The Politics of Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary Spanish American Literature: Elena Poniatowska, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Jorge Volpi Within a Disputed Tradition

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Abstract

This dissertation asserts that the tortuous relationship Spanish American literature had with cosmopolitanism since the Wars of Independence reached a turning point towards the end of the second half of the twentieth century. While the literary production of the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century was centred on the Spanish American nation and the continent, contemporary literature has become increasingly deterritorialized, and has begun to present narrative worlds and discuss issues that transcend this circumscribed universe. The discerning of this articulation of global issues in contemporary literature – which I contend is predicated on the concept of cosmopolitanism – is the primary objective of this investigation.

The five novels examined here are Elena Poniatowska's *La "Flor de Lis"* (1988), Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) and *El sueño del celta* (2010), and Jorge Volpi's *El fin de la locura* (2003) and *No será la Tierra* (2006). This study aims to describe and assess an evolving perspective on the treatment of cosmopolitanism in Spanish America. I trace the shift from the previous generations' main preoccupation with aesthetic cosmopolitanism, which sought to engage Latin American literary discourse with the Western canon, to what I identify as the current political implication of the concept. To this end, I show that whereas mid-twentieth century authors displaced cosmopolitanism in favour of more politically expedient concepts, authors now plot it in their novels as a means of discussing issues of identity and citizenship in an increasingly globalized world.

Résumé

Cette dissertation soutient que la relation complexe qu'entretenait la littérature hispano-américaine avec le cosmopolitisme depuis les Guerres d'indépendance a atteint un point tournant à la fin de la deuxième moitié du vingtième siècle. Alors que la littérature du dix-neuvième et d'une bonne partie du vingtième siècle visait à représenter la nation et le continent, la littérature contemporaine se déterritorialise de plus en plus en exploitant des univers narratifs et en débattant des problématiques qui transcendent cette appartenance culturelle. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est la mise en lumière de l'articulation de problématiques globales dans la littérature contemporaine – que je soutiens être déterminée par le cosmopolitisme.

Les cinq romans qui forment le corpus à l'étude sont *La "Flor de Lis"* (1988), de Elena Poniatowska, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) et *El sueño del celta* (2010), de Mario Vargas Llosa, et *El fin de la locura* (2003) et *No será la Tierra* (2006), de Jorge Volpi. L'analyse de ces ouvrages permet de décrire et d'évaluer la transformation de la perspective du cosmopolitisme en Amérique hispanique. Je mets en évidence le déplacement de l'intérêt du cosmopolitisme dit esthétique, que les générations précédentes adoptaient afin d'établir un dialogue avec la tradition occidentale, vers l'exploitation politique actuelle du concept. À cet effet, je démontre que les auteurs de la première moitié du vingtième siècle remplaçaient le cosmopolitisme par des concepts plus politiquement signifiants pour leur communauté, concepts que les auteurs contemporains vont remplacer par le cosmopolitisme, en faisant ainsi un thème essentiel de leurs romans. Le cosmopolitisme devient donc un prisme à travers lequel ils abordent les problématiques identitaires et citoyennes dans un monde de moins en moins régi par des frontières.

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Chapter 1 – *A modo de introducción* – Cosmopolitan Reading

Throughout the twentieth century, Latin America had a contentious relationship with foreign, sometimes imperial, influences. It is thus unsurprising that for years the continent's nationalist intelligentsia has rejected the influence of one of the most European concepts of all, cosmopolitanism, a charged philosophical and political concept. Derived from the extraordinarily ambitious proposition of world citizenship, cosmopolitanism results from the combination of the terms in its compound name (*cosmos* – universe, and *polites* – citizen). Cosmopolitanism urges us "to recognize the equal, and unconditional, worth of all human beings, a worth grounded in reason and moral capacity, rather than on traits that depend on fortuitous natural or social arrangements" (Nussbaum, "The Worth of Human Dignity" 31), and thus sets the ground for a universal fraternity, in which one would pledge allegiance to humanity as a whole, while also embracing one's community. In Latin America, the concept has undergone different interpretations and experienced diverse incarnations. Current articulations of cosmopolitanism are particularly relevant in the study of the continent, for they serve to deconstruct the dichotomy that pits cosmopolitanism against nationalism. Recent scholars, such as Anthony Kwame Appiah and Will Kymlicka, advocate for a rooted cosmopolitanism, in which the cosmopolitan patriot is able to reconcile his love and responsibilities for his birth nation with a universal commitment. This turns the philosophical concept into a call for action that renders it "actually existing" (Calhoun 1). In fact, however much some try to dissociate the national from the international setting, locality and globality are two concepts so tightly intertwined in cosmopolitanism that they are impossible to discuss separately.

This study examines the representation of cosmopolitanism in contemporary Spanish American literature. Analyzing selected novels spanning the last three decades – a period notorious for the transformation of national cultures and the nation-state brought about by the end

of the Cold War and the rise of globalization – allows me to chart writers' efforts to represent the changing cultural, economic, political, and social conditions, as well as the emerging ideas of community membership in an increasingly interconnected world, and this, in spite of challenging geopolitical circumstances. Reading works of fiction by three major authors belonging to three literary generations – Mario Vargas Llosa, Elena Poniatowska, and Jorge Volpi –, I demonstrate how their novels, published between 1988 and 2010, find distinct ways of addressing the complex politics of cosmopolitanism and Spanish America's engagement with the world.

First, this study argues that cosmopolitanism has consistently been the object of intense controversy and debate in Spanish America. This has led writers to take positions and find narrative recourses in order to accommodate the idea of universal citizenship. Proponents of cosmopolitanism – be it aesthetic or political – have invariably been criticized for a lack of allegiance to the nation, for an excessive admiration of all things foreign, and ultimately been considered a menace to national culture – often deemed the bedrock of socio-political cohesion and the state itself. Consequently, although cosmopolitanism has always been present in Spanish America's cultural discourse, it has always been superseded by more politically expedient concepts (*antropofagia, mestizaje*, transculturation) when discussing the continent's conception of itself, as well as its cultural and political relations with the world. By grounding the discussion in this assessment, I chart an evolution in the treatment of cosmopolitanism that, on the one hand, reveals the displacement of the concept by analogous terms, and on the other, identifies a new affirmation of cosmopolitanism in more recent fiction – both in the treatment of the concept and in narrative form – that marks a shift in Spanish American literary discourse.

Second, this study explores how evolving historical circumstances have had an impact on the treatment of cosmopolitanism as a theme in Spanish American literary production. Examining works published before and after the end of the Cold War and the present enables me to validate

the thesis of the shift in the treatment of the concept. In the period of hegemony of the nation-state – which, in Spanish America, ends more or less in the late 1970s and the 1980s – the most relevant concepts to discuss issues of cultural identity were miscegenation and transculturation.[1] Writers often produced fictions that revealed the intricacies of these cultural processes or turned them into central themes of their narratives. However, since the 1990s, the fading importance of the nation-state and the rise of globalization have led to the increased plotting of cosmopolitanism proper.

Third, this study explores how narrative form, and specifically the adoption of different literary genres, reveals the authors' efforts to represent cosmopolitanism in changing cultural, literary, and historical circumstances. By developing an approach that is not only thematic, but also formal and theoretical, I show how writers use the autobiographical novel, the historical novel, and the global novel in order to reflect their vision of cosmopolitanism. In late twentieth-century Spanish American literature, the first-person narrative, be it testimonial (*testimonio*, autobiography) or fictional (autofiction, autobiographical novel) was the genre of predilection to represent memories of trauma and/or the development of an individual's identity. Elena Poniatowska's novel *La "Flor de Lis"* (1988) is an autobiographical novel that explores the discovery and subsequent adoption of a transcultural Mexican identity by a young cosmopolitan character of French origin. The twentieth-century historical novel's main purpose was to question, reassess or fill the void in official versions of history, and to debate major political ideas and ideologies. Mario Vargas Llosa's novels *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) and *El sueño del celta* (2010) adopt the historical novel to discuss contemporary articulations of cosmopolitanism in the context of nationalist backlashes against globalization. Finally, the global novel is a relatively new genre that exhibits an intricate articulation of globality and global

[1] I use *mestizaje* and miscegenation indistinctively.

conscience; the newer generation of Spanish American writers use it to consolidate both the world and Spanish America as their chamber of resonance. Jorge Volpi's *El fin de la locura* (2003) and *No será la Tierra* (2006) are global novels that explore world events and ideas of the twentieth century from the perspective of characters that are not necessarily Spanish American.

Finally, this study argues that whereas Poniatowska's novel is a defence of transculturation, both Vargas Llosa and Volpi share a conception of rooted cosmopolitanism. I contend that the cultural and political transformation that occurred between the publication of Poniatowska's novel, in 1988, and those of Vargas Llosa and Volpi, between 2003 and 2010 – notably the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of globalization – also inaugurates a shift in the treatment of cosmopolitanism in literature. This transformation perhaps reflects the exhaustion of the hegemony of some metaphors about identity – such as the discourses of *mestizaje* and transculturation – in Latin American discourse. By exhaustion I refer to the plausible collapse of the uses of these discourses as promising emancipatory politics in the region. On the one hand, Poniatowska's novel reflects on twentieth century Mexican cultural identity and post-revolutionnary politics; the main character represents the rejection of cosmopolitanism and the affirmation of a transcultural identity in the midst of intense national and state affirmation in Mexico. On the other hand, Vargas Llosa's and Volpi's narratives embody a form of rooted cosmopolitanism through the representation of the cosmopolitan trajectories of characters who face diverse national or nationalist challenges in the context of the waning of the nation-state, in the contemporary era.

In order to ground the study of cosmopolitanism, I will first proceed with a discussion of major theoretical formulations of the concept that will provide the basis for the development of the methodological framework – which I call cosmopolitan reading.

Theorizing Cosmopolitanism

The term cosmopolitanism has been notoriously hard to define, and has been subject to varying conceptualizations dependent on diverse loci of enunciation and historical circumstances. Consequently, I will trace the origins of the contemporary approaches to cosmopolitanism that I employ in order to formulate the theorization sustained in this investigation. My perspective on cosmopolitanism, as that of most scholars interested in the concept in relation to Latin America, is based on both an awareness of its history and its evolution, as well as of the geopolitical underpinnings and/or uses of some of its formulations. This method enables me to examine articulations that will be taken up later in the analytical chapters. It also reflects, as it will become more evident in Chapter 2, my approach to the examination of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literature, which is also centred on a genealogical perspective of its evolving place in the continent's intellectual and literary history.

It is the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, the founder of the Cynic school, who first brought cosmopolitanism to the fore. His views emerged from major disappointments with traditional Greek expectations. He "declared himself *a-polis* (without a city), *a-oikos* (homeless) and *kosmo-polites* (a citizen of the universe)" (Goulet-Cazé 329 in Inglis 13). The Cynics' views on cosmopolitanism were rather different from those we hold today; indeed, "the Cynic's cosmopolitanism is not first and foremost the affirmation of our common humanity, but a rejection of any definition of man as a political animal" (Shea 17), who must abide by the rules of only one *polis*. The Cynics' main target "was the parochialism of civic and national attachments" (16). By living at the margins of society, they attempted to purge themselves of the *polis* itself, but also of social ties of any sort. Diogenes "took the universal concerns of humankind to be more important and binding than local concerns" (Van Hooft, *Cosmopolitanism* 15), and thus made cosmopolitanism into a philosophical stance rather than a political one. In short, Cynic

philosophers aimed to remove themselves from society so as to criticize it with a clean perspective. This detachment, which was essential for the Cynics in order to be critical intellectuals, was often seen as out of place in Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as intellectuals were expected, or needed to be associated, with the building of national, and often nationalist, states.

The Stoics, like the Cynics, affirmed that the *polis* did not deserve such a name, but unlike Diogenes's group, nevertheless engaged in politics (Brown 552). They maintained that, "to be a world citizen one does not need to give up local identifications and affiliations" (Nussbaum, "The Worth of Human Dignity" 37), and that "the fatherland [patris] does not exist by nature" (Plutarch qtd. in Brown 552). They also believed that the cosmos itself should be considered a *polis*, albeit one with which one cannot have physical ties. They understood cosmopolitanism as a series of concentric circles, each containing different groups of people, surrounding each individual. While the largest circle contains the entire human race, subgroups of humanity evolve in smaller circles; the smaller the circle the closer one's attachment to the people in it (Bett 539; Nussbaum 37). The objective would then be to treat every single human being as if he or she were a member of the smaller circle, and not to treat anybody as a stranger.[2] However necessary it was to treat everyone fairly, the most significant aspect of Stoic cosmopolitanism was the immediate political environment to which a citizen had ties. The world citizen "seeks to capture the idea that the kinds of allegiance, loyalty and solidarity that mark a person's relationship to the *polis* should now extend to the whole world" (Van Hooft 15). Nevertheless, it is also quite logical: one has to care about the people who are closer to oneself before extending the same sentiments to strangers. In conclusion, Hellenistic cosmopolitanism proposed a positive commitment towards all human beings, notwithstanding their political

[2] This specific outlook on cosmopolitanism would later constitute the core of Appiah's theories.

affiliations – or lack thereof –, their race or language, which would influence some of the greatest thinkers of the Enlightenment.

Another key proposal is the German philosopher Immanuel Kant's, in his *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784). In the introduction Kant defines cosmopolitanism as "the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop" (qtd. in Brown and Held 45). In his manifesto, he defends cosmopolitanism, and proposes a politically focused understanding of the concept. While he concentrates on countries, Kant also emphasizes the need to teach individuals about the obligations of a shared community, just like the Greek philosophers did. He declares that cosmopolitanism is an eternal process, both for individuals and for nations, and its possible realization depends on the existence of people of good faith, who already have some understanding of the world, a view that resonates with all Latin America's writers of cosmopolitan disposition for they have invariably travelled, and frequently resided for extensive periods, or even permanently, elsewhere in the world. Even if Kant mostly focuses on how cosmopolitanism should be applied to law and nation-state building, his perspective is interesting in that it arises from that of the Stoics (Nussbaum, "Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism" 29). Both the Stoics and Kant agreed that birth was merely an accident, and that reason and the primacy of personhood should shape one's relationships with anyone one encounters.

In spite of over two millennia of intellectual formulations of its universal tenets, and while most scholars in the field of cosmopolitan studies do not dispute the roots of the word – its most literal meaning –, they cannot seem to agree on what the concept implies, and very few clarify the definition of cosmopolitanism that they employ. Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty even write, in the conclusion to their book *Cosmopolitanisms*, that "Cosmopolitanism may ... be a project whose conceptual content and

pragmatic character are not only as yet unspecified but also must always escape positive and definite specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do" (577). Most common contemporary definitions, although incomplete, include the idea of "a posture of worldly sophistication which is naturally contrasted with more provincial or parochial outlooks" (Scheffler 255); treat cosmopolitanism as involving a "reflective distance from one's original or primary cultural affiliations, a broad understanding of other cultures and customs, and a belief in universal humanity" (Anderson 63 qtd. in Goodlad 400); describe the core of cosmopolitanism as "an intellectual and aesthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences, and an ability to make one's way into other cultures" (Hannerz 200); or focus on the cosmopolitan – the person – rather than on the concept. Ulf Hannerz, for instance, thinks of the cosmopolitan "as possessing [a] set of cultural skills ... a cultural repertoire" (210). Cosmopolitanism, then, becomes a mindset. The cosmopolitan is open to learn about diversity, and "embodies the universality of philosophical reason itself, namely its power of transcending the particular and contingent" (Cheah, "Cosmopolitanism" 487). This ability to transcend one's local surroundings has often led in Latin America, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the association of cosmopolitan writers and their works with a lack of commitment with and disengagement from the nation.

One scholar who does provide a definition is Appiah. First in "Cosmopolitan Patriots" (2005) and later in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), he goes back to the root of the word and to Hellenistic cosmopolitanism to define it as a sentiment, not an ideology, and as an ethical stance regarding world citizenship. He proposes that

> there are two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism. One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship.

> The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance. (*Cosmopolitanism* xv)

A cosmopolitan, then, is someone who is "secure in [his or] her difference, but also open to the difference of others" ("Cosmopolitan reading" 215). Cosmopolitanism "commits you to a global conversation, or a set of global conversations, about the things that matter. I count someone as a cosmopolitan if they're willing to engage in that conversation without the hope of making everybody like them" ("Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism").[3] The very idea of a cosmopolitan community, in which people from different backgrounds would interact with respect and open minds, is perhaps the biggest utopia of cosmopolitanism. The disappearance of frontiers, along with the increasingly porous nature of nation-state borders, make the number of people with whom a certain individual relates increase exponentially. In "Cosmopolitan Patriots," Appiah expresses his belief that "the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people" (618). Consequently, rooted cosmopolitanism is a celebration of diversity.[4] It is within this augmentation of relationships that cosmopolitanism develops, to the

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[3] Appiah also disagrees with those who think that cosmopolitan equals Westerner: "It's a misunderstanding to think that cosmopolitans are only a bunch of elite westerners. Michael Ignatieff has this nice phrase that human rights have gone global by going local" ("Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism"), and, as a result, relate to Stoic cosmopolitanism.

[4] Appiah is but one of many scholars to advocate in favour of rooted cosmopolitanism. Some authors refer to the same idea using a slightly different terminology: Dallmayr's "anchored cosmopolitanism" (2003), Baynes's "situated cosmopolitanism" (2007), Erskine's "embedded cosmopolitanism" (2008), and Werbner's "vernacular cosmopolitanism" (2006) all express similar ideas. According to Kymlicka, "Rooted cosmopolitanism attempts to maintain the commitment to moral cosmopolitanism, while revising earlier commitments to a world state or a common global culture, and affirming instead the enduring reality and value of cultural diversity and local or national self-government. Even as rooted cosmopolitanism affirms the legitimacy of national self-government, however, it also entails revising our traditional understanding of nationhood. For many rooted cosmopolitans, the nation can no longer be seen as the locus of unqualified sovereignty, exclusive loyalty, or blind patriotism. People's attachment to their ethnic cultures and national states must be constrained by moral cosmopolitan commitments to

extent that "each person you know about and can affect is someone to whom you have responsibilities: to say this is just to affirm the very idea of morality" (*Cosmopolitanism* xiii). What he advances is a "dialogue among differences" ("Cosmopolitan Reading" 207) and "conversations among places" (225) that put the main emphasis on human beings and their practices.[5]

Adopting this logic, I propose that the cosmopolitan *par excellence* is a person who cares about other human beings, but more crucially, who is aware that the specificity of their values and social practices is an integral part of their identity. The cosmopolitan is also conscious that such practices may be different from his or hers, but is willing to accept them nonetheless, even if there is a clash between the two types of beliefs or actions, for cosmopolitanism is about human beings and whatever practices they choose to enjoy. As Appiah states,

> But while cosmopolitanism is indeed about seeing yourself as belonging to a world of fellows, the cosmopolitan's fellows are living lives in their own style, and the cosmopolitan rejoices in the fact that "their" styles need not be "ours." Cosmopolitanism is, to reach a formula, universalism plus difference. It is thus one of the two possible poles of humanism: it thinks nothing human alien, but not because it imagines all humanity in its own image ("Cosmopolitan reading" 202).[6]

Thus, cosmopolitanism is not only a concept or a theory: "it's an adventure and an ideal" (*Cosmopolitanism* 32), in that few people are completely willing to accept certain fundamental

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human rights, global justice, and international law. Rooted cosmopolitanism, in short, attempts to redefine our traditional understandings of both cosmopolitanism and nationhood" (3).

[5] Appiah's stance proposes a balance between the universal and local aspect of the cosmopolitan identity; it is thus a practicable cosmopolitanism, in Appiah's words, a "tenable cosmopolitanism" (*Ethics of Identity* 223), one that allows a "permissible partiality" ("Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism").

