation reports. Each of them will be briefly explained to show their main focus.

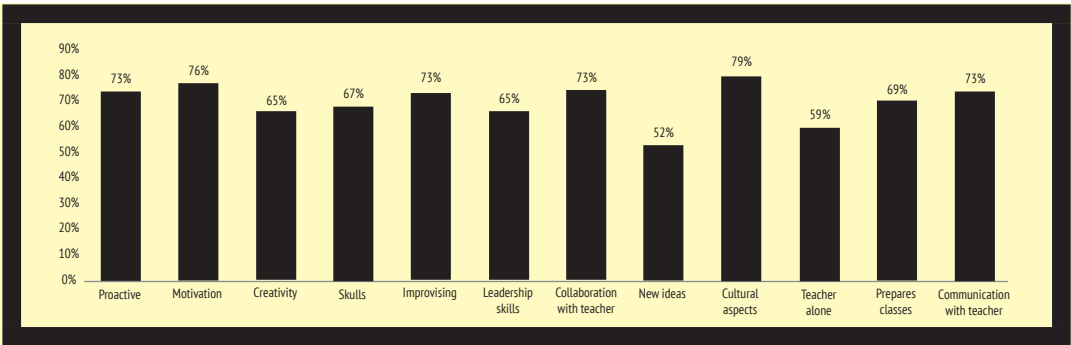
The results from the quantitative analysis of data from teachers showed that they seemed to believe that the basic information that the LAs needed to carry out his/her task was, in fact, provided at the beginning and during the course. The assessment that teachers normally provide to the university advisors for each LA focuses on aspects related to the fulfilment of his/her tasks/role and the acquisition of specific skills. Considering the accomplishment of tasks, teachers said that they highly valued both the teaching of cultural aspects as specific for content taught and skills related to planning, communication, initiative and creativity, which they seemed to expect from the LA without actually stressing their importance verbally. Thus, when we analyzed academic achievement for students in the MA in Bilingual Education by levels (excellent, good, average and poor) (Vescan & Vitalaru 2018) we observed that a high percentage of LAs (65 and 79%, respectively) had excellent and good levels of achievement for all the aspects included in the assessment report: collaboration with the teacher, preparing classes, teaching cultural aspects, improvising, creativity, being proactive (Figure 6).

The aspects that were most highly valued apart from content were attitude-motivation (73%) and communication through aspects such as collaboration with teachers (73%) and communication (73%), included in the report. On the other hand, skills that showed initiative and autonomous abilities were also highly valued through the following aspects: being proactive (73%),

FIGURE 5
Causes of difficulties from the LAs' perspective



FIGURE 6
Teacher's assessment. Good and excellent results



improvising (73%), preparing classes (69%), leadership (65%), proposing new ideas and teaching independently (52% and 59%) (Vescan & Vitalaru 2018). These results suggest that, although not openly expressed to students, most Spanish teachers perceive high communicative skills in the assistants and seem to assume that the communication process is effective in both directions⁹. Moreover, they expect a high degree of autonomy from them, which contrasts with the LAs' own expectations of clear-cut, specific instructions about the entire communication, coordination and teaching process.

IF-UAH AS MEDIATOR: UNIVERSITY PRACTICUM ADVISORS

University practicum advisors' perspective

Finally, the university advisors' observation reports on the LA's individual classes also provided qualitative information based on their direct observation of 62 students of the program (59% of all the students) while assisting teachers as LAs in bilingual charter or private schools during the first five months of the program. They provided specific feedback to each LA after each class specifically about teaching methods and attitude as a twofold strategy: first, for raising the LA's awareness about the teaching process and thus, help him/her improve practical knowledge and, second, for diminishing the gap between the two education systems involved, in an attempt to compensate for the lack of specific feedback from the lead teachers at schools, which LAs usually expect. At the same time, they drafted an observation report for each of the sessions they attended during the same period. The observation report for each student measured teaching procedures and behavior, attitude and strategies used to organize teaching and manage their class during specific classes. From this point of view, some of the difficulties shaped in the feedback provided to LAs by the advisors were related to different teaching aspects and to classroom management (eye contact), using demonstration and body language to provide explanation during class time, control of the academic learning time and the duration of each task, and different strategies that are effective for providing instructions to Spanish students.