[6] This is somewhat similar to the discourse held by critics of cosmopolitanism in Latin America. They think of cosmopolitanism as the expansion of an image of the West and as the erasure of local culture. Cosmopolitans are thus seen as unpatriotic for contributing to the dissolution of the local.

differences between cultures.[7] Cosmopolitanism becomes an ideal to which one aspires, not a complete identity one assumes; it advocates difference in the name of universalism, and in so doing blurs the traditional dichotomy that has pitted cosmopolitans against nationalists in Latin America's intellectual and literary history, and that, as I will discuss later, in spite of the cosmopolitan authors, who, across the region, have always strived to deconstruct the dichotomy.

Appiah's theories, which I propose to expand and redefine by evaluating the post-colonial perspective of Argentinean thinker Walter D. Mignolo, are the basis for the elaboration of my conceptualization of cosmopolitanism. The main criticism of *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, one I do not share, is that it does not provide a clear definition of what cosmopolitanism is – or should be –, but rather appears to be a defence of partial cosmopolitanism, which seems uncosmopolitan, inasmuch as it does not advocate for the disappearance of national communities in the quest for a universal one. For this reason, I am critical of thinkers, who are, in my view, extreme or intemperate cosmopolitans, those who deny the importance of nation-states and borders, and plead for a completely universal world in which local loyalties and allegiances do not matter. On the contrary, they are of consequence for they determine who we are as citizens of the world, and what we can bring to this universal conversation. Not only do they matter, but aligned with current theories, I contend that they are reconcilable. For this reason, the idea of partial cosmopolitanism, perceived as flawed by certain academics, is useful to this study, in that it is a practical and "actually existing" (Calhoun 1) cosmopolitanism, one that is rooted in cultural and historical experiences and considerations – both of which are fundamental for understanding the concept in Latin America's history. As Camille Fojas concludes, in *Cosmopolitanism in the Americas*, "cosmopolitanism in principle

[7] Camille Fojas maintains that "Cosmopolitanism does not promote an easy access to other cultural ways and modes, as this series of prerequisites suggests; rather, becoming cosmopolitan means expanding the means of understanding others and elsewhere" (34).

turns away from the national norm" (134) but "in practice is regulated and determined by the locality from which it emanates, from the national conditions" (135).

From my perspective, the practicality of this conceptualization makes cosmopolitanism all the more relevant to understanding national situations. Appiah stresses the importance of the local aspects of cosmopolitanism:

> It is because humans live best on a smaller scale that liberal cosmopolitans should acknowledge the ethical salience of not just the state but the county, the town, the street, the business, the craft, the profession, the family *as* communities, as circles among the many circles narrower than the human horizon that are appropriate spheres of human concerns. (*Ethics of Identity* 246)

Indeed, as in the Stoics's concentric circles, cosmopolitans first and foremost owe allegiance to the ones closest to them. It is thus not uncosmopolitan to acknowledge the significance of local and national allegiance.

Evidently, Latin America's relationship with cosmopolitanism is closely tied to the notions of nationalism, colonialism, and postcolonialism. Most post-colonial readings of cosmopolitanism, such as those of Mignolo, focus on how the very concept has been eurocentred and tied to imperialism from its inception.[8] Mignolo's stance on cosmopolitanism is of primary importance for the methodology I elaborate here, for he examines it in the context of the colonial and neo-colonial histories that characterized Latin America's relationship with Europe and the United States.

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[8] Even today, some scholars still argue that cosmopolitanism is tied to some sort of imperialism: "L'idée – qui se veut sans doute généreuse dans son intention – que ce que nous revendiquions comme juste et bon pour nous, la justice cosmopolitique requiert que nous l'accordions à tous, n'est pas sans évoquer les apories auxquelles Kant lui-même s'exposait en avançant que l'égalité de tous les êtres humains justifiait que l'on propage à l'échelle de l'humanité rien de moins que la civilisation européenne; elle n'est pas non plus sans rappeler les justifications, tacitement et, on voudrait le croire, involontairement alléguées par les Lumières, du colonialisme en tant que mission civilisatrice" (Couture, "Qu'est-ce que le cosmopolitisme?" 34).

In terms of my methodological approach, this grounding of cosmopolitan thought in history is instrumental in the assessment of its place in Latin American intellectual and literary history. Mignolo proposes a different starting point for the cosmopolitan ideals. He identifies cosmopolitanism's point of departure in the Americas with the "emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit" ("The Many Faces of the Cosmo-*polis*: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism" 725) in the sixteenth century. At the time, two complementary strands of cosmopolitanism co-existed: a religious cosmopolitan project related to "Christianity's global design," articulated by Francisco de Vitoria at the University of Salamanca,[9] and a secular "civilizing global design," led by Immanuel Kant at the University of Königsberg (724).[10] Although these two projects diverged on the means, "both ... were linked to coloniality and to the emergence of the modern/colonial world" (724). Mignolo considers coloniality to be the darker side of modernity, but also a constitutive side of it (724). Without coloniality, modernity would not have happened. A true dialogue among nations – a colonial power and a colony – is improbable as long as the empire retains its superiority. Since the concept was born in Europe, and has been applied mostly by Europe in its colonial relationship to its periphery, it has been seen as hard to reconcile with Latin America.[11]

The dichotomy between modernity and coloniality made it nearly impossible for Latin America to enter the realm of modernity as long as it was bound by its colonial mindset, but that very mindset was what brought it on the brink of modernity in the first place (*The Idea of Latin*

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[9] Vitoria's main objective was to bring to an end, once and for all, the poor treatment of the Indians of America. By arguing that since they possessed reason – an argument of the Stoics – they were human beings, and consequently, undeserving of slavery, Vitoria argued in favour of peaceful coexistence, an underlying theme of cosmopolitanism.
[10] In the article "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History," Sheldon Pollock develops this same idea of Christianity as a major cosmopolitan force, albeit one that sought to impose a uniform view.
[11] Others scholars, such as political scientist Fred Dallmayr and philosopher Eduardo Mendieta, share a similar perspective. See for instance Dallmayr's "Empire or Cosmopolis? Civilization at the Crossroads" (2005) and "Cosmopolitanism: Moral and Political" (2003), and Mendieta's *Global Fragments* (2001) and "From Imperial to Dialogical Cosmopolitanism" (2003).

America). The impact of colonialism was such that, even long after the colonizer left, the colonized had difficulty modifying their epistemic understanding of themselves. For Mignolo, the challenge is to undo the impact of colonization, and for that he proposes the notion of decolonial cosmopolitanism, which he conceptualizes as devoid of an imperial worldview, and therefore distinct from some of the formulations of Western cosmopolitanism in the modern era. Mignolo reasons that "to maintain cosmopolitan ideals [in the twenty-first century] we need to decolonize" (270) them, so that Western cosmopolitanism could be one of many possible cosmopolitanisms, but not the sole option.[12] This multiplicity of incarnations serves to reconcile the concept with Latin America, for, I contend, it allows the continent to transcend the core/periphery dogma, and engage in the cosmopolitan conversation.

As I have shown, the diverse notions of cosmopolitanism, from the Greeks to the present, intersect in contemporary formulations. In spite of the long intellectual history of the concept, the exact definition of cosmopolitanism is still contentious. For this reason, I accept Appiah's theorizations, for he proposes a definition that is pragmatic, and that, in desconstructing the dichotomy that pits cosmopolitanism against nationalism, becomes useful for the study of Latin America. Finally, from a philosophical perspective, Mignolo underscores the need to ground the concept in global history, and advances a definition that reconciles the concept with the multiple concerns of Latin America's intellectual history, and engages the region in a conversation about cosmopolitanism. Such post-colonial readings are trying to create a space for the subaltern, to erase the idea of a passive reception of the positive aspects of the Western world by the other. In

[12] Mignolo advocates in favour of decoloniality, that he describes as a movement that confronts "the colonial matrix of power" (*The Darker Side of Western Modernity* xxvii). The main objective of decoloniality is to erase all aspects of coloniality, and rearticulate history as stemming from multiples locations, not only Europe. Decoloniality and postcoloniality are often conflated; however, while postcoloniality is mostly about studying the effects of colonialism on societies, decoloniality is a concrete practice that aims at undoing the – according to decolonial scholars such as Mignolo – ever-growing effects of colonialism and its recent incarnation, globalization. Decoloniality is particularly used in relation to Latin America. Decolonial theorists argue that postcoloniality is mostly an intellectual movement, while decoloniality is an actual praxis.

a sense, post-colonial cosmopolitanism is trying to reach the ideal within the very concept of cosmopolitanism, that is, a relationship in which there are no subaltern cultures. It seeks to create a relationship based on true equality.

In what follows, I develop my own formulation of cosmopolitanism, one that can serve as a productive prism to interpret the critique and the reception of cosmopolitanism in Latin American literature, as well as to discern its treatment in the novels I study, and their place within that tradition. In order to assess cosmopolitanism in contemporary literature, it is crucial to ground the concept in the context of Latin America's trajectory in the periphery of the modern Western world, and take into account its history of colonialism and neo-colonialism. With this in mind I blend Appiah's concept of rooted cosmopolitanism with Mignolo's notions of decolonial cosmopolitanism.

The idea of rooted cosmopolitanism is particularly apt for, on the one hand, it promotes cultural difference as the basis of any articulation of a universal community, and, on the other, gives primacy of place to literature in the forging of that articulation. Rooted cosmopolitanism is conceived of as a conversation among peoples and places. The nation cannot be the locus of absolute sovereignty; while affirming the enduring and necessary reality of the nation, cultures and states must be constrained by moral cosmopolitan commitments. Rooted cosmopolitanism thus redefines our understanding of cosmopolitanism and nationalism, and, in the process, subverts the foundations of the traditional binary opposition.

In this conceptualization, the term rooted invokes cultural difference – cosmopolitanism is universalism plus difference (Appiah, "Cosmopolitan reading" 202) –, which I take to mean the articulation of place and time. Such an articulation combines the nation and the world with the history of a given culture. Although post-colonial scholars of cosmopolitanism frequently underline the lack of critical assessment of colonialism and neo-colonialism, a pragmatic

approach to the concept opens the possibilities of a theorization that does not circumvent the complexities of cosmopolitanism and its Eurocentric history. Indeed, I understand cosmopolitanism as a concept that implicitly carries historical considerations. In this regard, I take rooted to mean cultural difference of a given nation across place and time.

My reading of rooted cosmopolitanism is thus particularly receptive to Mignolo's notion of decolonial cosmopolitanism. These conceptualizations are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, both explicitly or implicitly advocate for universal values in the context of the absence of subaltern cultures. Whereas Appiah is concerned with a pragmatic proposition of cosmopolitanism, Mignolo's main objective is to trace its genealogy, its links to European imperial expansion in Latin America, in order to advance a conceptualization devoid of any imperial worldview. This post-colonial perspective can be productively reconciled with Appiah's formulation by instilling the notion of rooted with post-colonial history. As a result, rooted cosmopolitanism is a conceptualization that articulates a redefined notion of nationhood and universalism, and that grounds that articulation in historical concerns. This notion is a prism that I consider particularly apt to examine Spanish American literature. As I will subsequently discuss, combined with cosmopolitan reading, it becomes a productive strategy with which to analyze my corpus.

Literature is the privileged discourse to discuss cosmopolitanism, for narratives are universal; even national narratives can resonate with readers that are not necessarily native to a national setting, for human experiences are similar. "Literature creates the world and cosmopolitan bonds," stresses Pheng Cheah, "not only because it enables us to imagine a world through its power of figuration, but also because it arouses in us pleasure and a desire to share this pleasure through universal communication" (*What is a world?* 27). The worlds postulated by literature, in which characters move about in situations similar to ours, face obstacles, debate

ideas, are perhaps the best way to spread cosmopolitanism, for "literature [plays] an active role in the world's ongoing creation because, through the receptibility it enacts, it is an inexhaustible resource for contesting the world given to us" (35). Mignolo, for his part, refers more generally to the importance of art in the articulation of a nation's psyche (*The Darker Side of Western Modernity*). For him, art is the site where a community's understanding of itself is best articulated, and usually unfiltered.

This idea of a narrative, be it national or global, is one of the tools of the cosmopolitan. Everyone can be a cosmopolitan because every human being understands the concept of narrative: indeed, it is "through their shared exposure to narrations of those events" (Appiah, *Ethics of Identity* 245) that human beings acquire an understanding of other people's lives, for "The basic human capacity to grasp stories, even strange stories, is also what links us, powerfully, to others, even strange others" (257).[13] Appiah postulates that "Our modern solidarity derives from stories in which we participate through synecdoche" (245). We recognize ourselves through others and their stories, and in the end it commits us to others. For Appiah, a

> Cosmopolitan reading presupposes a world in which novels (and music and sculptures and other significant objects) travel between places where they are understood differently, because people are different and welcome to their difference. Cosmopolitan reading is *worthwhile* because there can be common conversations about these standard objects, the novel prominent among them. Cosmopolitan reading is *possible* because those conversations are possible. But what makes the conversations possible is not always shared culture ... ; not even, as the older humanists imagined, universal principles or

[13] In Appiah's conceptualization, "what makes the cosmopolitan experience possible – in reading as elsewhere – is not that we share beliefs and values because of our common capacity for reason: in the novel, at least, it is not 'reason' but a different human capacity that grounds our sharing: namely, the grasp of a narrative logic that allows us to construct the world to which our imaginations respond" ("Cosmopolitan reading" 223).

> values ... ; nor shared understanding ... What is necessary to read novels across gaps of space, time and experience is the capacity to follow a narrative and conjure a world. ("Cosmopolitan reading" 224)

As a result, a cosmopolitan reading is more than literary cosmopolitanism or a cosmopolitan interpretation, since it is the very condition of possibility for a cosmopolitan community. The universality of narrative clearly indicates that cosmopolitanism is within reach of every human being. Such a cosmopolitan reading entails two aspects: narrative is cosmopolitan because it is universal, and as such can reach any human being, and literature is the best space to discuss cosmopolitanism due to its universality. The reading of narratives of diverse nationalities promotes cosmopolitanism since they reveal the universality of human experience. These do not need to be cosmopolitan narratives – on the contrary, their cultural specificity allows for the detection of the universal in all humans and therefore reinforces the idea of cosmopolitanism.

Thus, for the purpose of my investigation, I propose to articulate my analysis from the perspective of a cosmopolitan reader, although expanding the notion to encompass methodological and theoretical considerations. I reconceptualize cosmopolitan reading, grounding it in historical and cultural concerns, much like what I have done with the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism. Narrative, in revealing our common humanity, serves as a tool to promote cosmopolitanism. Of all literary genres, the novel appears to be the best space to articulate this, since it creates complex worlds that resemble the one in which readers evolve. In such a scheme, they play a primary role: it is incumbent on them to produce, through the confirmation of commonalities across cultures, a cosmopolitan reading. Readers are in charge of connecting the dots, and turning the novels into a space of universality.

Within this scheme, I turn the notion of cosmopolitan reading into a productive interpretive framework to study the representation of cosmopolitanism in my corpus. In line with

the notion of the cosmopolitan reader, who turns fictions into spaces of universality, I wish to identify the plotting of cosmopolitanism in novels whose narrative worlds are populated with characters who reside in multiple localities, travel across cultural boundaries, and live through global events. In order to examine this complex representation, my reading combines cosmopolitan theory with literary and cultural theory, especially Latin American theories of culture, to perform a close textual analysis that is grounded in intellectual and literary history, as well as in the context of production of the novels.

My cosmopolitan reading of contemporary Spanish American fictions is predicated on the notion that the representation of travelling and residence across nations always involves the plotting of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, I advance that such representation of movement and displacement creates a textual field so potent that a cosmopolitan reading becomes inevitable. This reading invites a close textual analysis because the deciphering of minute manipulations of form, such as the rewriting and reframing of literary genres, allows me to show how the politics of cosmopolitanism are paralleled with aesthetic transformations. Reading at a smaller scale also reveals how seemingly marginal details illuminate the text and its political commitment in unexpected ways.

In order to explore and assess the politics of cosmopolitanism in contemporary Spanish American literature, my reconceptualization of cosmopolitan reading is predicated on combining the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism with the need to ground the concept in colonial and post-colonial histories. This theoretical and historical prism serves to identify and assess the cosmopolitan propositions at work. The lens of literary history is useful in that it enables me to trace an evolution in the cosmopolitan production, as well as to situate the selected authors' production. Moreover, this approach is grounded in the broad context of Latin American intellectual history. The long tradition of intellectual and political debates about and against

cosmopolitanism also informs the writing of fictions. Reading the novels in the context of these histories allows for the detection of the positions adopted by the authors in their essays, articles, but more importantly in their novels.

As for the aesthetics of cosmopolitanism, my cosmopolitan reading aims to discern how the plotting of cosmopolitanism leads writers to develop new narrative recourses. Thus my reading is set against national and nationalist literary traditions with the objective of establishing how Spanish American novels explicitly or implicitly represent and create a critical dialogue with literary genres, and especially with those that have traditionally served to project notions of national identity and history. The hermeneutic strategy serves to analyze how the discursive properties of certain national genres are transformed in works that plot transnational experiences and trajectories.

Overall, cosmopolitan reading is an interpretive strategy, grounded in a broad field of critical theoretical works as well as Latin American intellectual and literary histories, aimed at deciphering the ways in which a group of contemporary texts plot cosmopolitanism.

I propose to read these contemporary Spanish American novels as cosmopolitan fictions or fictions about cosmopolitanism. I contend that the selected novels specifically plot the politics of cosmopolitanism, and that this plotting affects narrative form. In this regard, these fictions have acquired another function, different from that of their so-called cosmopolitan predecessors, at least according to literary history. Whereas most studies on cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literary criticism are about the influx of traditions in a given literary work, and are concerned with discerning how authors try to create a universal artistic language, my investigation identifies novels that express political concerns, and reads them as articulating cosmopolitics. Indeed, while canonical cosmopolitan works produced either during *Modernismo*, that developed an aesthetic cosmopolitanism through the blending of traditions – namely the

French and the Latin American ones, or the *Boom*, that sought to create a universal language and a universal aesthetic expression, the novels that form my corpus discuss cosmopolitanism, meaning that they are concerned with representing characters politically engaging their localities and the world.

The five novels I study can be read with the notion of cosmopolitanism as a political and philosophical idea, and its effect on one's identity. I do not claim that the works I study cannot be aesthetically cosmopolitan; however they are not in search of a universal language. Their main focus remains political. The fact that they are not set in Latin America can make them more accessible, but no specific literary technique is used to make them universal, as was the case with *Modernismo*, the *Vanguardias* or the *Boom*. This marks a break in the treatment of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literature. Most Latin American authors deemed cosmopolitan by the critical tradition have not written cosmopolitan novels in the sense of writing narratives, as Berthold Shoene-Harwood puts it, with the political "purpose and intention ... to imagine humanity in global coexistence ... or to conceive of real cosmopolitics as communal tackling" of the world's problems (186). This tackling of the world's problems is, however, represented in the novels of my corpus, in which characters show a preocuppation with being world citizens.

Fernando Rosenberg and Mariano Siskind, two of the scholars who have written the most prominent studies on cosmopolitanism in Latin American literature, have advanced theories articulated around the notions of "displacement" and "deseo de mundo," or desire for the world, respectively. Both researchers have focused on earlier periods of Latin American literature to conclude that cosmopolitanism, while always a lingering presence in the continent, has generally been displaced by analogous and more politically expedient concepts such as transculturation or *antropofagia* (Rosenberg), or that cosmopolitanism has always expressed a "desire for the world"

(Siskind), an impulse on the part of artists, including writers, to break with the asynchronicity of living in the periphery of the Western world. Although I agree with their assessment, this research traces the shift from "displacement" and "deseo de mundo" to an affirmation of cosmopolitanism. It is this objective that led me to study the origins and evolution of this shift by focusing on works published in the last three decades (1988-2010).

The selected corpus of novels advances a conjured world that combines spaces, times, and experiences, and in which cultural and historical specificities are plotted and made to interact. I address four broad questions to this corpus. First, how is cosmopolitanism plotted in works by authors belonging to three different literary generations? Second, what conceptions of cosmopolitanism are at work in these novels? Third, what narrative recourses are used to plot cosmopolitanism? Fourth, how do these novels inscribe themselves in literary and intellectual history? These lines of inquiry aim to reveal the political in literary representations of cosmopolitanism, describe the narrative recourses adopted by the authors, establish differences and similarities between the proposals advanced by each one, and compare their conceptions of cosmopolitanism.

Chapter 2 – Cosmopolitanism in Spanish American Literature

"Es preciso ser a la vez el hombre de su época y el de su pueblo,
pero hay que ser ante todo el hombre de su pueblo."
José Martí, *Nuestra América*

My objective is to assess the place of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American intellectual and literary traditions, as well as its critical reception. This examination allows me to situate the selected novels and their critical dialogue within intellectual and literary discourses about cosmopolitanism. My major contention is twofold: first, discussions about cosmopolitanism in Spanish America, for the most part, had never been about cosmopolitanism *per se*, and second, the Spanish American literary tradition, thus far, had not dealt with issues of global citizenship. The works I study fill this void with a novel articulation of global concerns; their primary impulse is to explore universal events and trajectories, and their ultimate objective is a reflection on a cosmopolitan ethos.

In this regard, the selected corpus, I posit, represents cosmopolitanism proper, and this marks a break with traditional discussions and representations of cosmopolitanism in Spanish America. In what follows I show that cosmopolitanism has been mostly associated with three major notions: miscegenation, modernity, and nationalism. First, I assert that cosmopolitanism has been displaced by more politically expedient concepts such as miscegenation. Second, I contend that cosmopolitanism has been associated with the quest for modernity, conceived by some, in fact, almost as a nation-building tool. Third, I maintain that cosmopolitanism has always been in tension with nationalism, to the extent that the latter was used as a way to criticize and denounce a lack of patriotic engagement on the part of artists. Furthermore, I argue that in the literary tradition, cosmopolitanism has been about aesthetic cosmopolitanism; a defence of a conception of literature in dialogue with the universal literary canon. Finally, I claim that so-called cosmopolitan artists in Spanish America, although often criticized for their aesthetic, never

advocated a radical notion of cosmopolitanism or explored cosmopolitanism proper in their works. However, I advance that their cosmopolitan aesthetics often revealed an implicit conception of cosmopolitanism that I propose to call rooted cosmopolitanism.

It is now widely acknowledged that Latin America did not experience modernity the same way as most Western countries. Indeed, the continent was out of step with European modernity, which, for some, it did not fully reach until the 1970s (Pizarro, *El sur y los trópicos* 27-40). While there is no consensus on how to name this phenomenon, its importance is unquestionable in the continent's development. In the 1970s, Ángel Rama referred to an *arritmia temporal* that would be specific to Latin America; he stated that "lo propio del continente es una arritmia temporal respecto del modelo extranjero" (*Las máscaras democráticas del modernismo* 37).[14] Meanwhile, contemporarily, Beatriz Sarlo has chosen to use peripheral modernity, an expression usually associated with dependency theory, as well as with an acute awareness of such a difference, to explain this aspect of Latin America's evolution (*Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930*). Peripheral modernity refers to the social and cultural characteristics of so-called underdeveloped countries, and how they experienced modernity through imitation and adaptation. Fernando Rosenberg (2006), for his part, gives analytical pre-eminence to Johannes Fabian's concept of coevalness, to explain how Latin American authors and artists dealt with the asynchronity of the periphery and strived to undo this denial of coevalness imposed onto

[14] Rama elaborates on the concept and argues that "Si visualizamos los cincuenta años de la cultura modernizada internacionalista como un proceso evolutivo que sin cesar va ampliando sus bases o sea incorporando nuevos stratta, enriquecido por sucesivas incorporaciones externas y sucesivas inventivas respuestas internas que no se sustituyen sino que se acumulan combinándose de diversas maneras, trabajando sobre un sistema de valores culturales consolidado en América Latina por una elaboración de siglos, el cual es trastornado por su integración a una civilización-mundo que ya pertenece a los sistemas productivos industriales, deberemos convenir que no puede depararnos sino un arte en movimiento que no acepta demarcaciones estéticas rígidas ni puede reducirse a equivalencias más o menos logradas con las corrientes europeas" (61).

them by their locality.[15] In the periphery, artists wanted to imitate foreign models, worldly models – Mariano Siskind (2014) calls this a *deseo de mundo*, a desire for the world – and were consequently deemed cosmopolitan and unnational, which could largely explain why the term, regardless of its multiple meanings, has had, for the most part, a negative connotation in Latin America.

From the Wars of Independence onwards, aesthetic cosmopolitanism was a means to address the problems of a continent that was perceived as lagging behind in terms of culture, intellectual life, and political organization. *Deseo de mundo*, where at the time world really meant Europe, drove artists to immerse themselves in foreign literary traditions and adopt aesthetic cosmopolitanism to (try to) address the *arritmia temporal* that defined their era.

This explains why cosmopolitanism has always been at the forefront of artistic and intellectual discussions. This catching up with modernity extended to all areas of intellectual life; it was both aesthetic and political, but never political in the true sense of cosmopolitanism, since it never involved a reflection about the universal ideas and values of a global community. Even criticism of cosmopolitanism was mostly triggered by the aesthetic proposals authors were making in engaging various literary traditions, since the addition of literary devices and styles was seen as diluting pure national elements. These nationalist concerns, or nationalism, thus formed the binary opposition that would become the cornerstone of Latin America's literary history. Surprisingly, this dichotomy has never been the subject of critical study until recent years. It has led contemporary scholars such as Rosenberg to maintain that contemporary Latin America is indebted to cosmopolitanism, for it has always shaped its reflections on cultural

[15] Fabian coined the term coevalness in *Time and the Other* (1983), where he suggests that "for human communication to occur, coevalness has to be *created*" (italics in the original 30-31). Coevalness is a critical paradigm that emphasizes synchronicity among peoples and nations (16). Coevalness emphasizes how different people are able to influence each other at any given time, when they evolve in the same temporal timeframe.

identity, and this, even when it was used as a counterpoint for what was deemed good and national. The rejection of cosmopolitanism as a prism through which to approach the continent was due to the imperial connotations it carried, connotations that did not bode well in Latin America, where

> La noción de cosmopolitismo está muchas veces asociada con ideas tan desencontradas como las pretensiones universalistas eurocéntricas de la alta cultura, con adscripciones imperiales al nivel de la política, y con el desapego, el desprendimiento, o simplemente la posición irónica, esteticista o hedonista al nivel del sujeto (una vida de lujos y placeres, como dice algún tango, y lo sigue afirmando hoy el nombre del trago). Al cosmopolitismo se lo relaciona con una estudiada distancia, cuando no un menosprecio y falta de sensibilidad, respecto a los problemas locales y/o nacionales. ("Afecto y política" 468)

In the age of globalization, most contemporary artists and intellectuals have overcome this perception, and cosmopolitanism could now be a productive lens with which to analyze the continent and its relationship with the world.

Cosmopolitanism and *Mestizaje*

While Spanish America's contentious relationship with cosmopolitanism can be traced back to the Wars of Independence – the continent's first formal step towards, in Mignolo's words, undoing coloniality – its displacement in favour of other concepts deemed more suited for the continent goes back even further. Leopoldo Zea, in *El regreso de las carabelas* (1993), asks "¿De dónde surge esta utopía que Vasconcelos, Bolívar, Martí y otros muchos latinoamericanos imaginaban como meta universal? De la historia, de la experiencia histórica de la región que emergió a la historia de la conciencia europea el 12 de octubre de 1492, este es, hace quinientos años" (55), thus setting the birth of the complexity of the *mestizo* identity on the very day of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. His reflection is indicative of how Latin America and

mestizaje are intertwined, and, to some extent, inseparable, which explains its prevalence in intellectual history from 1800 onwards.

Major thinkers of the independence movements saw the importance of rallying all the social strata under one name in the newborn nations. The movements used *mestizaje* to further their message and tried to use it as a nation-building tool. Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), *El Libertador*, referred to the *mestizo* nature of Latin America in many letters and speeches, the most famous being the "Carta de Jamaica" (1815) and the "Angostura Address" (1819). In the "Carta de Jamaica," Bolívar admits that Latin American identity is in some sort of limbo, and illustrates that *mestizaje* is not solely based on racial features, but also on cultural aspects of identity:

> nosotros, que apenas conservamos vestigios de lo que en otro tiempo fue, y que por otra parte no somos indios, ni europeos, sino una especie mezcla entre los legítimos propietarios del país y los usurpadores españoles; en suma, siendo nosotros americanos por nacimiento, y nuestros derechos los de Europa, tenemos que disputar éstos a los del país.[16] (164)

Bolívar sets the *mestizo* nature of the continent between "los legítimos propietarios del país y los usurpadores españoles" (164), acknowledging that Latin America learned from both, and calls the people resulting from this *mestizaje americanos*. As such, his conception is more cultural and political than biological or ethnic. The *mestizo* is the person born in America rather than in Europe. Later on, in 1819, he advanced similar ideas in front of the *Congreso de Angostura*, when he said that "nuestro pueblo no es el europeo, ni el americano del norte" (682), and argued

[16] In 1819, in front of the *Congreso de Angostura*, Bolívar used a different phrasing to convey the same meaning: "Nosotros ni aun conservamos los vestigios de lo que fue en otro tiempo; no somos europeos, no somos indios, sino una especie media entre los aborígenes y los españoles. Americanos por nacimiento y europeos por derechos, nos hallamos en el conflicto de disputar a los naturales los títulos de posesión y de mantenernos en el país que nos vio nacer, contra la oposición de los invasores; así nuestro caso es el más extraordinario y complicado" (683).

that the purity of nations is no longer an issue: North America is now more a "compuesto de África y de América que una emanación de Europa," and even Spain, the motherland, "deja de ser europea por su sangre africana, por sus instituciones y por su carácter" (682). Racial mixing then dilutes the particularities of every race, and miscegenation becomes the main characteristic of Latin America.[17] Bolívar maintained that such a difference was a transcendental debt, and with it came the responsibility of allowing the newly created nations to bloom.

While Bolívar had a pragmatic approach to *mestizaje*, and adopted it as a political strategy to rally diverse populations with competing interests, it only became a national ideology in various Latin American countries during the first decades of the twentieth century. In fact, numerous authors claimed that racial mixing was beneficial for any given society, and *mestizaje* was perceived as a way to achieve national unity in a context where recently born nations were going through a difficult phase. For instance, Cuban activist and writer José Martí advocated, in *Nuestra América* (1891), for the inclusion of the Indian into the nation-building process. Contrasting Cuba with its enemy the United States, he claimed that to rise above as a nation, Cuba had to reject any tie to America's behaviour: "¡Estos hijos de nuestra América, que ha de salvarse con sus indios, y va de menos a más; estos desertores que piden fusil en los ejércitos de la América del Norte, que ahoga en sangre a sus indios, y va de más a menos!" (22).[18] Martí sets Latin America, and especially Cuba, on a higher ground than the United States when it comes to the inclusion of the ethnically subaltern: while the United States had annihilated them, Cuba was to include them culturally and politically in the nation. Like Bolívar, Martí advocated for a new

[17] In the "Discurso de Angostura," Bolívar claimed that "Es imposible asignar con propiedad a qué familia humana pertenecemos. La mayor parte del indígena se ha aniquilado; el europeo se ha mezclado con el americano y con el africano, y éste se ha mezclado con el indio y con el europeo. Nacidos todos del seno de una misma madre, nuestros padres, diferentes en origen y en sangre, son extranjeros, y todos difieren visiblemente en la epidermis; esta desemejanza, trae un réato de la mayor trascendencia" (676).

[18] Although Martí refers to *indios*, he probably meant *mestizos* or ethnically subalterns. It would have been impossible for Cuba to include *indios*, for they were eliminated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Caribbean. He was speaking in general terms about Spanish Americans.

American identity. Martí's was but one of the many calls for the inclusion of the subaltern in the modernization process.

The apogee of *mestizaje* was the post-revolutionary period in Mexico. Philosopher and Education Minister José Vasconcelos published *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana* (1925),[19] an essay/pamphlet in which he articulated the idea of a new nation that would unify all members of Mexican society, and eventually the world. Its publication also marked the transformation of the concept into a full-blown political and state ideology.[20] In it, Vasconcelos advocates for the advent of a *quinta raza*, a fifth race that would merge all the different races, thus creating a better world. He believed that a new Enlightenment would result through the merging of four racial groups, namely the Black, the Indian, the Mongol and the White. In his worldview, Latin America was the best setting to witness the formation of this cosmic race, since it had a long history of racial mixing: "La ventaja de nuestra tradición es que posee mayor facilidad de simpatía con los extraños. Esto implica que nuestra civilización, con

[19] *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana* is divided into two parts: *La raza cósmica* and a travel diary, in which Vasconcelos recounts his memories of a 1922 diplomatic mission to Argentina and Brazil. He compares Buenos Aires to Paris, and sees it as the epitome of civilization; yet Argentina is probably one of the least *mestizo* countries in Latin America, but definitely the most cosmopolitan.

[20] Three decades earlier, the Uruguayan essayist José Enrique Rodó Piñeyro (1871-1917) argued, in *Ariel* (1900), for a regional Latin American identity. Like Martí, his pleas urging youth to reject materialism, and to develop and concentrate on their own culture, were a reaction against the ever-growing influence of the United States in Latin America. Time and again, he voiced the importance of regional and national identity, and how it ought to be rooted into every country's respective traditions. Rodó asserted that, even though outside influences may be beneficial in the construction of a nation's collective psyche, it might also diminish the principles on which the nation was built. In the fifth chapter of *Ariel*, written in reaction to the Spanish-American War (1898), Rodó advanced that Latin America ought to resist the growing American imperialist power. According to Jacqueline Loss, "Rodó's *Ariel* is characterized by a regression into a cultural past under the threat that even more change is imminent. Its retrospective and prescriptive tone have made it a model for intellectuals' complicated negotiation of resistance to neo-imperialistic gestures throughout the twentieth and now even into the twenty-first century" (31). Although he did not explicitly state that Latin America ought to return to *mestizo* roots, he was one of the first intellectuals to call for the creation of a regional identity. In some of his early texts, Vasconcelos worked with the same ideas as Rodó, such as the rejection of the imposition of American ideas and institutions on Latin American soil and their totalizing power (Miller 33).

todos sus defectos, puede ser la elegida para asimilar y convertir a un nuevo tipo a todos los hombres" (15).[21]

Vasconcelos also envisioned *Universopolis*, a new city created by and for the fifth race, which would be the starting point of its expansion: "El mundo futuro será de quien conquiste la región amazónica. Cerca del gran río se levantará Universópolis y de allí saldrán las predicaciones, las escuadras y los aviones de propaganda de buenas nuevas" (21). This idea of a universal city is one of the clearest articulations of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American terms. It is also an articulation that amounts to a displacement of cosmopolitanism by miscegenation. Vasconcelos's world city is imagined in a way that accommodates and universalizes Latin America's cultural and racial history of miscegenation. This formulation fundamentally conceptualizes the continent's relation with the world in terms of *mestizaje*.[22] Vasconcelos's project is also reflective of the political, and also racist, possible uses of *mestizaje*. His understanding of racial mixing is associated with the improvement of races, and can be likened to a whitening of the race. This eugenic rhetoric mostly appears at the end of his pamphlet, where he reiterates the importance of erasing the flaws of all cultures and states that "Las razas inferiores, al educarse, se harían menos prolíficas, y los mejores especímenes irán ascendiendo en una escala

[21] Vasconcelos saw miscegenation as a positive and defining characteristic of the continent, going as far as to imply that the Spanish pursued it out of love: "Comienza a advertirse este mandato de la Historia en esa abundancia de amor que permitió a los españoles crear una raza nueva con el indio y con el negro; prodigando la estirpe blanca a través del soldado que engendraba familia indígena y la cultura de Occidente por medio de la doctrina y el ejemplo de los misioneros que pusieron al indio en condiciones de generar en la nueva etapa, la etapa del mundo Uno. La colonización española creó mestizaje; esto señala su carácter, fija su responsabilidad y define su porvenir" (*La raza cósmica* 15).

[22] Vasconcelos also showed signs of vehement nationalism. In a 1925 essay entitled "Raza pura y raza mezclada," he argued for Mexico to emancipate itself from other cultural forms and find its own, and asked his fellow citizens: "Pongamónos francamente en las filas de los pueblos de color; esta declaración no importa que reneguemos de nuestra porción de sangre blanca ni de nuestra cultura que es toda de origen blanco. Solamente quiere decir que antes que resignarnos a un coloniaje ya demasiado prolongado, debemos emanciparnos, aun cuando esta emancipación espiritual nos cueste perder un grado en la clasificación. En otros términos, vale más ser pueblo de color, pero autónomo de cultura, que un pueblo seudoblanco que vive de la producción espiritual de los verdaderos blancos" (*Qué es la revolución* 218).

de mejoramiento étnico, cuyo tipo máximo no es precisamente el blanco, sino esa nueva raza, a la que el mismo blanco tendrá que aspirar con el objeto de conquistar la síntesis" (27).

After Vasconcelos, *mestizaje* remained prominent, though promoted in different and more positive terms, in some Latin American countries. A few decades later, in "Conciencia e identidad de América," the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, who was deeply influenced by the notion of transculturation advanced by his compatriot, the anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, reflected on it in terms of encounters between different peoples. In his view, the history of Latin America is particularly worth studying, since it is "*una historia distinta a las demás historias del mundo*" (italics in the original 175). It is a "Historia distinta, desde un principio, puesto que este suelo americano fue teatro del más sensacional encuentro étnico que registran los anales de nuestro planeta" (175). The encounter is not merely biological, but also cultural. Such a symbiosis obviously results in exchanges, a certain globalization of practices, and a need to accept the other and his/her practices in order to live harmoniously. Citizenship ought to stem from the local aspects of the history of one's country in order to later expand on them. Moreover, much like Bolívar in his time, Carpentier advocates for a Pan-American knowledge of history, one that is not only national, but also continental.[23]

Throughout the twentieth century, *mestizaje* "was a conciliatory and comforting utopia that seems to gather onto one unique torrent the many rivers that converged in this physical and spiritual geography we call Latin America" (Cornejo-Polar, *Multiple Voices* 23). Even in 1992, five hundred years after the Discovery, that marked the symbolic birth of *mestizaje* in Latin America, the Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes claimed that the continent still had a use for the

[23] Indeed, "no sólo el estudio de la historia de la patria, sino la historia de todo el continente, convencidos como lo estamos de que nada latinoamericano puede sernos indiferente, y que las luchas, los logros, los dramas, las caídas y los triunfos, de las naciones hermanas del continente, son acontecimientos que nos conciernen directamente" (182). Ultimately, though, Carpentier reaffirms the value of the national framework.

concept: "Pues el mundo por venir será como ha sido el nuestro: un mundo de *mestizaje*, un mundo de migraciones, pero esta vez instantáneas, no en carabela, sino en jet" (*El espejo enterrado* 70). [24] The notion of *mestizaje*, then, underwent an evolution from the racial to the cultural, especially under the aegis of transculturation, and continues to repeat itself through various cycles.[25]

It is my contention that together with the nation-state in the era of globalization, miscegenation has lost some of its appeal. *Mestizaje* appears to have lost its hegemonic power over the continent because of the way it was used in the last century. While the proponents of racial miscegenation tried to promote the concept in terms of inclusion and/or inclusivity, in practice it has proven to be fraught with ideas of eugenics and racism. It has also been linked to the dissolving of indigenous identities and assimilation – as was for example highlighted in Vasconcelos. Regardless of the celebration of cultural *mestizaje*, it has not undermined racism. In sum, miscegenation has lost its appeal and political expediency because it has neither proven to undo the colonial legacy of racism nor led to an emancipatory socio-political arrangement. It is in this context of the critical assessment of miscegenation under the aegis of globalization that cosmopolitanism arises as a valid prism to reflect on Latin America's relationship with the world.