In this context, we can say that the advisor's role is essential from two points of view. On the one hand, the advisor becomes a mentor that explains and employs strategies to help raise the student's self-awareness and improvement of pedagogical strategies throughout the program while acting as LA in schools. In general, the supervisor's observation reports and feedback notes reflected the pedagogical challenges for LAs in their teaching practice. By using this strategy, it provided the university advisors with a tool to improve the communication process between Spanish teachers and LAs and the effectiveness of their collaboration in the teaching practice. On the other hand, the advisors' reports are particularly relevant for the types of difficulties mentioned by the student or teacher and they reflect a need of mediation required from the advisor to prevent a potential conflict, help the student improve or solve the problem.

⁹ From this point of view, we are aware that this research has its limitations and that this aspect would have to be confirmed through a specific survey to teachers.

Taking into account the background information provided before and of the advisors' perception of 'roles' and 'communication,' it can be said that both concepts are essential for the program to be successfully completed by students. Thus, the advisors make sure that the roles of the agents involved (in this case, advisors, teachers and students) are clear from the first orientation session and that the communication with the advisor is constant throughout the program. Some examples will be discussed in the next section.

University advisors provided specific feedback to each LAs specifically about teaching methods and attitude in order to raise his/her awareness about the teaching process and to diminish the gap between the two education systems involved.

University practicum advisors as intercultural mediators

At a specific level and as seen in the previous section, practicum university advisors act as intercultural and academic mediators between the students-LAs and the lead teachers from the schools where they act as LAs. Therefore, they play an essential role in facilitating the communication process and providing context to possible difficulties by performing different tasks:

- a) Informing LAs about their tasks before starting the teaching practicum.
- b) Staying in contact with the LAs and guiding them through the process as well as keeping informed of the LA's difficulties.
- c) Assessing the LAs' activity during and after their teaching practicum, especially when they face difficulties.

The different types of elements that make that process possible are the orientation and observation sessions, feedback meetings, mid-term school assessment, the end-of-term evaluation (Vescan & Vitalaru 2018), and constant contact during office hours.

In order to provide examples of the topics that required mediation and their perception by the parties involved, a selection of the most common causes of difficulties that required mediation in the academic course 2016-2017 were analyzed: class management strategies, class management collaboration, collaboration in planning, planning meetings, and feedback to students. The analysis included the topic, the perception of the same aspects by each group, the difficulty involved, the feedback provided by the advisor to both groups and outcomes.

Part of the analysis was included in different tables (Tables 5-9). An explanation about each aspect follows.

In Table 5, we offer a synthesis of one of the most common topic that caused difficulties in the collaboration between the LAs and the lead teachers: 'classroom management' and 'discipline/class management strategies'. As observed, the two different perspectives regarding this topic caused miscommunication the way that the pupils' behavior should be managed in the classroom. The university advisors offered feedback to both LAs and lead teachers and helped in finding a common agreement about the strategies put into practice in the classroom.

TABLE 5
Examples and analysis.
Class management strategies

TOPIC/ RESPON- SABILITY	LAs' DIFFICULTIES	LEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE	UNIVERSITY ADVISOR'S FEEDBACK
Class management & discipline strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining authority in the classroom as they were not familiar with strategies used by lead teachers. Found out that each teacher has its own strategies General practice of lead teachers raising their voice louder to their students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A need to immediately correct negative behaviors in the classroom even if raising their voice is necessary. A common strategy in Spanish classrooms. 	<p>Communication difficulties arise when LAs and Lead Teachers have different perspectives regarding the strategies that are more effective for behavior correction in the classroom.</p> <p>Feedback for both agents: In Spain: generally accepted to raise the voice in order to get the group's attention. LA: feels uncomfortable as in the US the perception is different.</p> <p>Solutions: Both teachers and LAs: Found a common understanding in order to be more effective in the classroom. Established some common strategies e.g. using attention grabbers, a voice signal in order to get students attention as "Class Class" and the class would answer "Yes yes" or they would call the class "I loly moly" and the class would answer "guacamole!".</p> <p>Outcome: teachers would not need to raise their voice louder constantly in order to get students attention. LA: comfortable.</p>