Cosmopolitanism and Modernity

The *Generación del 37* in Argentina (Esteban Echeverría, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Marmol, and José Hernández) represents one of the most powerful examples of the impact that the quest for synchronicity with Europe had for intellectuals. Frequent travel to France

[24] Fuentes's assertion is not surprising, in that the concept is for many the epitome of the continent, its most defining characteristic. For instance, Cuban essayist Roberto Fernández Retamar argued, in *Calibán* (1974), that race as an ethnic concept was somewhat irrelevant, that race was mostly culture: "Pero existe en el mundo colonial, *en el planeta*, un caso especial: una vasta zona para la cual el mestizaje *no es el accidente, sino la esencia*, la línea central: nosotros, 'nuestra América Mestiza'. Martí, que tan admirablemente conocía el idioma, empleó este adjetivo preciso como la señal distintiva de nuestra cultura, una cultura de descendientes de aborígenes, de africanos, de europeos — étnica y culturalmente hablando" (24).

[25] Transculturation and hybridity are discussed in Chapter 3, in relation to Elena Poniatowska's *La "Flor de Lis"*.

influenced their Romantic works: while these authors broached local topics, such as dictatorship or the *cautiverio* (captivity), their style and literary techniques were clearly of European influence, yet revealed, through their generic hybridity, the writing conditions in America and the colonial position of the continent.

Sarmiento arguably offers one of the clearest articulations of the relevance of cosmopolitanism, understood here as the importance of integrating foreign models, in nation-building. For Sarmiento, Europe, especially France – a country he called "ideal y bella, generosa y cosmopolita" (*Viajes* 225), was progressive, something to mimic in order for Argentina to become progressive herself. His essay *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie – Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga*, published in 1845 in Chile, claims to illustrate how, during Juan Manual de Rosas's dictatorship (1829-1852), *barbarie* had become institutionalized; to reject barbarism and enter the cultural framework of modern Europe, Argentina had to erase its national culture – that of the *gaucho*, deemed unsuitable for the modern national project. The "foreigner within" had to be either absorbed by the national masses or eradicated altogether. Argentina would only be elevated through the inclusion of foreign elements and the rejection of national ones, perceived as backwards. The barbarian, then, was the one who rejected civilization; civilization being Europe. Siskind claims that for Sarmiento, "Modernization was a process of conversion (forced or voluntary – and, in any case, violent) to be enacted by reproducing European modernity in Latin America" (*Cosmopolitan Desires* 29). Sarmiento, like a large majority of the intellectuals, writers and often statesmen of nineteenth-century Latin America, had a variation of the *deseo de mundo*, a *deseo de modernidad*.

Sarmiento must be understood as an ambiguous figure who experienced a paradigm shift in his conception of Spanish America. Most intellectuals of the newly-created nations, who were well-travelled and educated individuals, were preoccupied by the loci of enunciation of their

discourse, since it could affect the very reception of their work, and explored the topic in their writings. While they reaffirmed the specificity of Spanish America, they also called for its dilution, for it would make the continent easier to integrate into the Western framework.

The extensive voyages, as well as the European influences that permeate his oeuvre, reveal Sarmiento's cosmopolitan interests.[26] His reverence of French and English philosophical movements showcases a deep understanding of the tumultuous era in which he was living. To gain a better appreciation of the object of his advocacy, Sarmiento travelled right after the publication of *Facundo*. While in Paris, he wrote that

> Las ideas y modas de Francia, sus hombres y sus novelas, son hoy el modelo y la pauta de todas las otras naciones; y empiezo a creer que esto que nos seduce por todas partes, esto que creemos imitación, no es sino aquella aspiración de la índole humana a acercarse a un tipo de perfección, que está en ella misma y se desenvuelve más o menos según las circunstancias de cada pueblo. (*Viajes* 138-39)

What appears first as a mimetic path to modernization is then a universal human feature. Modernity becomes a universal goal, even if it is attained through the rejection of national particularities.

It is hard to reconcile Sarmiento's ideas and writings with the notion of cosmopolitanism, and especially when it comes to his views on the inhabitants of non-European descent of Argentina. The main argument of Sarmiento's seminal essay is that Argentina should be more open to European culture and commerce, and as such, should attract Europeans to exploit the different resources of the *pampa*, two elements that befit the context of nineteenth-century economic expansion. But in doing so, the government would also rid itself of the indigenous

[26] In *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*, in addition to numerous epigraphs and quotations from European writers, Sarmiento quoted excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Voyage en Amérique*, while in *Conflictos y armonías de las razas en América* (1833), he used Charles Darwin's ideas on evolution.

populations, and of the *gaucho*s, pushing them further into the periphery, marginalizing them, eventually eliminating them entirely. This argument is contrary to the ethical tenets of contemporary formulations of cosmopolitanism. As a result, it is hard to claim that Sarmiento's oeuvre, while marked by such political tendencies in its promotion of Argentina as an integrated member of a Western community of nations, embodies cosmopolitan ideals. This constitutes a first desemanticization of cosmopolitanism in the context of Spanish American letters. Sarmiento is widely considered cosmopolitan because he is open to European modernity, not necessarily because he espouses a vision of world community or makes an ethical commitment to other cultures. Even if he showcased openness to the outside world, his colonial rejection of a major section of his country is reflective of the Orientalism present in the European library of the period. The fact that his intellectual library was mostly French and English, at the time of the emergence of Orientalism as a discipline and discourse, also led him to associate that interested and reductive view of the Arab world to Spain, Africans, *gauchos* and indigenous people. For this reason, he produced a discourse that is profoundly flawed in terms of cosmopolitan ethos; his body of work lends itself to contradictory interpretation (Bletz 94). Nevertheless, however problematic it may be, the cosmopolitan question traverses his work, both as rhetorical predicament – *Facundo* showcases the *Encyclopaedia of Western Letters* in its countless epigraphs and quotations – and as a political concern in his reflection about institutions and forms of government.

Sarmiento's discourse on modernity, Europe, and cosmopolitanism remained relevant in Argentina through the *Centenario*, the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Argentina's independence from Spain. Authors such as Ricardo Rojas saw in Sarmiento an intellectual forefather, although they did not necessarily agree on the relevance of mimicking Europe to integrate modernity, and openly criticized Sarmiento's perceived cosmopolitanism. In

the "Nota preliminar" to the 1921 reedition of *Facundo*, Rojas expressed his discontent with the dichotomy civilization/barbarism, and claimed that Sarmiento's views were now *passé*:

> Yo la he combatido en uno de mis libros, porque la considero insuficiente para explicar la evolución argentina, sobre todo si, como lo hacen algunos "sociólogos" de marbete europeo, creen que "barbarie" quiere decir "provincia", "federalismo", "tradición", "emoción agreste o americana", y que "civilización" quiere decir "cosmópolis", centralismo, riqueza, pedantería libresca o intelectual. La fórmula de Sarmiento encierra sólo una verdad pragmática, es decir, utilitaria y ocasional, vigorosa en su tiempo, pero gastada ya en virtud de su propia aplicación social, por haberse transformado tan radicalmente la estructura económica y moral de la nación argentina. (21-22)

Rojas's cultural nationalism is aligned with that of the *Grupo de Boedo*, and opposed to that of a young Jorge Luis Borges.[27] For Rojas, cosmopolitanism was related to immigration and foreigners, who were at that moment perceived as a threat, for they were diluting Argentineness and national purity. It is not surprising that the Centenary celebrations coincided with the rejection of Sarmiento's perceived cosmopolitan ideas. It is yet another example of the ever-returning nationalist criticism that has shaped Spanish America's relationship with cosmopolitanism. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, periods of openness to the world have been marked by ideas broadly associated with cosmopolitanism; alternating with these periods there were moments of inwardness and rejection of these cosmopolitan ideas in the name of nationalist needs to preserve local culture.

Cosmopolitanism and *Modernismo*

The intricate articulation of cosmopolitanism and modernity stands out in the very name of one of the most cosmopolitan literary movements in Spanish American letters: *Modernismo*.

[27] The *Grupo de Boedo* is discussed below.

The proponents of *Modernismo* struggled to come to terms with the fact that, after almost a hundred years of independence, Latin America's subordinate relationship to Europe remained unchanged. Cosmopolitanism for *Modernistas*, then, can be associated with the need to integrate modernity at the turn of the twentieth century, and with the new urban centres that sprout throughout the continent. By 1898, the hegemony of Spain in Latin America was declining rapidly, and was replaced by the United States. In such a scenario, cosmopolitanism was a tool to rework the hemispheric dynamic and give Latin America the critical tools to avoid falling prey to a new type of colonialism. Cosmopolitanism, then, served to establish a *rapport de force* with the cultural weight of the United States. However, the Western European culture to which cosmopolitans ascribed meant more than mere cultural products and consumerism: indeed, "Cosmopolitanism describes the culture associated with these new urban entities, while it is also a political sign of international diplomacy and justice, a sign of world-wide hospitality for the outcast, the exiled, migrants, foreigners, and travellers" (Fojas ix). Artists, outcast by nature, fit well into this framework and saw cosmopolitanism as a useful notion for their art.

Representative of the *fin-de-siècle* spirit, *Modernismo* sought to produce a universal literature that would break all the boundaries between countries and continents, during this period of crisis in Latin America. Their cosmopolitanism was a reaction to this crisis of modernity and provided them with the tools necessary not only to gain a better understanding of their own culture, but also to criticize it through a different paradigm. The cosmopolitan ideal was to acquire a different cultural framework that nuanced or even rejected nationalist perspectives. The main problem of *Modernismo* consisted "en su inscripción cultural dentro del vasto texto universal al que habían sido arrojados y que ya no abandonaría al continente" (Rama, *Máscaras* 173). Writers not only felt an urge to produce ground-breaking poetry, but also a need to create a new literary language, and new forms and techniques, that would neither confine them to a

specific space nor to their own time frame. *Modernismo*'s cosmopolitan impulse is present in the incorporation of the European canon in its production.[28] This understanding of the Western literary and cultural canon, even if it produced artefacts of a great cultural proficiency, was not well received by nationalists. Once again, the main criticism was cultural amnesia and a conscious avoidance of the past. The cosmopolitans were not national enough to be integrated into a national culture that sought to rally everyone under the concept of one single identity: cosmopolitans were queers and outcasts, captivated by various cultural, foreign metropolises; in sum, they appeared to their critics as having no interest in undoing colonial legacies. However, the *Modernistas* aimed to integrate the framework of modernity, so that Latin American cultural identity would be contemporaneous to that of Europe, and in the process, reject its colonial legacy. By doing so, it was able to enter a wider sphere of cultural influences that would later prove useful in defining the Latin American literary canon. Like the authors of the *Boom* and those of the *Crack* would later, the *Modernistas* wanted to work within the Western literary tradition at large.

Modernismo's foremost poet, Rubén Darío, illustrates this artistic quest.[29] Whatever he learned in Spain and France, Darío brought home and integrated into his poetry. In fact, Darío, more than a poet, was also a cultural translator for Latin Americans, and tried to make sense of European modernity for the continent.[30] In an era still obsessed with the historical concept of

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[28] Rama claims that their inscription into a new poetics meant the acceptance, and an acute understanding of the whole of European tradition, as well as its roots in the Greek and Roman classical works (*Las máscaras del Modernismo* 173). Fojas maintains, like many others before her, that "Latin American modernismo was inherently cosmopolitan; it often took elements from international art and thought – from, for example, Decadence, Aestheticism and Symbolism, Occultism, Romanticism, Greek mythology, and German philosophy" (3).

[29] Although, of course, the precursor of the movement and one of its major representatives is Cuba's José Martí.

[30] Darío acted more or less as a bridge between Latin America and Spain, and many Peninsular poets recognized his work as powerful, as well as distinctively American and "dentro de ellos tiene especial relevancia, por proceder de un intelectual español y por haberse expresado en una correspondencia privada, el juicio de Juan Valera. En una carta a Menéndez Pelayo de 1892, le dice: 'Veo en Rubén Darío lo primero que América da a nuestras letras, donde, además de lo que nosotros dimos, hay no poco de allá. No es como Bello, Heredia, Olmedo, etc. en quienes todo es nuestro, y aun lo imitado en Francia ha pasado por aquí, sino que tiene bastante del indio sin buscarlo, sin afectarlo, y

core/periphery, Darío's movement questioned this dichotomy by diluting it with the adoption of a cosmopolitan aesthetic. His works were also deeply Pan-American. *Azul* (1888) was published in Valparaíso (Chile), rather than in Managua (Nicaragua), for instance, and the movement had members in most countries. *Modernismo* had a supranational aspect for the poet.

Darío, then, was a cosmopolitan who was deeply committed to the continent where he was born, which made him, if not national, at least continental. Although he was well travelled, he was never exiled and never lacked ties to Latin America. Darío's cosmopolitanism is, in his own words, one of universal acceptance: "He expresado lo expresable de mi alma y he querido penetrar en el alma de los demás, y hundirme en la vasta alma universal. He apartado asimismo, como quiere Schopenhauer, mi individualidad del resto del mundo, y he visto con desinterés lo que a mí yo parece extraño, para convencerme de que nada es extraño a mi yo" ("Dilucidaciones" 274); "nothing is foreign to me," which echoes Greek philosopher and playwright Terence's famous phrase "I am human, and nothing of that which is human is alien to me" (qtd. in Kurasawa 301). This hints at the fact that Darío, more than a poet hypnotized by France, conceived of his poetry within a cosmopolitan ethos.

Even if the poet integrated elements of French prose into his poetry, his intention was not to create a new cultural dependency on yet another cultural metropolis, but rather to change the Spanish American literary order.[31] Octavio Paz is correct in stating that "Los modernistas no querían ser franceses, querían ser modernos. ... En labios de Rubén Darío y sus amigos,

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además, no le diré imitado, sino sustituido e incorporado, todo lo reciente de Francia'" (Rama, *Las máscaras del Modernismo* 182). Darío was well aware of Valera's appreciation of his work, for they exchanged a few letters, in which he shared that "Si el libro, impreso en Valparaíso, en este año de 1888, no estuviese en muy buen castellano, lo mismo pudiera ser de un autor francés, que de un italiano, que de un turco o un griego. El libro está impregnado de espíritu cosmopolita. Hasta el nombre y apellido del autor, verdaderos o contrahechos y fingidos, hacen que el cosmopolitismo resalte más. Rubén es judáico, y persa es Darío: de suerte que, por los nombres, no parece sino que Ud. quiere ser o es todos los pueblos, castas y tribus" (215-16).

[31] According to Rama, "la reinvención de una tradición poética de la lengua se obtiene por el encabalgamiento del 'pensando en francés' y 'escribiendo en castellano', cuando esto funciona en un plano exclusivamente estético" (*Rubén Darío* 22).

modernidad y cosmopolitanismo eran términos sinónimos. No fueron anti-americanos, querían una América contemporánea de Paris y Londres" ("El caracol y la sirena" 94-5).[32]

Critics have traditionally interpreted *Modernistas* as disengaged from the world, artists whose art is produced for art's sake, and have also deemed their cosmopolitanism frivolous.[33] Yet, they were committed to undoing the perennial *arritmia temporal*. In my view, this dimension of their work reveals them not as alienated or self-absorbed artists, but on the contrary as artists engaged in dislodging coloniality. Cosmopolitanism from the margins is an apt term to describe their critical position vis-à-vis the world's literary canon. This interpretation sets aside traditional considerations of originality and imitation, and reads the engagement of *Modernistas* as a quest for contemporaneity. For these artists and intellectuals, the colonial legacy and the project of modernity represented a denial of contemporaneity or coevalness, to use Fabian's concept, which they strived to undo through their writings. Their cosmopolitanism was a form of

[32] But *Modernismo* is not a one-man movement. Literary journals and *revistas* were also staples. Cosmopolitan literary journals, like many other artistic displays, "encoded political interests. They were concerned with the proper way of being cosmopolitan and national at the same time, of forging literary and diplomatic parity between national and international interests" (Fojas 104). *Cosmopolis*, which lasted from May 1894 to July 1895, is probably the best-known literary journal of that time. Founders Pedro Emilio Coll, Pedro César Domínici, and Luis M. Urbaneja Achelpohl wanted to promote a serious cosmopolitanism that aimed at making art universal: "En este periódico como lo indica su nombre tendrán acogida todas las escuelas literarias, de todos los paises. El cosmopolitanismo es una de las formas más hermosas de la civilización pues que ella reconoce que el hombre rompiendo con preocupaciones y prejuicios, remplaza la idea de Patria por la de Humanidad" (Coll et al. 3). They were well aware of the criticism they would receive and tried to counter it from the outset: "Si esta revista tiene una marcada tendencia cosmopolita, no debe verse en ello un fátuo snobismo, una garrulería presentuosa de rastaqouère, muy a la moda de hoy, sino algo más serio, una necesidad de nuestras almas inquietas, que solicitan en las literaturas extranjeras no sensaciones sino ideas, solución a los problemas que apenas salidos á la vida empiezan á torturarnos, aire, horizontes para nuestras inteligencias que por una ley de equilibrio buscan el nivel del progreso universal. Es una labor más bien ética que estética la que acometemos" (2). The journal tried to establish the type of cosmopolitanism to which Fojas refers, one that is also a nation-building tool.

[33] Darío spent a lot of time in Paris and wrote many poems about the French capital. While at the beginning of his life he had, to mimic Siskind's phrase, a *deseo de Paris*, at the end of his life his perception was more nuanced. In his autobiography, he stated that "Yo soñaba con París, desde niño, a punto de que cuando hacía mis oraciones rogaba a Dios que no me dejase morir sin conocer París. París era para mí como un paraíso en donde se respirase la esencia de la felicidad sobre la tierra. Era la ciudad del Arte, de la Belleza y de la Gloria; y sobre todo era la capital del Amor, el reino del ensueño" (*La vida de Rubén Darío escrita por el mismo* qtd. in Zanetti 70).

engagement, a rejection of subordination. In this regard, the traditional view that associates *Modernismo* with disengagement can be seen as a biased anti-cosmopolitan reading.

Cosmopolitanism and the Avant-Garde

Cosmopolitanism remained at the centre of artistic and literary endeavours with the advent of various vanguard movements, which spanned the 1920s. Artists, who resided or travelled in Europe, introduced the movement to Latin America. The Avant-Garde marked a period of literary experimentation, during which numerous *manifestos* – attacking everything that had been previously produced, as well as Western modernity itself – were published across the continent. In Argentina, Roberto Arlt and Mario de Andrade are prominent examples of such literary experimentation, as well as Jorge Luis Borges, who spent his early adulthood in Spain where he was exposed to the Spanish Ultraist movement, which he later brought back to Buenos Aires in his twenties.[34] In Mexico, the poet Manuel Maples Arce was the *figure de proue* of the *Estridentistas*, a movement that was both artistic and political, its proponents having experienced the Mexican Revolution (1911). José Carlos Mariátegui imported the Vanguards to Peru, and in 1926, created the journal *Amauta*, to which César Vallejo was a major contributor. Even if every region of Latin America had a specific type of vanguards, they all agreed on the ultimate objective of the movement: to renew the national artistic vision and literary references, as well as to debate the notions of national and continental identity in a changing geopolitical order. This rearticulation of traditions happened simultaneously both in Europe and Latin America; a first step in reducing the deeply felt sense of *arritmia temporal*.

Whereas the European Vanguard was aesthetically radical, the Latin American Avant-Garde was more moderate, since the authors shared national preoccupations and were influenced

[34] Borges's *Manifiesto Ultraísmo* was the first of its kind for the Argentinean vanguard; its main objective was to renovate the literary tradition and get rid of what he called *rubenianismo*, after Ruben Darío.

by the production of the previous decade during the celebrations of the Centenary of independence.[35] In Argentina, the *Centenario* marked a turning point in cultural production, since for the first time authors who did not come from the highest spheres of society played an active role in it, expanding the borders of the republic of letters and making it more cosmopolitan. Indeed, most of these new writers were part of the immigration waves that came to Argentina at the turn of the century: "Se plantea entonces, por primera vez de manera global y dramática, la cuestión de la identidad nacional, interrelacionada con la de la tradición cultural y el carácter sintético del 'ser nacional' argentino" (Sarlo, "Vanguardia y criollismo" 56). It can even be related to the resurgence of cosmopolitanism in Argentina. The *Boedo* writers were a group of Avant-Garde artists – mostly authors and painters – who published their works in many *revistas*, such as *Los Pensadores, Dínamo* and *Extrema Izquierda*. They were opposed to the *Martín Fierro* Group, also known as *Grupo de Florida*. *Boedo*'s writings were characterized by their interest in social issues, their leftist ideas, and a desire to connect with the popular sectors – especially the labour movement – while the *Martínfierristas* were more focused on language and poetry. Tensions between cosmopolitan and nationalist authors were, to a certain extent, useless: both groups were publishing cosmopolitan material, and used the cosmopolitan insult against one another, since they could not seem to agree on what cosmopolitanism was, while also being deeply national.[36] Ten years after the nationalist celebration of the *Centenario*, both groups

[35] Rosenberg states that "In comparison with the European avant-gardes, the Latin American movements were not as socially radical, and their function resided more in the building of cultural and artistic institutions that the European movements strove to destroy" ("Cultural Theory and the Avant-Gardes" 414).

[36] According to Mariátegui, in *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*, it is the fact that they were able to merge the universal with the local that makes the Argentinean Vanguardists such great authors: "No obstante esta impregnación de cosmopolitismo, no obstante su concepción ecuménica del arte, los mejores de estos poetas vanguardistas siguen siendo los más argentinos. La argentinidad de Girondo, Güiraldes, Borges, etcétera no es menos evidente que su cosmopolitismo. El vanguardismo literario argentino se denomina "Martínfierrismo". Quien alguna vez haya leído el periódico de ese núcleo de artistas, Martín Fierro, habrá encontrado en él al mismo tiempo que los más recientes ecos del arte ultramoderno de Europa, los más auténticos acentos gauchos" (309). Through cosmopolitanism these writers were able to discuss the local and the national in relation to modernity, and advocate for a preliminary articulation of rooted cosmopolitanism.

refused to be called cosmopolitan, preferring to see the other group described as such. For the *Grupo de Florida*, being cosmopolitan resulted from an international trajectory, as well as from drawing on the Western cultural tradition. The same can be said for the *Grupo de Boedo*. Both groups were more or less pursuing the same ideals: they wanted to merge the local with the foreign while also defining Argentineness. Their objective – the objective of a generation – was to redefine national culture while embracing cosmopolitanism, and read the Argentinean tradition with the help of the European Vanguard's precepts. By relocating *criollismo* in a modern, urban context,[37] they were able to merge Argentina and the world, a work that Borges would continue throughout his career.

Even if Borges is a key figure of the movement in Argentina, the Avant-Garde, as previously mentioned, was a pan-continental movement that had branches in every Latin American country.[38] The Avant-Garde in Latin America, by opposition to that in Europe, aimed at criticizing modernity (Rosenberg, *The Avant-Garde* 1). The alternative modernities that were being proposed by the vanguard movements in Europe could not be seen as productive tools in Latin America, since they "kept referring back to the subaltern situation of Latin Americans themselves vis-à-vis the idea of the West, a concept that neither clearly included or excluded Latin America" (2). These authors thus engaged in a form of critical cosmopolitanism, which sought specifically to undo the colonial mindset, as well as to dislodge coloniality. The Avant-

[37] *Criollismo* is a nationalist literary movement that came about at the end of the nineteenth century, the main objective of which was to depict Latin America's unique cultural and natural composition.

[38] In "Cultural Theory and the Avant-Gardes," Rosenberg argues that even if every region of Latin America had a specific type of vanguards, they all agreed on the ultimate objective of the movement: "Mexican estridentistas, Brazilian modernistas, pan-Hispanic creacionistas and ultraístas all believed actively in the radical novelty of what they brought to the cultural scene: the preponderance of metaphor, a radical vision of artistic freedom, a renewal of literary references that incorporated icons of modernity, and an original set of provoking ideas regarding national or continental identity" (410). All viewed themselves as the bearers of Modernity, while also being inherently national, two positions they did not deem irreconcilable; they interpreted globality on a local scale.

Garde was a turning point in Latin American literature, since, unlike the *Modernistas* who drew on the French tradition but never really questioned it, the Vanguardists questioned everything.

One of the major successes of the Avant-Garde was that the authors were able to reconfigure their locus of enunciation

> by unlocking the entrapments of their own place in the geography of modernity and by interrupting the reproduction of global cultural hierarchies that legitimated different levels of subordination. The stance devised for this purpose was defined by different and contradictory demands: the acknowledgment of the largely irrecoverable status of native values and sense of community, the undesirability of notions of progress and civilization that reproduced the abjection of Latin America's own situation, and the embrace of modern values as vehicles/apparatuses for gaining agency and effecting social change. ("Cultural Theory and the Avant-Gardes" 415)

Such a critical stance displayed local and cosmopolitan affiliations, since the authors were able to redefine their identity as one that included the best of both the native and the foreign. By incorporating modern values, they were able to acquire tools that would help them undo the colonial mindset.[39] By rereading the Avant-Garde in a global context, it becomes obvious that these authors embraced an ideal of "non-Eurocentric, always-situated universalism" (*The Avant-Garde* 40). The undoing of coloniality happened "by imagining Latin America as a site of continuous creative re-accommodations of both native and European legacies" ("Cultural Theory

[39] According to Rosenberg, the works published during the Avant-Garde "undermine the hierarchical evolutionary ladder of earlier positivist ethnologies, and propose instead either an anthropological mosaic of cultural relativism or a melting pot of ethnic and cultural mestizaje and transculturation. But we need to recognize that the project of shaking up the philosophical underpinnings of Western superiority, a vanguardist agenda in its own right, might be mobilized in favor of both old and new national hegemonic projects of the elite. European vanguards exercised their own cultural cannibalism by appropriating native others for their own agendas, but the cannibalistic appropriation here aligned native knowledge with the structures of Creole power in the nation-state, feeding the archive of national literature with a new argument that ended up confirming cultural, economic, and epistemological subordination" ("Cultural Theory and the Avant-Gardes" 414).

and the Avant-Gardes" 412), which allowed the vanguards to secure "a place for the native in modernity, in establishing peripheral modernities – rejecting subordination to a single paradigm of modernity and instead offering re-creation of modernity as an authentic indigenous alternative" (412). Their creation of a new modernity was expressed through an acute understanding of their colonial past, as demonstrated, for example, by Brazilian *antropofagia*.

In the case of Borges, the aforementioned creative reaccomodations led him to establish a dialogue based on reciprocity with Occidental culture.[40] For Borges, as for Darío before him, cosmopolitanism was an emancipatory discourse that led to modernity.[41] The tension between the universal and the typically Argentinean led him to produce what Sarlo considers "a literatura de conflicto" (*Borges, un escritor en las orillas* 5), in which both aspects coexist and reinforce one another.

In his classic essay *El escritor argentino y la tradición* (1951), Borges holds that Argentinean literature is not bound by its location, and as such should not only broach local topics, but rather ought to evolve in dialogue with the universal literary tradition. However, some critics did not see his cosmopolitanism as a positive aspect of his narrative.[42] Even if he produced a great corpus of fiction that focused both on international and national aspects of life in Argentina, many of his detractors complained that he was pro-European, and that he did not pay

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[40] Sarlo interprets Borges's cosmopolitanism as "la condición que hace posible una estrategia para la literatura argentina: inversamente, el reordenamiento de las tradiciones culturales nacionales lo habilita para cortar, elegir y recorrer desprejuiciadamente las literaturas extranjeras, en cuyo espacio se maneja con la soltura de un marginal que hace libre uso de todas las culturas. ... Desde un margen, Borges logra que su literatura dialogue de igual a igual con la literatura occidental. Hace del margen una estética" (Sarlo, *Borges, un escritor en las orillas* 16). According to Mario Vargas Llosa, "Borges heralded the end of a kind of inferiority complex that inhibited us, unwittingly of course, from broaching certain subjects and that kept us imprisoned in a provincial outlook" ("The Fictions of Borges" 29).

[41] For Siskind, it is now imperative that scholars start to re-evaluate Borges's stance on cosmopolitanism, and see it as "un discurso modernizador anti-nacionalista para las culturas marginales" ("El cosmopolitismo como problema político: Borges y el desafío de la modernidad" 88).

[42] In "*Sur*. Una minoría cosmopolita en la periferia occidental," María Teresa Gramuglio states that although many writers of Borges' generation had reached levels of fame that helped them have "relaciones fluidas con figuras representativas del poder," up until 1955, the year Perón was overthrown by a military dictatorship, most of them were "disidentes de las políticas oficiales" (196).

attention to the core identity of his country. Borges, with his openness to the world and his cosmopolitan aesthetics, was perceived as lacking interest in the problems of his nation or continent, and some argued that this cosmopolitan outlook was a rejection of Argentina itself.[43] De Castro proposes the term "extraterritorial" to summarize the repeated allusions to Borges as a writer alien (*Spaces* 52). Detractors include fellow Argentinean short story writer and literary critic Enrique Anderson Imbert, who wrote in the *Revista Megáfono* that "Borges no sólo carece de preocupación por lo humano sino que da la espalda a los problemas nacionales" (28), and Peronist writer Juan José Hernández Arregui, who said that "el rasgo definitorio de la obra de este escritor es su desdén por lo argentino" (89), adding that "su europeísmo le lleva a desestimar toda tradición y a ver en esta insuficiencia de la literatura nacional, según él, una libertad para encadenar la creación a modelos o influencias extranjeras" (92).[44]

These many comments about Borges's lack of national interest further underscore the difficulties of the cosmopolitan position. In 1932, Borges wrote that "el culto argentino del color local es un reciente culto europeo que los nacionalistas deberían rechazar por foráneo" (270). The *europeizantes* are now the nationalists, who are basing themselves on European trends to develop their nationalism. His comment not only embodies the debate between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in Latin America, but also uses the nationalists's own arguments against them. This

[43] Borges defied the Argentine dictator Juan Perón and Peronists on more than one occasion. He disagreed with them on a core issue, that of cultural autonomy. While Peronists argued that Argentina had achieved cultural autonomy, since the *gauchos* were undoubtedly a local element, Borges held that it still had not been achieved. Moreover, his opposition to Perón led to his "progressive abandonment of literary nationalism and his denial of a foundational or defining role to gauchesque poetry ... two stances common among Peronist intellectuals" (De Castro, *Spaces* 51-52).

[44] However, some considered cosmopolitanism a positive characteristic of his narrative. Néstor Ibarra, for instance, described Borges, in the prologue to the 1951 French translation of *Ficciones*, as: "Hispano-Anglo-Portugais d'origine, élevé en Suisse, fixé depuis longtemps à Buenos Aires où il naquit en 1899, personne n'a moins de patrie que Jorge Luis Borges. Ce n'est qu'en lui-même qu'il doit être considéré, non pas en fonction d'un pays, ou d'un continent, ou d'une culture dont il relève point et qu'aucunement il ne représente. L'état-civil de ce dissident-né importe peu: Borges est un homme de lettres européen qui serait à sa place à London, à Paris aussi ou du moins, plus largement, à la N.R.F." (7). (The acronym N.R.F. refers to the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.) In this formulation, Borges's lack of national interest appears to be one of the strengths of his narrative.

articulation of the cosmopolitan position against nationalism also hints at Borges's own position in this debate, which, in the conclusion to *El escritor argentino y la tradición*, he forcibly articulated in the following manner: "Todo lo que hagamos con felicidad los escritores argentinos pertenecerá a la tradición argentina, ... no debemos temer y ... debemos pensar que nuestro patrimonio es el universo" (273-74). His idea of authenticity was closely associated with his understanding of his era – one of increasing exchanges and travels – and therefore one ripe for cosmopolitan perspectives on the world.

Pascale Casanova describes in *The World Republic of Letters* (2004) an international literary space that emerged during the sixteenth century, in which literature knows no borders and competes for success on two fronts: the national and the international. She argues that, although literature was essential in establishing and legitimizing political and national authorities, it was not chained to them, and eventually escaped their possession (37). Therefore, the search, and later the establishment, of a common literary tradition beyond the political and the historical spheres allowed literature to create its own theoretical and practical framework, with its own identity and characteristics. As a result, writers no longer had to submit to its national definition, and could reject it completely if need be (37). Borges is a powerful example of such behaviour, since, while in the 1940s other Latin American authors focused on problems related to the definition of a national identity – notably represented by the *criollistas* – the Argentinean intellectual shied away from this issue, and defined himself as a proud heir to the Western canon, causing a break in the continent's tradition and opening the door for other writers: "the writers who seek greater freedom for their work are those who know the laws of the world literary space and who make use of them in trying to subvert the dominant norms of their respective national fields" (109). In Latin America, this process of emancipation from the political sphere, parallel to gaining professional autonomy, started to happen progressively during the twentieth century. Rama

explains that authors experienced a progressive separation from political power due to the emergence of an autonomous literary sphere: novelists first worked for government, then for newspapers, and finally, as of the *Boom*, were able to live off their writing (*La ciudad letrada* 55).

Cosmopolitanism and the *Boom*

The *Boom* (1962-1972) was arguably the last literary movement compelled to engage in the debate over the adoption of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Mario Vargas Llosa stands out, even if he is always named with the other authors, such as Argentinean Julio Cortázar (1914-1984), Mexican Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012), and Colombian Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2015). He is an anomaly within the *Boom*: while most of the *Boom* authors had already published major works with a Latin American publisher, the Peruvian had only published minor *relatos* in Latin America. His first major novels, *La casa verde* (1966) and *Conversación en La Catedral* (1969), were published with Seix Barral, in Barcelona, after he won the *Premio Biblioteca Breve*.[45] In a sense, Vargas Llosa's major works have had an international, if not cosmopolitan aspect – given the place of production and circulation – from the outset.[46]

Carlos Barral, one of the central figures of the publishing world in Spain, seemed to have had a better understanding of the phenomenon than some of the young *Boom* authors themselves:

> Ellos mismos, los escritores latinoamericanos, no formulaban bien el fenómeno de su literatura. Se confiesan como escritores tercermundistas, pertenecientes a una literatura del subdesarrollo. En todos los congresos a los que he asistido en Europa y América así lo repiten y comparan su situación con la de los países coloniales de África o de Asia. En

[45] Vargas Llosa, with *La ciudad y los perros*, was the first Latin American author to receive the *Premio Biblioteca Breve*, in 1962.

[46] According to Fuentes, there was always something universal about Vargas Llosa's prose: In *La ciudad y los perros* and *La Casa Verde*, he notes "la fuerza de enfrentar la realidad latinoamericana, pero no ya como un hecho regional, sino como parte de una vida que afecta a todos los hombres, y que ... revela un movimiento de conflictos ambiguos" (*La nueva novela* 36).

> realidad, yo creo que es completamente distinta. En América Latina coincide una literatura, una tradición literaria, tan vieja como en cualquier literatura europea – y más antigua, por ejemplo, que la eslava, que nació después – con un mundo más interesante y anecdótico, donde fenómenos como las luchas étnicas o las luchas de clase están a flor de piel. Tienen, pues, una herramienta literaria, une tradición semejante a la francesa, la inglesa o la alemana, y un mundo que tiene interés por sí mismo. (qtd. in Catelli 715)

Barral claimed, then, that while the *Boom* was making Latin American literature international, there was already something universal about it. For the first time, it now seemed that authors had fully integrated modernity, and the modern world now also noticed them.

Most *Boom* writers thought of their art in universal terms and some consciously tried to develop a universal aesthetic through the introduction of international art forms such as jazz and photography (Russek 7). Julio Cortázar talks at length of his cosmopolitan vocation in his letter-essay "Situación del intelectual latinoamericano" (1967), directed at the Cuban thinker Roberto Fernández Retamar, who had rather conflicted views when it came to the internationalization of the Latin American author. Cortázar confesses that his years in France made him discover his true Latin American self, which he puts in perspective on a global scale:

> ¿No te parece en verdad paradójico que un argentino casi enteramente volcado hacia Europa en su juventud, al punto de quemar las naves y venirse a Francia ... haya descubierto aquí, después de una década, su verdadera condición de latinoamericano? Pero esta paradoja abre una cuestión más honda: la de si no era necesario situarse en la perspectiva más universal del viejo mundo, desde donde todo parece poder abarcarse con una especie de ubicuidad mental, para ir descubriendo poco a poco las verdaderas raíces de lo latinoamericano sin perder por eso la visión global de la historia y del hombre. (269-70)

In Cortázar's understanding, locality and globality go hand in hand, in that they both help a writer become more aware of the tradition to which he belongs, but also drive him to discover more about himself. Cortázar also mentions having received negative comments since "vivir en Europa y escribir 'argentino' escandaliza a los que exigen una especie de asistencia obligatoria a clase por parte del escritor" (275), but he remains "dispuesto a seguir siendo un escritor latinoamericano en Francia" (277).

The Mexican novelist and essayist Carlos Fuentes had already expressed similar views in the first edition of Emir Rodriguez Monegal's *Mundo Nuevo* in July 1966. In the interview, presented as a conversation between the literary critic and the writer, the Mexican shared his incomprehension of the never-ending criticism against cosmopolitan authors:

> se sigue criticando al llamado cosmopolitismo y se sigue ejemplificando la crítica con Darío. Se nos olvida que también en el cosmopolitismo hay una aspiración muy nuestra, muy valedera, muy cierta, muy concreta, que es la de no debilitarnos en el aislamiento, la de romper ese aislamiento que nos disminuye y encontrar toda una serie de correspondencias y de afirmaciones en las relaciones abiertas de la cultura. (9)

By expressing the desire to end this isolation, Fuentes hints at the fact that there is still some sort of asynchronicity between Latin America and the rest of the world. Authors still feel peripheral, and are still trying to break with subalternity. Later on, when Monegal concludes that "la emigración no hace al escritor menos sino más americano" (9), Fuentes wraps up this section of the interview and says that "al salir encontramos nuestras correspondencias, nuestros verdaderos valores" (9). Like Cortázar, Fuentes thought of cosmopolitanism as one of the many tools available to Latin American authors – and considering his body of work, to all authors, wherever they come from. The Chilean author José Donoso mentions, in his *Historia personal del «boom»,* that "aparece Carlos Fuentes como el primer agente activo y consciente de la internacionalización

de la novela hispanoamericana de la década de los años sesenta" (49), thus making him the first militantly and openly cosmopolitan author, in the sense that, unlike some of his predecessors or contemporaries, on whom the term was imposed, Fuentes was one of the first to claim it.

Fuentes elaborated on this later in the volume *Geografía de la novela* (1993), where he concentrates on the Latin American novel, its evolution since the 1940s, and the perpetual dogmas that identified a deeply-rooted dichotomy in the perception of what a typical Latin American novel ought to be: 1) Realism versus Fantasy; 2) Nationalism versus Cosmopolitanism; and 3) Commitment versus Formalism. These were inherent to the nature of the production of the 1960s, which would actively seek to annihilate them, the same way *Modernistas* had tried to break the continent's boundaries, or Borges the national/nationalist dogma. Fuentes also uses some fundamental points from Karel Kosík's oeuvre – in which the Czech philosopher explains that every work of art is multi-faceted, in that it is part of the reality by which it is produced, but also helps create this very reality – to demonstrate how the *Boom* expanded literary borders. Kosík argues that the novel adds elements to reality, and ultimately creates it. Since reality knows no bounds, it cannot be confined to a certain country; it is intrinsically cosmopolitan. The contemporary novel promotes human universality and the fading of borders; thus, "toda una generación contemporánea, que incluye a Borges y a Reyes, a Lezama, a Paz y a Cortázar, nos enseñó, según la breve y afortunada fórmula de Reyes, que sólo se puede ser provechosamente nacional siendo generosamente universal" (*Geografía* 25). Even if the previously mentioned dogmas were deeply grounded in the Latin American understanding of its literature, its principal representatives would be the ones to break them.[47]

[47] According to Vargas Llosa, not only did the *Boom* writers break boundaries, they also paved the way for Latin American authors who followed them and gave them the possibility that "se atrevieran, como lo hacía un Borges, un Carpentier, un Carlos Fuentes, un Lezama Lima, a ser universales y atreverse con temas universales y atreverse a salir de su propio medio e inventar y crear historias a partir de experiencias ajenas, excéntricas, al de su propio

Like the *Modernistas*, the *Boom* authors did not necessarily want to be international, but modern, and this meant being published in Spain, even if this is one of the major criticisms the movement faced.[48] After years of literary independence, Spain acted once again as the literary metropolis, since most publishing houses were located in Europe. Nevertheless, whether published in Latin America or Spain, their literary language was the same: "A partir de la certeza de esta universalidad del lenguaje, podemos hablar con rigor de la contemporeanidad del escritor latinoamericano, quien súbitamente es parte de un presente cultural común" (34). For the first time in literary history, a cultural movement broke with the asynchronicity and the core/periphery dogma.