Moreover, collaboration in the classroom is differently perceived by both LAs and lead teachers. This is the result of the difference in focus considering the two countries involved. While the teacher training programs in Spain do not focus on co-teaching strategies, in the US it is a common practice. In Table 6, both perspectives are summarized and a common strategy is established through the feedback received from the university advisors:

TABLE 6
Examples and analysis.
Class management strategies

TOPIC/ RESPON- SABILITY	LAs' DIFFICULTIES	LEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE	UNIVERSITY ADVISOR'S FEEDBACK
Class management & discipline collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishing discipline individually as they expect specific instructions regarding rules.Expecting constant support and collaboration in the implementation of disciplining strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Authority and leadership in the classroom is lost when discipline is not implemented individually.If they provide consistent support in class regarding class management and behavior control, they would take part of LAs' authority in the classroom.	<p>A dialogue regarding cultural differences in the way two educators are expected to collaborate in the classroom is necessary.</p> <p>Feedback for both agents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In Spain, in teacher training programs Co-teaching strategies are not a focus in the curriculum and Lead teachers are not familiar with these strategies. As a result, they have a common belief that when two educators are in the classroom, they need to teach individually in the benefit of class management and discipline.Co-Teaching is more common in the US and there is research (Peery, 2017) that proves that there is an academic and behavioral improvement in students when co-teaching occurs. <p>Outcome: awareness; some feedback provided when necessary; specific strategies depending on the circumstances.</p>

Another common challenge that the advisors identified is related to planning, collaboration, and meetings. In Tables 7 and 8, we can observe that there are different cultural perceptions regarding the planning of collaboration. From the LA's perspective, pedagogical planning requires more support from the lead teachers, while from the lead teachers' perspective it is considered an individual task. Thus, they expect a proactive attitude and more individual work from LAs.

Furthermore, in Table 8, we can observe that there is certain lack of time for actual meetings. On the other hand, the different perception of the dynamics and content that should be discussed during the meetings affects the impression that it gives to its participants. In this case, the university advisors provided feedback to both LAs and lead teachers helping them to establish common strategies to foster collaboration more effectively.

In Table 9 we can observe a summary of the different insights about the correction of English mistakes in the classroom and that commonly create a conflict between LAs and lead teachers. The university advisors helped to establish a dialogue regarding the differences in the perception of error correcting and pointed out the need to balance different error correction strategies that would facilitate the most effective collaboration in the class instruction.

TABLE 7
Examples and analysis. Planning collaboration

TOPIC/ RESPON- SABILITY	LAs' DIFFICULTIES	LEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE	UNIVERSITY ADVISOR'S FEEDBACK
Planning collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving the specific information about the content they have to focus on in their teaching. Expecting collaboration and specific details in order to plan effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning is an individual task rather a collective task with other teachers. Students must show creativity, proactive behavior and autonomous skills. 	<p>Lack of collaboration when planning can cause apparent lack of coordination and affect content taught and methods used by LA as well as students' behavior and attitude in the classroom.</p> <p>Feedback:</p> <p>Lead teachers: LAs' expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A planned and guided collaboration to happen before the programs starts and during the course. Information regarding the next session's content beforehand so they can plan effectively. <p>LAs: lead teachers expect them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to improvise or to plan some activities individually without requiring their constant guidance. Bring suggestions or ideas regarding the content. <p>Outcome: meeting to discuss the content of next sessions; LAs are more comfortable when improvising if necessary.</p>