In the previously mentioned interview with Rodríguez Monegal, Fuentes maintains that "Hay que salir un poco a respirar aire fresco, a tomar perspectivas. Creo también que hay cierta

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mundo histórico o de su propio mundo cultural" ("Conferencia inaugural" 12). He also claims that the success of the *Boom* boosted the confidence of peripheral writers: "Hoy día el joven escritor latinoamericano sabe que, si se empeña, que si paga el precio que hay que pagar, puede, de alguna manera, materializar su vocación y no frustrarse en embrión, como ocurría con tanta frecuencia antes del *boom*. Creo que el escritor joven en España, en Argentina, en Brasil..., se siente de alguna manera partícipe de una realidad que no está acotada por fronteras, que hay una patria común que tiene que ver con el lenguaje, que tiene que ver con ciertas experiencias compartidas y que, con todo ello, se puede hacer una literatura que llegue a un público muchísimo mayor, al de su propia ciudad o su propio país. Y sin ninguna duda, para que eso hoy día sea posible algo sirvió la experiencia del *boom*" (13-14).

[48] While it is true that Latin American authors aspired to be published in Spain, they mostly longed for Paris. In fact, the most important literary review promoting the *Boom*, Rodríguez Monegal's "Mundo Nuevo," was published in the French capital. Spain was nevertheless the centre of the editorial market in Spanish, and the publication, and subsequent popularity of *Boom* authors in the metropolis raises paradoxes, which can be explained by the very question of Modernity to which I referred earlier in the chapter. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Spanish cultural elites were eager to enter their own modern framework. After twenty years of dictatorship under Franco, who condemned everything foreign for fear it would dilute Spanish national essence, there was a frantic search for foreign cultural products. Contact with the writers of the *Boom* was an injection of both modernity and cosmopolitanism for the Spaniards. The *Boom*, then, was as useful for Latin Americans as it was for Spaniards: emerging writers from the periphery received international attention, and readers from the metropolis were finally allowed to experience reading materials from outside their national area. (For more information, see Dravasa's *The Boom in Barcelona*.) For Spain, Latin America represented Modernity versus its own cultural and intellectual backwardness; for Latin America, Spain represented the undoing of coloniality, and reaching contemporaneity with the rest of the world; ironically so, since Spain was itself at the periphery of Europe's intellectual scene. Nevertheless, by being published in Spain, the *Boom* authors entered a literary system very different from their own. Vargas Llosa describes it at length in *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, to which I refer in Chapter 4. In fact, the protagonist Varguitas discusses how Peru lacked any sort of literary system, and Peruvian authors and journalists, intellectual autonomy. His integration to the already well-established European literary market – be it in Spain or France, where all *Boom* authors spent time – meant the affirmation of the very possibility of his role as a *creador* who was no longer expected to mimic the production of other European or Latin American countries.

tensión en la vida cultural de nuestros países, tensión nacida de esa demora a la que se refería Alfonso Reyes cuando decía: 'Llegamos siempre con cien años de retraso a los banquetes de la civilización'" ("Situación del escritor en América latina" 6). With the *Boom*, Latin American authors tried to bridge the gap and arrive on time at this *banquete de la civilización*, a civilization that was already undergoing a degree of globalization. "La aspiración cosmopolita," claims Fuentes, "digámoslo con esa palabra que a veces tiene un sentido peyorativo, me parece muy importante, sobre todo en este momento en que, como dice Paz, somos por primera vez contemporáneos de todos los hombres" (9). Octavio Paz's assessment sums up the ongoing quest that had defined, up until then, Spanish American letters. This central quest finally bore fruit, thus opening new possibilities for the next generations of authors. This marked a turning point, for authors could now consider themselves full members of the world republic of letters. This new attitude towards cosmopolitanism coincided with the advent of globalization, its global ethos and global consciousness. By becoming contemporaneous with all authors, the Latin American writer was faced with "la necesidad de sumarse a la perspectiva del futuro a fin de dirigirse a todos los hombres," while also remaining a writer "que debía superar varias etapas a fin de integrar una literatura que se dirigiese a los lectores de su comunidad" (*La nueva novela* 23). This double process, international yet local, was a treacherous one.

Many literary critics disagreed with the internationalization of the literary market and the fact that national authors now had more exposure, and sometimes ended up writing novels that were not deemed continental or national enough. Anadeli Bencomo, in "Geopolíticas de la novela," maintains that "Estos mismos escritores impulsados por la internacionalización de su obra se convirtieron así en escritores cosmopolitas, residentes en varios países del extranjero, invitados frecuentes a eventos alrededor del globo" (36), as if this somewhat disconnected them from Latin America. *Boom* authors were multi-faceted artists: they were journalists, translators,

professors, and as such were invited to preside over events and teach university classes on a global scale.

Donoso criticized the cultural nationalism of the previous generations of novelists, and especially the regionalist authors. In his memoir *Historia personal del «boom»*,[49] published as the movement was fading, he criticized the *criollistas*, who,

> con sus lupas de entomólogos, fueron catalogando la flora y la fauna, las razas y los dichos inconfundiblemente nuestros, y una novela era considerada buena si reproducía con fidelidad esos mundos autóctonos, aquello que específicamente nos diferenciaba – nos separaba – de otras regiones y de otros países del continente: una especie de machismo chauvinista a toda prueba. (23)

He thus expressed his frustration with a literary production that refused to immerse itself in the world of letters and saw narrative innovation as treason to one's national culture. *Criollismo* was a way of looking within the continent, while cosmopolitanism invited authors to look out. However, detractors of the type of cosmopolitanism promoted by the *Boom* saw those criticisms as the logical response of outsiders and exiles "with radical aesthetics projects" (Cobb 84). The *Boom* novels, as articulated by Donoso, are then universalist in terms of universal aesthetics. As we will see in the following chapters, Vargas Llosa has taken this one step further – although it could be argued that literary experimentation and aesthetic cosmopolitanism was but a first step in his later articulation of cosmopolitanism. Aesthetic cosmopolitanism is about dialoguing with art forms from around the world; political cosmopolitanism is about discussing global citizenship

[49] Donoso made it clear in the introduction to his memoir that it was a personal testimony, not literary history or literary criticism: "No quiero erigirme en su historiador, cronista y crítico ... es probable que en muchos casos mis explicaciones, mis citas, la información que manejo, no sean ni completas ni precisas, e incluso que estén deformadas por mi discutible posición dentro del *boom* de marras: hablo aquí aproximadamente, subjetivamente, ya que prefiero que mi testimonio tenga más autenticidad que rigor" (17-18).

and ethical engagement with other cultures. *Boom* novels were not at this point yet, nor would the novels of so-called *Post-Boom* reach it.

The *Post-Boom* arose partly in reaction to the formal experimentation and ambitious continental allegories of the *Boom* novels. The *Post-Boom* was a return to realism and to more concrete issues, more fitting to the historical circumstances in which the authors were evolving at the height of the Cold War and the emergence of dictatorships across the continent. The *Post-Boom* authors completely rejected the work of their predecessors, for they deemed it elitist and reader-unfriendly. Its excessive cosmopolitanism and universality at the expense of local preoccupations, as well as its emphasis on technique, were also criticized. The second characteristic is of particular interest in my investigation, for Elena Poniatowska is an author of the *Post-Boom*, and *Post-Boom* authors, then, by virtue of their historical circumstances, were more focused on national issues than universal ones. The aforementioned historical circumstances also explain the fact that exile became a major theme in their novels.

More contemporary literary movements, especially those emerging in the 1990s, aimed to produce a corpus that would present a different perspective on Latin American literature than that of their predecessors and on its place within an ever expanding, no longer exclusively Western, canon. They proposed texts that strived to renovate the novel, and that left aside the historical obsession for which their predecessors were known; mostly, they wanted to distance themselves from the narratives about identity of both the *Boom* and the *Post-Boom*.[50] The *Crack* is of

[50] *McOndo*, a collection of short stories edited by Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez, broke with the tradition of *realismo mágico*. *McOndo* is also the name of the literary movement that emerged from the publication of the anthology, the idea of which came to the authors during a stay in the United States. It appeared as a reaction to the pervasiveness of magical realism, which dominated American and European reception of Latin American literature since the 1960s. They presented a post generation, one that sidelined family values in favour of individualism, and focused on describing the individual reality of the protagonists. The so-called *McOndo* novels are characterized by their realistic settings, which does not exaggerate or put emphasis on an alleged colourful Latin American exoticism, which is in fact a reproach they make to the *Boom* novels. Their background is more apolitical and individualistic than that showcased in the novels of the *Boom*, and they set aside the deliberate pursuit of Latin American identity.

particular interest here because one of its members, Jorge Volpi, is among the authors studied in this investigation.

Rather than a generational movement, the *Crack* is more of a thematic-formal nature.[51] The seven authors – Ricardo Chávez Castañeda, Alejandro Estivill, Vicente Herrasti, Ignacio Padilla, Pedro Ángel Palou, Eloy Urroz, and Jorge Volpi – penned in 1996 the "Manifiesto Crack". In it, they proclaimed themselves a new literary group, exposed their ideas about literature – be it Mexican, Latin American, or global – and traced the genealogy of Mexican literature, in order to situate themselves within it. The manifesto also served as a way to break free from national and continental structures. According to Volpi, "el *Crack* es antes que nada, una broma literaria" ("Código" 175), a "carácter a la vez paródico y provocador" (177), "una amistad literaria" (176), but it is not, like the *Boom* is known to have been, "una invención de editores, agentes de mercado" (176). Their intention, almost academic and pedagogical, is to recover an active reader who reflects on the reading material at his disposal and to move away from a type of literature they deemed *complaciente*, a thinly veiled criticism aimed at the *Post-Boom* novels.

The authors who belong to the movement were born between 1959 and 1962. Most of them received a cosmopolitan education since they were raised or lived abroad during their youth. The paradigm to study this movement should be globalization, rather than cosmopolitanism, which is why I have not included *McOndo* in my corpus. *McOndo* novels portray characters in a global world, but do not concern themselves with the ethics of living in one. In the "Presentación del País *McOndo*," Fuguet and Gómez hint at the fact that Latin America has now moved past Rama's *arritmia temporal*, even if being synched with the rest of the world now means having access to things such as MTV Latina, CCN in Spanish, NAFTA and Mercosur (9). For these authors, the *arritmia temporal* appears to be resolved, and Latin American authors no longer feel compelled to engage in debates about cosmopolitanism; on the contrary they seem to feel part of a global system of letters.

[51] The authors of the *Crack* refuse to be categorized as a literary generation. In the "Código de procedimientos literarios del *Crack*," Volpi affirms that "En contra de la opinión de la prensa y de numerosos académicos, el *Crack* no es una generación" (177). Pedro Ángel Palou, in the "Pequeño diccionario del *Crack*," states that "veinte años no es nada" (199) and specifies that he considers to belong to his *generación* authors such as Mexican novelists Sergio Pitol (1933) and Mario Bellatin (1960), which by definition, breaks the idea of a literary generation.

Much like their *Boom* forefathers, the authors of the *Crack*, and especially Volpi, became entangled in various polemics about their supposed lack of national interest.[52] Volpi has always rejected this type of criticism, well aware of the tradition from which his novels stem, as well as of the fact that much like Borges claimed in the 1950s, the Latin American author is allowed to broach any and all topics. The first, and to this day, the biggest polemic of his career came after the publication of his first novel to gain international fame, *En busca de Klingsor* (1999):

> Cuando yo me planteé la escritura de la novela nunca imaginé hacer explícitamente algo para renunciar al tema latinoamericano. Para mí era absolutamente natural escribir sobre un país que no fuera el mío – por otro lado, continuando una vasta tradición latinoamericana que tiene su punto medular en Borges –, y no dejó de sorprenderme que la crítica señalara con tanta asiduidad esta aparente voluntad de distanciarme de lo latinoamericano. Ahora, simplemente creo que un escritor latinoamericano puede escribir sobre cualquier tema posible con la misma naturalidad crítica. (qtd. in López de Abiada 151)

Volpi maintains that the cosmopolitan tradition in Latin America is very strong, and is not limited to Borges: "Hay en América Latina una tradición cosmopolita desde el principio, pero por lo menos desde el siglo veinte muy poderosa, la tradición que tiene a Borges y en el caso mexicano a Alfonso Reyes, que prefería escribir sobre Grecia que sobre el mundo prehispánico, sin que ello le quitara ningún elemento de mexicanidad" (qtd. in Areco 300). Much like his predecessors, then, Volpi advocates for some sort of rooted cosmopolitanism. He understands the tradition from which he stems, yet does not see how it can be seen as inappropriate to write about other

[52] Elena Poniatowska wrote in a column that "los escritores del *Crack* le tiraron siempre a la sofisticación, a escribir sobre temas internacionales, que interesaran en Alemania, Francia, Italia e Inglaterra. Habían leído a Broch y a Musil, traducidos por sus abuelitos literarios: Pitol y García Ponce. (Eran un poco esnobs, la verdad). Imposible de permanecer tras la cortinita de nopal que tanto enfureció a José Luis Cuevas. Una vez profesionalizada la carrera de escritor por Carlos Fuentes, ellos se lanzan a las grandes avenidas. Nada de Allá en el rancho grande, nada de color local."

topics. The *Crack* novels articulate the continent in a global context by erasing major indicators of identity of the Spanish American novel; most of their narrators, characters, events, and settings are removed from or only partially intertwined with the continent. The absence of signs of national identity in their novels allows for the articulation of a global consciousness, as well as for the tackling of the world's problems. Their use of the global novel makes possible not only the articulation of globality, but also the reconceptualization of the relationship between Spanish America and the world, leaving behind the dichotomy of nationalism-cosmopolitanism. In the *Crack* novels, globalization is a fact, and the best way to live harmoniously in such an interconnected world is through ethical commitment and working towards the resolution of global problems.

Rooted Cosmopolitanism

Nationalism and cosmopolitanism operate hand in hand in Spanish America, and yet have mostly been seen as irreconcilable by literary critics: one was either a national or a cosmopolitan author. Any examination of literary histories published until very recently reveals that there was no middle ground. On the one hand, the notion of cosmopolitanism, however vague its uses in Latin America, has been intricately associated with more politically expedient concepts such as miscegenation and modernity, which were perceived as useful tools to reinforce national aspirations. On the other, aesthetic cosmopolitanism, invariably understood as receptiveness to a universal artistic and literary tradition, has been at the forefront of efforts to undo colonial legacies. Cosmopolitan artists and works were engaged in an important mission, albeit one not always perceived as such, especially by nationalist critics who, in order to shame them for being disengaged, systematically invoked cosmopolitanism.

In Latin America, as in other peripheral societies where national cultures are seen as requiring preservation, one can identify two types of cosmopolitanism:

> The explicitly political cosmopolitan organizations and theories of cohesion across the Americas are the normative version of the cosmopolitical, the acceptable version of men organizing and joining together. The proper cosmopolitanism involved the formation of political unions and the consolidation of national and international bodies through association. (Fojas 131)

This cosmopolitanism, perhaps that of Simón Bolívar and other thinkers of this era, was acceptable. It was (mostly) white and male, and promoted by and for the wealthy elite.[53] "The 'other' cosmopolitanism," Fojas assesses,

> evoked promiscuous travels, tempting encounters, and new experiences that might shock the more provincially minded. Cosmopolitanism was disturbing and disruptive because it introduced new ideas about social formation, it deregulated the norm of association and introduced the single and singular figure – odd, queer, outcast, alien – as its exemplary type. (131)

This other cosmopolitan, who led the life of a sophisticated European traveller, was poorly perceived and accepted in Latin America, because he/she brought back new ideas from exile. Such foreign ideas were seen as diluting the specific Latin American locality, something that was linked to cultural amnesia.

This alleged amnesia is but a biased nationalist rejection since, on the contrary, cosmopolitanism was also a tool to rework the nation-world relationship in a different framework: "Though the cosmopolitans were accused of short memories, they repeated a past relationship with the aim of reworking it and remembering the nation, making it stronger and

[53] Some notable exceptions, that neither Fojas nor Siskind mention, are Argentinean author Victoria Ocampo and Paris-born Venezuelan Teresa de la Parra. Ocampo is best known for her work for the literary magazine *Sur*, which provided a space for cosmopolitan authors such as Borges. De la Parra, for her part, lived abroad extensively and wrote the *Diario de una caraqueña por el Lejano Oriente* (1920), a travel diary that notes her evolution as she discovers China and Japan.

more flexible" (35). The inherent coloniality of the locus of enunciation meant that cosmopolitanism from the periphery understood global culture as both local and global, one that these artists could integrate (59). Nineteenth and twentieth century cosmopolitans, such as the *Modernistas*, articulated a form of rooted cosmopolitanism *avant la lettre*, through mimetism and a keen understanding of their own tradition, in an attempt to reconceptualize Spanish America and make it modern. Cosmopolitanism, or the attraction they had towards France for the most part, was just a strategy to enter modernity and actualize their cultural framework. Consequently, such an author must reject national cultural aspects and ties to Spain, ties to coloniality. It was then a double process of emancipation: first from Spain, then from the nation, in order to become worldly. The artists had to, in Mignolo's articulation, undo the colonial mindset in order to reconceptualize the cultural framework to make space for the nation and the world.

Up to the very early twentieth century, one major problem with the definition of the word cosmopolitanism or of the cosmopolitan author in Latin America is that it had been desemanticized to mean diverse things. It was recurrently associated with luxury, decadence, the imitation of everything foreign, extra-territoriality, denial of locality, all tied to elitist and imperial connotations. In my view, this appears to be the major problem of authors deemed cosmopolitans, and correctly echoes the preoccupations of the scholars to which this investigation refers, that cosmopolitanism has mostly been misunderstood in Latin America. Indeed, cosmopolitanism has almost always been exaggerated in the region.

As I have previously argued, cosmopolitanism does not need to be understood as dissociated from national concerns. In fact, one of the major flaws of the critical reception of cosmopolitan authors in Spanish America is the belief that cosmopolitanism is exclusive and cannot coexist with other ideologies or concepts in the creation of an artistic identity. My contention is that the proposed notion of rooted cosmopolitanism allows for a more appropriate

assessment of this complexity. From this perspective, Spanish American writers and thinkers have never been absolute cosmopolitans; their position, rather, was one of rooted cosmopolitanism.

Moreover, contemporary Latin American writers defined as cosmopolitan, such as Borges, Cortázar, or Reyes, were moderate cosmopolitans, but were often read as immoderate because their critics worked within the binary framework of cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Borges's profound understanding of the Western canon left a deep mark on his corpus, and associated his oeuvre to that of major Western authors of the time. His reading of T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," as well as his personal and intellectual problems with Perón's regime, led him to develop two key ideas, namely "the lack of relevance of Spanish heritage to the culture of Argentina and the nonexistence of a defined national tradition" (De Castro, *Spaces* 52). Still, his full acknowledgment of the Western tradition, as well as his cosmopolitan outlook on literature, never led him to a cosmopolitanism that denied the relevance of national difference, which makes him, in my understanding, a rooted cosmopolitan.