TABLE 8
Examples and analysis. Planning meetings

TOPIC/ RESPON- SABILITY	LAs' DIFFICULTIES	LEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE	UNIVERSITY ADVISOR'S FEEDBACK
Planning meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expecting to have specific meetings for planning content purposes.• Not attending regular meeting of the staff.• If forced to attend regular meetings, a conflict aroused.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings should provide dates or general information of school events.• Planning is an individual task.• No especific meetings for planning content purposes.	<p>Not planning meetings on a regular basis specifically for organizing content can be a cause for misinterpretation and conflict.</p> <p>Feedback:</p> <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LAs need to have specific meetings to plan together.• In the US system, it is common to use planning meetings for lesson planning.• It is more common for teachers or educators to co-plan. <p>LAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Spanish schools: meetings organized for general information and socializing with the rest of the staff.• Teachers plan more individually.• Teachers expect LAs to be more proactive in meetings and in getting the information from lead teachers regarding the lessons plans. <p>Outcome: more frequent and specific meetings; more socializing.</p>

IF-UAH AND STRATEGIC MEASURES FOR DIMINISHING CULTURAL GAPS

After the specific analysis of circumstances that required mediation from IF-UAH university advisors explained in the previous section, this section focuses specifically on describing the measures taken by Instituto Franklin-UAH to facilitate communication and training. Its actions, developed over the years, can be considered actual mediation acts, since their purpose was to provide context before the actual experience and whenever necessary in order to facilitate effective interaction between the agents involved. Ultimately, it can also be said that those actions were also aimed at preventing culture shock in a teaching context in Spain. A brief description of each follows:

TABLE 9
Examples and analysis. Feedback to students

TOPIC/ RESPON- SABILITY	LAs' DIFFICULTIES	LEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE	UNIVERSITY ADVISOR'S FEEDBACK
Feedback to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing feedback to their students by using the expected correction techniques commonly used by teachers. • Preferred using self-correction or peer correction techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expecting LAs to correct immediately. • Believing that students would not learn English correctly and will not improve their mistakes if the teacher would not point out immediately. 	<p>Over-correction can be a source of misunderstanding and create conflict.</p> <p>Feedback:</p> <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAs believe students will lose their motivation speak English if there are over-corrected. <p>LAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teachers preferred them to correct pronunciation or grammar immediately. • Teachers believe that this would avoid students making the same mistakes over time. <p>Outcome: found a balance between using different correction mistakes strategies by combining peer correction, self-correction or instant correction in some occasions.</p>

1) Initial workshop for LAs on differences between American and Spanish education systems since 2008. The topics that have been approached (gradually) ever since are the following:

It is important to mention that this workshop started as a basic general orientation session. However, it has been adapted based on the LAs' reaction to class experience each year and on the information provided through surveys by both LAs and teachers regarding ways of expression and communication styles in educational settings.

On the other hand, the coordinator has focused more and more on the definition of aspects that have proved to be problematic: roles, expectations and responsibilities in terms of specific ideas, such as "functions," "methods and strategies," and "specific tasks". Clarifying aspects related to "communication" has also become a priority. Thus, ideas such as who initiates encounters and how, who plans meetings and how often, if a specific procedure should be followed, among others, are also discussed with LAs at the beginning of the course.

TABLE 10
Topics workshop for LAs

Specific characteristics of Spanish education system in primary and secondary education.
Role as LA and expectations from teachers.
Role of main teachers and own expectations.
Information of planning regular meetings for discussion.
Cultural differences in general.
Discuss aspects related to classroom management based on hypothetical situations.
Discuss planning on a weekly basis/establish frequency.
Cultural differences in general.

TABLE 11
Topics workshop on co-teaching

Regulations regarding role of the Language Assistants.
Culture shock and cultural differences at school.
Co-teaching strategies.
Examples on how to collaborate in the classroom.
Lesson plan and activities for language assistants.

2) Workshop for main teachers and LAs on co-teaching (first edition in 2017). The different models of co-teaching are presented and shown with examples and, in mixed discussion groups, both categories reflect and discuss them based on possible applications. On the other hand, they share both difficulties and previous experience applied to different courses. The specific topics included in the syllabus are:

3) Feedback provided to LAs individually after observing them in class regarding both teaching aspects such as attitude, method, class management, among others, and cultural aspects that caused difficulties.

4) Workshop for lead teachers on American students since 2008. The topics discussed include:

TABLE 12
Topics workshop for lead teachers

Introduction to the objectives of the 'Teach and Learn in Spain' Master's program.
Introduction to culture shock and its symptoms.
Cultural differences between US and Spain.

5) Constant contact with the LA during the Practicum as an opportunity not only to stay informed about the process but also to avoid possible misunderstandings and compensate for the lack of specific feedback regarding LAs' teaching practice, which they tend to expect from the lead teachers. This is also an opportunity for the LA to receive feedback (written or oral) from the coordinator.

Finally, if we consider the three functions of the mediation process discussed in section 2, we could say that all the examples above show both rehabilitating and preventive actions from IF-UAH as, at some point, each was necessary to facilitate (further) communication and collaboration. Moreover, the actual changes that affected the IF's instructions policy and specific measures taken over the years to raise awareness and improve the situation can also be considered as a transformation process although at a very basic scale.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL IMPLICATIONS

As seen throughout our research, some differences between the Spanish and American education systems and particularly different perceptions regarding roles and communication not only reflect how culture can affect the perception of basic daily actions but also how it can result into actual training difficulties for the different groups involved. The different perspectives and groups that provided the data helped us draw conclusions about the types of challenges involved and their potential causes.

More specifically, the results from questionnaires to LAs from the academic year 2016-2017 showed that, in spite of the general good results for three thirds of the students in terms of the completion of their task and communication between teachers and assistants, the perception of that communication process was very different for the two stakeholders involved. In fact, it suggested an actual gap between expectations and experience. This refers mostly to the communication methods used, which show a certain lack of uniformity regarding systematic procedures of information and feedback in the different stages of the teaching practicum process. On the other hand, the analysis of lead teachers' assessments suggests that, although not openly

expressed to students, most Spanish teachers perceive high communicative skills in the assistants and seem to assume that the communication process is effective in both directions. Moreover, Spanish teachers expect a high degree of autonomy from LAs, which contrasts with the LAs' own expectations of clear-cut, specific instructions about the entire communication, coordination, and teaching processes from the Spanish teachers.

In this context, it is important to underline the essential role that the practicum university advisors and Instituto Franklin-UAH itself play in the effective communication process between Spanish teachers and the 'Teach and Learn in Spain' American LAs in bilingual schools. In fact, as seen through different examples and reflections, IF-UAH's actions are threefold: 1) preventive, by facilitating the communication process, providing context to possible difficulties; 2) rehabilitative, by solving conflicts; and 3) transformative, by changing basic regulations in the 'Teach and Learn in Spain' program's policy, information in the syllabi, guides, leaflets and, in general, influencing the actions of both the program and schools. Thus, based on the analysis of changes and factors that characterize the program as well as our experience in the program, it can also be said that Instituto Franklin-UAH itself plays a fundamental role as a mediator. In fact, IF-UAH acts as an intercultural and academic mediator between the education systems of two cultures, by identifying cultural differences, preventing misunderstandings and possible communication problems and solving difficulties that occur. IF-UAH has had more than 800 students in the TLS program since its beginnings in 2008, who were specifically trained not only to teach students at schools but also to identify cultural differences and challenges on their own and be able to face those differences, always with the support and understanding of their advisors. All of the actions taken by the program are designed to help students understand cultural context, and, ultimately prevent LAs from suffering from culture shock, which underlines IF-UAH's mitigating nature. In turn, these students help promote the cultural interchange in a dynamic and more comprehensive way as intercultural ambassadors and even mediators in their countries of origin or workplace.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the different perceptions of the same aspects from the groups involved, how those perceptions can actually result in anxiety and stress, and the need for an actual intercultural mediator that understands, clarifies context, and prevents misunderstandings. The actual description of an effective communication system as well as a specific definition of roles, tasks and their application considering the intercultural background of all the agents involved is a gap in the current policy of the program in the region of Madrid. Our experience shows that these aspects should be part of what we envision as a 'cooperation system' which involves a specific knowledge of intercultural aspects and different collaboration strategies in the teaching instruction process in schools.

Although this research is limited considering the amount of data analyzed and the depth of the analysis carried out, it can serve to raise a deeper awareness on the topic and to provide some ideas for the implementation of practical solutions adapted for the groups involved in the near future.

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