Borges made use of the best elements of what he considered to be the epitome of Western literary culture to showcase his own. Borges, who was rejected by some and glorified by others, best exemplifies the difficulties of the cosmopolitan position in Latin America.[54] In "El escritor argentino y la tradición," he argued that "no debemos temer y ... debemos pensar que nuestro patrimonio es el universo; ensayar todos los temas, y no podemos concretarnos a lo argentino para ser argentinos: porque o ser argentino es una fatalidad, y en ese caso lo seremos de cualquier modo, o ser argentino es una mera afectación, una máscara" (273-74), acknowledging the equal

[54] Vargas Llosa claims that Borges contributed to the internationalization of Latin American literature thanks to the lectures he gave to the UNESCO and at La Sorbonne in 1963: "las revistas más importantes le dedicaron números especiales*: L'Herne, La Nouvelle Revue Française* ... Toda su obra se tradujo o retradujo, y a partir de entonces yo creo que, gracias a Borges, la literatura latinoamericana en Francia empezó a ser vista y leída con un respeto que no había merecido antes" ("Conferencia inaugural" 6). Borges was then not only a precursor to the *Boom*, but also a cultural ambassador.

importance of both aspects of his identity as a writer. Mexican Alfonso Reyes, also criticized for his cosmopolitan openness, claimed that "Podemos ser muy buenos mexicanos pero paralelamente podemos ser universales"; underlining the fact that nationalism and cosmopolitanism are not irreconcilable. However, their cosmopolitan positions and the reception of their work were always conditioned by the colonial and neo-colonial trajectories of the continent. Rooted cosmopolitanism was synonymous with inclusivity for these authors. It allowed them to be national writers, while also belonging to the Western canon, these two roles being complementary. Although they were criticized for their supposed rejection of the continent, Spanish American rooted cosmopolitans never rejected the importance of national belonging; they only framed it on a global scale.

Examining the place and reception of cosmopolitanism in Spanish America's intellectual and literary history reveals that the uses of the term do not reflect its philosophical and political meanings. Cosmopolitanism has been desemanticized to mean diverse notions and practices that are mostly associated with the continent's colonial history and difficult processes of national formation within the framework of Western modernity. In this regard, any reference to the term must always be elucidated and placed in the proper socio-cultural context. As such, cosmopolitanism, vaguely understood as engagement with the world and other cultures, has been long associated, to the point of displacement, with miscegenation, always considered a more politically expedient concept in a continent with diverse ethnic and cultural groups in need of coalescing under single national purpose. While miscegenation, and later transculturation, were hegemonic concepts and conceptual tools, they were also ideologies for most of the twentieth century. Throughout this period, cosmopolitanism as a concept remained in the background, always sidelined in favour of notions of intercultural relations seen to reflect the internal dynamics and needs of the region's troubled history. However, it is also true that this denial of

cosmopolitanism coexisted with the acceptance and promotion of institutions and government practices – for example republicanism and democracy – always deemed universal.

In the artistic and literary realms, cosmopolitanism, understood as a productive engagement with global artistic practices, has been at the heart of every artistic and literary movement or school since the nineteenth century. For many authors, the desire to assert their national identity was not irreconcilable with adopting the best elements from various literary traditions. Furthermore, embracing aesthetic cosmopolitanism placed the artist at the heart of an important mission: contributing to resolve the time lapse between the centre and the periphery of the Western world. Artists and writers saw themselves as involved in bridging the gap between Europe and Spanish America. Their work, thus conceived, participated in collapsing the dichotomy that relegated the continent to the periphery of modernity. In engaging the Western canon writers saw themselves in the avant-garde of a movement directed to undo the continent's *arritmia temporal*; this by definition meant the rejection of mimetism or passive imitation, and the affirmation of a critical engagement that put their production on par with the world. In this sense, cosmopolitanism is an intricate notion that denotes both a *deseo de modernidad* and a *deseo de mundo*.

Cosmopolitanism has always been explicitly or implicitly associated with the quest to undo the legacies of colonialism in Latin America. In this context, nationalist discourses have articulated the systematic criticism of cosmopolitanism as form of disengagement and indifference. For a long period this was the prevailing interpretation of most aesthetic cosmopolitan positions. My conclusion is, first, that the positions of cosmopolitan authors should be understood as those of rooted cosmopolitans, but the heated intellectual and literary debates of a continent in political turmoil, partly due to foreign interference, until only a few decades ago impeded this nuanced assessment. Second, the advent of the *Boom* in the 1960s and early 1970s

meant, for most artists and intellectuals, the end of the *arritmia temporal* that had characterized the quest behind artistic and literary production. Third, the end of this artistic and intellectual gap coincided with the fading of the nation-state and the advent of globalization. Both of these intellectual and structural transformations have led to a new era in which some Spanish American writers have begun to engage the world in new terms that, as I argue in this investigation, can properly be called cosmopolitan. The three selected authors should be considered rooted cosmopolitans like their predecessors, but their works differ from the earlier writers' in that they engage in discussions about cosmopolitanism and in the articulation of a global consciousness.

Chapter 3 – Elena Poniatowska's *La "Flor de Lis"* – Straddling the Divide Between Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: The Advent of Transculturation in Spanish America

"México es de quien nace para conquistarlo.
Yo nací para México. México es mío, yo soy de México" (145).
Elena Poniatowska, *Tinisíma*

In her acceptance speech of the 2013 *Premio Cervantes*, the most prestigious literary prize in Hispanic literature, an Elena Poniatowska dressed in Mexican national costume shared her first memories of Mexico. There she explained that when she saw a map of the country, she was intrigued by the various "Zona[s] por descubrir" – zones yet to be discovered – spread before her eyes. "Este enorme país temible y secreto llamado México," she says, "se extendía moreno y descalzo frente a mi hermana y a mí y nos desafiaba: 'Descúbranme'" ("Discurso Premio Cervantes" 3-4). She claims that "El idioma era la llave para entrar al mundo indio, el mismo mundo del que habló Octavio Paz ... cuando dijo que sin el mundo indio no seríamos lo que somos" (4), a subtle reminder of Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*. In my view, this speech sums up her artistic, intellectual, and personal trajectory. It also resonates with the novel I analyze in this chapter. *La "Flor de Lis"* (1988) is an autobiographical novel, a *Bildungsroman* that depicts the evolution of Elena Poniatowska in shaping her Mexican identity through her literary alter ego, Mariana.

Born on May 19, 1932, in Paris, France, and established in Mexico in 1942, Elena Poniatowska is one of the country's most prolific journalists and authors. She specializes in works that broach social and political issues, and that mostly concentrate on women and the poor, thus giving a voice to the subaltern. Margo Glantz mentions in "Las hijas de la Malinche" that "Poniatowska es objeto de un mito, aquél con el que nos ha familiarizado cierta tradición romántica, la de la princesa que lucha por los oprimidos" (1995, 127). However, the fact that she was born abroad to upper class parents – her father, Jean Joseph Evremond Sperry Poniatowski,

was related to the last king of Poland, and her mother, María Dolores Paulette Amor Yturbe, came from a family of wealthy Mexican landowners who fled the country during the 1911 Revolution – has caused her to be seen as an outsider for most of her life. When she started her journalistic career in the 1960s, most thought of her as someone who "no conocía el país … una francesita de nacimiento … educada con la escuela católica de Estados Unidos … Elena sabía de México lo que hablaba de su familia, que era la alta sociedad" (Schuessler 165). She overcame this perception and eventually published well recognized works such as *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971) and *Nada, Nadie – Las voces del temblor* (1985), two testimonials that relate pivotal events in her adopted nation.[55]

La "Flor de Lis" recounts the life of the duchess Mariana, who must leave France in the early years of the Second World War. She journeys to Mexico with her mother, Luz, and her sister, Sofía, while her father remains in Europe to fight alongside the French troops. Upon arrival, the two sisters must quickly adapt to a way of life far removed from the one they have always known. During the war, the sisters discover a new side to their mother, and develop a very close relationship with her: she appears to be freer in Mexico than she ever was in France, and dedicates more time to her daughters, a drastic change in their lives. The transition from Europe to America is easier for Sofía than for Mariana, as the latter feels marginalized in a society to which she has a profound desire to belong, but which continually rejects her. Mariana eventually acquires elements of Mexicanness through the presence of her nanny, Magda, who embodies the

[55] While *La noche de Tlatelolco* recounts the massacre of the Plaza de las tres culturas, *Nada, nadie – Las voces del temblor* focuses on the aftermath of the 1985 earthquake. In both chronicles, Poniatowska weaves her own experience of the events with that of people who lived through them. Poniatowska has often spoken about her commitment to the subaltern and how her work as a *cronista* became intertwined with her career as a journalist: "lo que sucedió con el periodismo es que fui comprometiéndome cada vez más, no sólo con el periódico, sino también con las personas a quienes entrevistaba" (26). In *Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska*, she goes further and states that she considers herself a journalist, never an author: "Todo lo que soy se lo debo al periodismo, si algo he hecho en la escritura ha sido gracias al periodismo. ... Siempre, en todas partes, cuando tengo que decir o escribir mi profesión pongo *periodista*, jamás pongo escritora" (63).

popular Mexico that the protagonist longs to make hers. Magda introduces Mariana to *her* Mexico by taking the young protagonist out in the streets, where she becomes acquainted with new aspects of the country. She is also a constant presence in her life, unlike Luz, whose attention vascillates from one interest to another.

The close relationship Luz had developed with Mariana and Sofía changes dramatically when Mariana's father returns from the front, and again later when her brother, Fabián, is born. The repeated absence of a maternal figure leaves Mariana in a situation of crisis, which in turn brings Father Teufel, a French priest, into her life. Mariana becomes obsessed with the priest; the lessons that he imparts about culture in Mexico and the need to transcend class have a profound impact on the teenager. The novel concludes with Mariana affirming her love for her mother, and for Mexico, the former being a personification of the latter in her mind.

Literary critics have often underlined the autobiographical character of *La "Flor de Lis"*. Indeed, one cannot help but see Poniatowska floating just beneath the surface of the protagonist, Mariana.[56] Throughout the novel, the child's voice and that of the adult intertwine as Mariana recalls the strongest memories of her childhood; a period of time within the twentieth century during which she makes the journey from Paris to Mexico City. Mariana's life – from her birth in France to a mother of Mexican heritage, to her escape from World War II, which brought her to Mexico – runs parallel to the life of the author, who left France at ten years of age and has lived in Mexico ever since.

By combining local, national and global perspectives, Poniatowska's fiction tackles the tensions at the heart of the conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism in Latin America. While I have used Mariano Siskind's expression *deseo de mundo* to describe the desire some authors had, and

[56] In *Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska*, Poniatowska states that "los personajes de *Lilus Kikus* y *La "Flor de Lis"* son una combinación de varias niñas, ninguna de las dos me refleja totalmente, porque siempre entra el elemento ficción" (29).

to some extent still have, to discover and inscribe themselves in the world literary canon, it is my contention that through Mariana, Poniatowska shows what I call a *deseo de Mexico*, that is, a desire to belong to her new country that compels her to shed her cosmopolitan identity.[57] As she herself stated in a 1997 interview with Walescka Pino-Ojeda, entitled "Elena Poniatowska: Sobre castas y puentes," Mariana, although a fictional character, embodies her own desire to belong to Mexico: "Es obviamente el deseo de saber cómo era México y qué era México y eso no lo iba yo a saber sino a través de otras gentes, que además me enriquecieron y me dieron mucho más que lo que podía darme cualquier miembro de mi clase social" (30). She then goes on to describe her love for Mexico as "amor a la gente de México, a la gente que hace, que es la urdimbre, la textura ..., la tela o el telar, la piel de este lugar. ... Yo creo que ser mexicano no es simplemente pertenecer a un país, cabe más" (32). Through Mariana, Poniatowska was able to explore this love for Mexico and this desire to become Mexican, at a time when the historical circumstances, namely the exacerbated nationalism of mid-century Mexico, did not necessarily facilitate it.

This process of a female character becoming Mexican is a recurring theme in Poniatowska's body of work, which hints at the importance it has for the author herself. Indeed, in *Tinisíma* (1992), fictional Tina Modotti undergoes a process similar to Mariana's. Real-life Tina Modotti (1896-1942) was an Italian-born photographer who spent most of her life travelling around the globe. She moved to the United States during her teenage years – she was 13 years old when she left her country of birth –, and then to Mexico in 1922. She devoted most of her adult life to the Communist Party, first for the Mexican branch, then in Moscow. She was sent on various missions, but the one that had the most impact on her was her stay in Spain, where she

[57] In "Vida y muerte de Jesusa Palancares," Poniatowska claims that it is her encounter with Jesusa that made her into a Mexican: "Lo que crecía o lo mejor estaba allí desde hace años era el ser mexicana, el hacerme mexicana; sentir que México estaba adentro de mí y que era el mismo que el de Jesusa y que con sólo abrir la rendija saldría" (43).

worked with the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War. She later returned to Mexico, where she died in 1942. According to Poniatowska, "La vida de Tina Modotti, en sí misma, sin necesidad de novelizarla ya era una novela, porque es una vida de aventura, que ya no las hay; una persona que vivía por un ideal, que estaba dispuesta a dar todo por ese ideal, que se olvidaba de sí misma, que no se prestaba ninguna atención, que borró su belleza y se dedicó a una causa" (*Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska* 68). This dedication, that I would say goes so far as to relate to cosmopolitan commitment, is evident from the onset of the novel.

The fictionalized Tina Modotti's ideal is to help her fellow human beings, whatever the cost: "Sólo tengo esta vida y quiero vivirla comprometida con las causas de los hombres" (*Tinisíma* 22). Her cosmopolitan spirit pushes her to assist everyone, even to the detriment of her love life, her career, and also her health. Throughout the novel, Modotti's leitmotiv is the following question: "¿Cómo unir a hombres tan dispares en una sola voluntad?" (451). Although she sometimes fails, she never gives up: "recomenzaré, en otra parte del mundo, con otras tareas" (570). Even if the character of Tina Modotti demonstrates more cosmopolitan tendencies than Mariana, these female protagonists have a lot in common. While Mariana is stigmatized when she arrives in Mexico and called a *gringa*, Tina is associated with her nationality when she first sets foot in the United States: "ser italiana oscilaba entre vampiresa y apache. 'Siempre me ven con un puñal atravesado en la boca'" (125). She is cast in B movies, always as "la exótica" (125). Her situation does not improve in Mexico, since "Lo malo es que en México, los extranjeros siempre se notan" (189), something that is also quite clear in *La "Flor de Lis"*. Tina is always perceived as a foreigner, and never fully accepted by the Mexican community. She is, however, fully accepted in the communist circles, for they see her multilingualism and her blind allegiance as great assets.

Moreover, Tina and Mariana both have a close relationship with their country of adoption: just as Mariana falls in love with Mexico through Magda, her nanny, and her grandmother, "A Tina, el país la atrapó" (133). She soon becomes obsessed with the country, she marvels at everything, and shouts her love for Mexico. When faced with departure, she states that "Eso me dolería, porque amo a México" (256). Leaving to pursue her work in Moscow, she admits that "Moscú será mi cabeza pero mi corazón está en México, en la Bondojo" (239). However, when she comes back to Mexico from Spain, she no longer longs for Mexico: "¡Qué país desmesurado! Esto formó parte de mí, pero ya no lo traigo adentro" (583); "Ha vuelto a otro México o ella ya no es la misma" (581). Like Mariana, for whom to love is to metamorphose into the loved one, Tina falls in love with the country through someone she loves, Mella. When Mella dies, she feels that she no longer belongs: "México la rechazaba desde el asesinato de Mella" (288). This never happens to the perhaps too young Mariana in *La "Flor de Lis"*; in the end she affirms her love for Mexico and her desire to make a life for herself in that new country.

Although the comparison between Poniatowska and her protagonists is an easy one to make, a closer look at *La "Flor de Lis"* reveals several levels of significance. It is my contention that the novel can be read as an allegory for the evolution of the various philosophical positions in Mexico during the second half of the twentieth century. As noted by Doris Sommer in her canonical *Foundational Fictions*, allegory "invites a double reading of narrative events" (41). In the case of *La "Flor de Lis,"* "the two parallel levels of signification" (42) are, on the one hand, the evolution of a young French newcomer to Mexico, and on the other, the veiled criticism of nationalist proposals, as well as of the cosmopolitan elite present at the time. The novel, then, proposes to replace cosmopolitanism with a Mexican culture of transculturation that would be more fitting to the country's history. In this allegorical reading, Mariana embodies Mexican

society on the road to accepting a culture of transculturation, and Luz, her mother, the rejection of elitist Latin American cosmopolitanism.

It is also my contention that *La "Flor de Lis"* can be read as a novel about the increasing prominence of the notion of transculturation, after its conceptualization by Ortiz in 1940, in Latin American intellectual discourse. My hypothesis is that the character of Mariana embodies the cultural movement towards the acceptance of transculturation as a fundamental aspect of Mexico, since the text develops the idea of a Mexican identity formed on the basis of harmony between indigenous and European heritages. *La "Flor de Lis"* ends with a question, demonstrating the state of transition and constant doubting in which the protagonist finds herself. By asking "¿Dónde, Mamá?" (261), the focus is constantly on belonging and on the fleeting figure of the mother.

The perspective of the cosmopolitan-turned-transcultured protagonist manifests itself in different ways throughout the novel. The change of setting – the journey from France to Mexico, and the transition from home to street – is the first step that affects Mariana as well as her perspective. Although the cosmopolitan outlook is as essential for Poniatowska as it is for Mariana, certain divergences appear between the author and the character. Poniatowska's autobiographical style of writing, along with her treatment of cosmopolitanism as a subject, is particularly interesting, in that she utilizes fiction to reflect on the evolution of her own identity and culture.[58] The author explicitly stated that her writing was born out of a desire to belong: "yo creo que escribo sobre todo, como dice, para pertenecer, quizás para ubicarme en un solo sitio, para escoger, y desde luego escogí a México, y también para cavar un túnel para llegar a conocer

[58] In the interview with Pino-Ojeda, Poniatowska mentions that "Hay un libro entre los míos que está muy ligado a mi niñez y a mi persona, que se llama *La "Flor de Lis"*. Este libro coincide incluso en párrafos completos con las memorias de mi madre ... que se llaman *No me olvides*" (21).

a los demás" ("Sobre castas y puentes" 63).[59] While Poniatowska is a proven citizen of the world, whose cosmopolitan commitment shone through in various occasions, her narrative counterpart – a French Mariana newly arrived in Mexico – begins by developing a cosmopolitan outlook by default, one which she models after that of her mother, Luz, and evolves over time towards an identity that combines European and American influences.

Despite her cosmopolitan origins, the young protagonist progressively assumes a Mexican identity, presented as a negotiation between cosmopolitanism and transculturation. In her struggle to define her identity, Mariana cleaves a path between the pervasive ideologies of the late 1930s and early 1940s – exacerbated Mexican nationalism and racist Eurocentrism – and finds a middle ground through transculturation. Mariana's transition from childhood to adolescence leads her to favour a hybrid identity that celebrates a Mexican culture of transculturation. Her transcultural identity, found through her nanny, Magda, and her grandmother, embraces all aspects of her complex cultural heritage.[60]

Mariana's transition mirrors that of Mexico. Following the Mexican Revolution, various well-thought out and well-crafted artistic initiatives were implemented, in an attempt to foment a strong national identity after the armed struggle that had left the country divided. In the 1920s, Vasconcelos, then Minister of Education, sponsored muralism, as well as artists such as Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco. Their murals, painted on government buildings so that any passerby could admire and learn from them, glorified Mexico's indigenous

[59] However, she later elaborated on her choosing Mexico in *Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska*: "siempre me he sentido mexicana, tanto que nunca tuve la impresión de no serlo legalmente hasta un día en que recibí una llamada de Gobernación diciéndome que recordara que era extranjera" (92), "Jamás había tenido la impresión de no ser mexicana, jamás se me había ocurrido no serlo: toda la gente que me trataba me creía mexicana, los únicos que sabían que era francesa eran los de Gobernación. No tenía conciencia de mi nacionalidad" (92).

[60] Despite the fact that her Mexican grandmother is of primary importance in Mariana's development, she never mentions her first name. At the beginning of the novel, Mariana makes a distinction between her European grandmother and her Mexican grandmother, referring to the latter as *la nueva abuela*, the new *abuela*. As she grows accustomed to her new setting, the protagonist only uses the expression *la abuela*.

past and promoted the idea of a Mexican identity deeply rooted in its indigenous ancestry. It became unpatriotic to have strong ties to Europe or to the United States. To be fully accepted as a member of Mexican society, everyone was expected to celebrate the country's hybrid culture. The concept of the cosmic race, to which I referred in Chapter 2, also helped cement the rationale that the Mexican *mestizo* had been chosen as the repository of a greater purpose, which led to a strong national feeling. Through these initiatives, Mexico became a centre of modernity in Latin America, where artists and intellectuals from across the globe converged.[61] The Mexican nationalism of the decades following the Revolution was also strongly influenced by its rejection of the United States's influence on various spheres of Mexican life. The ambitious education programs spearheaded by Vasconcelos, the industrial policies, the land reforms, and the nationalization of oil companies and railways, during a period of economic protectionism, led to what has been dubbed the "Mexican miracle," a period of growth not seen before or since.

The origins of the prevalence of the discourse of transculturation in the second half of the twentieth century in Latin America are found in the celebrated work of Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. Published in 1940, the *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* describes the process of transformation that a society undergoes in acquiring foreign cultural material (97-103).[62] Ortiz, partially in reaction to prevailing American and European anthropological theories

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[61] This is a period Poniatowska has written about multiple times, first in *Tinísima*, then in her 2011 novel *Leonora*. This last novel, which fictionalizes the life of Surrealist painter Leonora Carrington, is precisely about this period in Mexico's artistic scene.

[62] Transculturation became, in the 1970s, a hegemonic concept in approaches to Latin American culture. But for a few instances, it remained dormant until Ángel Rama reactivated the notion in 1982, in *Tranculturación narrativa en América latina*. Rama departed from the anthropological understanding of the concept proposed by Ortiz to elaborate a literary one. Rama opposed the cosmopolitan tendency to a *transculturadora* one, to understand why some authors incorporated various elements of indigenous cultures in their work, as well as adopted European and American literary technique. According to him, the era during which he was analyzing the evolution of literary processes was "una época de cosmopolitismo algo pueril" (123). Finally, according to cultural theorist Abril Trigo, whose perspective is supported by countless articles, essays and books published about the term, after Rama's rearticulation of Ortiz's theory for a more literary purpose, "transculturation became a fundamental tool in the field of Latin American cultural theory [rather than anthropology], a sort of wild card capable of interweaving anthropological, sociological, political and literary studies from a liberating and anti-imperialist Latin American perspective" ("On

that viewed cultural exchange in terms of dissolution of a given culture, coined the term transculturation to describe "las complejísimas transmutaciones de culturas" (86) to which a society is subjected after coming into contact with another, whether referring to a loss or a displacement of culture within a given society as new cultural material is assimilated.[63] Ortiz theorized transculturation as a three-phase process: the loss of one's cultural elements, the incorporation of new cultural elements, and finally cultural recomposition. Acculturation describes the social repercussions in the transition from one culture to another, while transculturation refers to the sharing and mixing of cultures, to create a new one. Moreover, the Cuban anthropologist understands this word as an act of resistance. Indeed, in his thinking, Ortiz wanted to replace the word acculturation by transculturation, since "the process of transit from one culture to another [is] more powerful" than the mere acceptance of new cultural traits (Millington 260).[64] Acculturation involves the loss of an earlier culture and assimilation to another; transculturation is a bridge between cultures, a place where cultures meet and interact. In

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Transculturation" 100). It was perceived as the only instrument capable of describing, explaining, and even creating Latin American modernity.

[63] Ortiz believed that "el vocablo transculturación expresa mejor las diferentes fases del proceso transitivo de una cultura a otra, porque éste no consiste solamente en adquirir una distinta cultura, que es lo que en rigor indica la voz anglo-americana *aculturation*, sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente, lo que pudiera decirse una parcial desculturación, y, además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse de neoculturación. Al fin ... en todo abrazo de culturas sucede lo que en la cópula genética de los individuos: la criatura siempre tiene algo de ambos progenitores, pero también siempre es distinta de cada uno de los dos. En conjunto, el proceso es una transculturación, y este vocablo comprende todas las fases de su parábola" (96-7).

[64] According to Silva Spitta, "Ortiz created the neologism 'transculturation' to undermine the homogenizing impact implicit in the term 'acculturation', which in his view obfuscated the true dynamics at work in colonial situations" (4). Some scholars, such as Bronislaw Malinovsky, who penned the prologue to the 1947 edition of Ortiz's seminal work, maintain that the term acculturation has an intrinsic ethnographic bias. Indeed, he states that the word implies an exchange that does not happen on fair terms, since "the 'uncultured' is to receive the benefits of 'our culture'" (Malinovsky xx in Trigo, "On Transculturation" 99), obviously seen as better. This is perceived as assimilation rather than as transculturation, since there is only one culture that benefits from new cultural elements. Nevertheless, there have been countless criticisms to this perception of transculturation, namely that Ortiz did not understand properly the ramifications and the etymological root of acculturation. Another criticism is that of Antonio Cornejo-Polar, who, in the 1995 article "Mestizaje, transculturación, heterogeneidad," argued that Ortiz's conceptualization of transculturation did not bring anything new to the Latin American theoretical framework, since it was basically the same concept as *mestizaje*.

such a process, social groups never completely lose their own cultural background. Rather, they adjust their vision of the other and remodel it to fit their ways in order to create new forms.[65]

Throughout *La "Flor de Lis,"* the protagonist constantly adjusts her vision of both her cosmopolitan and indigenous relatives, in various attempts to create an identity for herself. Mariana's flight to Mexico with her family marks the beginning of her cosmopolitan overture. The child is surprised to learn that her mother, Luz, is of Mexican descent; indeed, she says that "Sofía y yo no sabíamos que mamá era mexicana" (Poniatowska, *La "Flor de Lis"* 32). Nevertheless, stereotyping and disdain for her immediate family in Latin America mark this awakening to a new reality. Even before they embark on their journey to Mexico, the sisters are warned that it is a strange and dangerous country: "'You see children this is Mexico.' La abuela Beth nos enseña en el 'National Geographic Magazine' unas negras de senos colgantes y hueso atravesado en la cabeza. Sonríen, sí, porque van a comernos, son caníbales. 'This is where your mother is taking you'" (27). *La abuela Beth*, their American aunt, does not know much about Mexico and appears to mix up her neighbour to the south with some African countries. Yet, she manages to frighten her nieces, and the first image Mariana has of her new country is one of cannibals who want to devour her. The child internalizes this idea of Mexico put forth by her

[65] Although it is a valuable concept in Latin American studies, transculturation has been under fire since the 1970s due to its imprecision and overuse. Cultural theorists, such as Mark Millington, assert that the popularity of transculturation may come from the fact that it is more practical than its counterparts (hybridity, *mestizaje* and syncretism), and has been used by default (260): "it may be a case of the least bad option, but transculturation is a more neutral, more simply technical term, carrying fewer connotations than hybridisation or any of the other [ones]" (260). Indeed, the words are not exactly synonymous; these terms have their own authority and relate to subtle differences in meaning. While the term *mestizaje* is relatively specific and only refers to racial mixing, transculturation and hybridization are not only more commonly used in the field, but their meaning is also fleeting. The former has a truly Latin American identity for having been coined in Cuba; in contrast, the latter is more related to post-colonial studies (258). Millington draws a contrast between transculturation and hybridity: he sees the first concept as a technical, neutral term, while the second relates more to the biological or genetic problems that can lead to partnerships. Finally, Abril Trigo illustrates for his part that the imprecision, combined with the broadness of all the metaphors used to conceive Latin America – be it hybridity or *mestizaje* – have left open a space that transculturation can occupy, allowing it to remain the primary conceptual tool of Latin American cultural studies to this day. Although he considers it an obsolete "teoría de los setenta" ("De la transculturación (a/en) lo transnacional" 148), Trigo maintains that the many variations of the concept – modernizing, cosmopolitan and transcultured transculturation – are the cultural ideological manifestations of peripheral modernity displayed throughout the continent ("On Transculturation" 102).

relatives and cannot help but wonder why their mother is taking them to such a dangerous place.[66] Upon reaching her new country, she is bewildered that she cannot find any cannibals. While "En tierra en el aeropuerto de México, [donde] espera nuestra nueva abuela" (32) she wonders "¿Dónde estarán las del hueso atravesado en la cabeza?" (32), once she gets used to the country she realizes that this image was filled with prejudice.

Although her non-Mexican relatives' perception of Mexico is false, Mariana does not get to acknowledge it right away, for once there, her family makes a point of maintaining its status as foreign, as it positions them within the upper class. Since the mother expects to return to France once the war is over, she wants her children to retain their cultural ties to Europe. It is these ties to their past that prevent them from completely assimilating into the new culture. While Luz sends Mariana and Sofía to a British school to learn English, they all speak French at home. As for Spanish, they are rarely exposed to the language, for it has little value in Luz's worldview:

> Mamá avisó que iba a meternos a una escuela inglesa; el español ya lo pescaremos en la calle, es más importante el inglés. El español se aprende solo, ni para qué estudiarlo. En el Windsor School nos enseñan a contar en "pounds, shillings and pence" y a transferirlos. Cantamos "God save the Queen" todas las mañanas al empezar las clases. (33)

Consequently, the school, normally the crucible in which children's identities are largely formed, rejects most national elements, and when it does present them, it does so through a Euromorphic prism. The girls are thus exposed to British culture, one that is far from being their own, or even

[66] In *Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska*, Poniatowska addresses this very event and acknowledges that her grandmother was not as prejudiced as she is portrayed in the novel: "mi abuela paterna, se llamaba Elizabeth Sperry Crocker, era norteamericana y hablaba mal el francés – lo conjugaba mal –, nos quería mucho a Kitzia y a mí. Ella fue la que más se opuso a que viniéramos a México. Por las noches nos enseñaba una revista, la *National Geographic Magazine*, donde aparecían hombres y mujeres con huesos atravesados arriba de la cabeza, las tetas caídas, los labios deformados con platos. Mientras las hojeábamos nos decía: 'Miren niñas, esto es México.' Nos contaba que llegando allá nos iban a sacar la sangre y nos iban a comer crudas. Por eso cuando llegué a México yo tenía mucho miedo por todo lo que mi abuela nos había dicho, pero obviamente la abuela lo decía porque no quería que la dejáramos" (14).

one they could grow into, simply because it is perceived as more valuable than its Mexican counterpart. Culture then becomes a skill, necessary for survival, rather than something one embodies. This is where Mariana's dilemma stems from: she wants to be accepted by Mexico, but is not sufficiently exposed to its culture to assume it properly.

The relationships Mariana's family entertain with other Mexican families are reflective of the same mentality: these families value European ties over Mexican ones, and consider that their children can only learn how to evolve in the world through a stay in Europe. They are convinced that "no cabe duda de que el mundo se adquiere en el otro continente, aquí somos todavía muy provincianos" (50), and associate culture with the elite. Therefore, anyone who took part in the Mexican Revolution, a popular uprising, has little to no culture – something that is apparent to all:

> ¿Te has fijado cuánto la menciona el Duque de Otranto en sus columnas? En la del martes contó de un gigantesco ramo de flores que le mandó Ezequiel Padilla, y Marie Thérèse Redo que lo vio en la sala dijo que era una cosota así, desproporcionada, claro que de mal gusto, del gusto de los políticos, del gusto de la Revolución Mexicana que no tiene el menor gusto, qué le vamos a hacer, la cultura no se aprende de un día para el otro. (50)

Once again, culture is a tool that must be acquired by people who want to be accepted into higher circles. If one does not master it, one is to be ridiculed and set apart. Mariana masters this art of the culture of the elite, for she was born into it, but it is not this elitist cosmopolitan culture that she wants to embrace. Instead, she treasures the popular Mexican culture that would make her a Mexican.

While Mariana demonstrates interest in learning about Mexico and Mexicans, whatever their social background, her mother only looks to Europe-related aspects of Mexican life. The disdain shown by Luz towards the Spanish language is made manifest by the one she shows

towards her country and her fellow countrymen: indeed, language and nation are closely aligned in her mind, with Spanish being associated with the lower classes and countries with a colonial or neo-colonial past in Latin America. Those who speak it are therefore inferior to the world she has chosen. Although Mexican, Luz prefers to identify as French. Mariana's mother is a shining example of someone who chooses to deny his or her past, rejects tradition, and who, in times of crisis, refuses to accept the transcultural society whence he or she came, favouring the culture adopted in the metropolis. Luz can then be regarded as a justification as to why cosmopolitanism gained a poor reputation in Latin America.

Indeed, Luz embodies such elitism, and displays her disregard for her fellow countrymen and local problems during a trip to the countryside. When Sofía suddenly becomes thirsty, Luz, used to a life of plenty, expects a farmer to be able to give the child something to drink:

> Sofía reclama: "Tengo sed." Mamá le dice: "Vamos a conseguirte un vaso de leche." Cuando lo pide, frente a una puerta, la enrebozada hace una larga pausa antes de responderle como si fuera a darle un vahído: "No hay." Mamá patea el suelo con sus botas, cómo que no hay, si ésta es una región ganadera, no hay, no hay, no hay, repite a cada patada, no hay, en este país nunca hay nada, no hay, en cualquier pueblito mugroso donde te detengas en Francia te dan de comer estupendamente y aquí, no hay, no hay, no hay, lo mismo en la miscelánea, en la trapalería, no hay, no hay, ¿para qué abren tiendas entonces si no hay?, lo que pasa es que no quieren atenderte, no hay, no hay. ... "Pero ¿de qué vive esta gente, qué come, si ni siquiera tiene un vaso de leche?" (69-70)

Luz becomes upset and acts like a capricious child. Instead of acknowledging that they are riding through a poor region of Mexico, she prefers to convince herself that the farmers are making a conscious decision not to help the wealthy. She projects the disdain she feels for the rural people onto them and paints herself as the victim. She cannot fathom being denied anything. Luz

erroneously compares Mexico to France: in her idyllic vision, she imagines French farmers who would have fed strangers knocking at their door. She fails to mention that France is now a war zone, in which food is sparse and rationed, and that had she stayed, she would probably have been in a situation similar to that of the Mexican farmers.

Instead, Luz quickly shifts her attention to the Revolution, which she blames for taking everything away from her wealthy family, for the lack of milk, and the utter poverty of the region they are visiting: "Habla de la Revolución; antes con los hacendados, todos tenían de todo, ahora el país está muerto de hambre. ... Pinche revolución tan pinche, sintetiza mamá" (70). Before the Revolution, the conditions were not any better for the poorer class, but the neo-colonial aristocracy ruled the country, and as such, could expect almost anyone to be at their service. Mariana, of a more affable nature, listens to her mother but does not internalize her destructive words. In this regard, Cristina Perilli rightly points out that "La desvalorización de 'la raza' mexicana dentro del discurso familiar produce, como contraparte y respuesta a la búsqueda de pertenencia, el discurso de Mariana que la naturaliza y mitifica" (33). Unbeknownst to her, then, Luz is helping her daughter to become Mexican.

For Mariana's family, and particularly her mother, Europe remains the cultural reference, thus preventing the two sisters from beginning the true process of Mexicanization. Luz assures herself, with help from different strategies – the British school, the American convent, the piano lessons – that the dominant culture in the home remains that of the old continent. Luz hierarchizes and instrumentalizes culture. Mariana discovers that her mother is in fact a product of cultural mutation, typical of the neo-colonial cultural elite of the early twentieth century, the so-called *ciudad letrada*, or lettered city, always turned towards the overseas metropolis. Evidently, as it was across all of Latin America at the time, this metropolis could not be Spain, but rather France or England, two fundamental benchmarks for their national education systems.

While Luz embodies the elitism that has tainted cosmopolitanism for so long, the concept of transculturation is particularly relevant in the case of Mariana who, unlike her mother, begins to build a different identity by slowly absorbing elements of her new surroundings, piece by piece. As a result, the adversarial relationship between Mariana and her mother serves as a starting point for the protagonist's acceptance, and her eventual integration or assimilation, of her Mexican roots. As a child, Mariana has not yet assumed the racial prejudices of her mother and remains open to the perception of Mexico held by other authority figures, such as her nanny Magda and her Mexican grandmother. The Mexicanization of the protagonist happens in two phases. Mariana first idealizes her mother, which corresponds to the acclimatization period in her new environment, then she wishes to be more Mexican than her mother, in order to be accepted by her peers, most of whom are of a nationalistic mind, thereby leading her to establish a link between mother and motherland (Hurley 156). This contradictory and conflicting desire of Mariana to finally obtain Luz's maternal love, which never seems to be within reach, pushes her to develop a transcultural identity.

Even if she is quite young, Mariana feels the sting of not being accepted by the Mexican community. This rejection happens even when she is with her grandmother, who has lived in Mexico her whole life. Although clearly Mexican, her upper-class status separates her from most Mexicans. For instance, this feeling of alienation is deeply felt during a church service:

> Casi no hay gente, apenas unos cuantos bultos enrebozados, morenos como las bancas, monitos que se rascan y se persignan, confundidos los ademanes. A veces capto, entre las cortinas del rebozo, el fulgor de una mirada huidiza; la mano vuelta hacia adentro como una garra que se recoge es la de un animal que erró su ataque y tuvo que retraerse. ¿Qué tanto hay dentro de esos rebozos? ¿Cuánta mugre rencorosa, cuánto sudor ácido, cuánta miseria arrebujada en el cuello y en el cabello opaco, grisáceo? Quisiera hablarles, sería

> fácil acuclillarme junto a una forma doliente, pero aprendí que no me aceptan, me ven en sordina, agazapados entre sus trapos descoloridos y tristes, hacen como que no me entienden, todo su ser erizado de desconfianza. Dice la abuela que es más fácil acercarse a un perro sarnoso. ... "Dios mío, dime ¿qué les he hecho? ¿Qué les hacemos para que nos rechacen tanto?" Espío sus gestos hieráticos, vergonzantes y sobre todo, esa terrible tranquilidad oscura con la que esperan yertos a que el más allá les dé la señal. ¿Qué esperan? Magda me dijo una vez: "Es que no tienen a nadie." ¿Qué hago entre esas ánimas en pena? (Poniatowska, *La "Flor de Lis"* 51-52)

Mariana is aware of the divide between her family and most Mexicans, and in church, she wishes she could talk to them – "quisiera hablarles" – and make them see her profound desire to understand them, to accept them, and most of all, to be accepted by them. As a child, she does not feel the need to have such a separation between people because of their socio-economic classes. She does not understand what she did wrong to be rejected in this manner, when in fact her mistake is having been born into what is perceived as the wrong class. She finds solace in Magda telling her she did not, in fact, do anything wrong.

Once Mariana begins to appreciate Mexico, the maternal figure she was attempting to emulate undergoes a transformation. Thanks to her nanny, Magda, who represents contact with the indigenous and popular majority of society, she discovers a Mexicanness different from the exotic image to which she was first introduced in Europe.[67] In fact, the relationship Mariana develops with Magda gradually helps her to assume her Mexican identity. Whereas France, and later her grandmother's house, represent closed spaces where European culture flourishes,

[67] Glantz compares Magda to La Malinche, and claims that "con ella entran a la casa las leyendas, los servicios, la segunda lengua: como Malinche, es la que interpreta la realidad, la transforma, le da sentido, la organiza" (2013, 87). La Malinche, or Doña Marina or 'la lengua' – the tongue –, was the young indigenous woman who was given as a gift to Hernán Cortés in 1519. Her mastery of indigenous languages and Spanish enabled her to act as a mediator and translator, a role resembling Magda's in Mariana's life.

Mexico and its streets represent free, open areas where an uninhibited Mariana can develop and learn more about her new country. Moreover, Magda's presence in the house causes the closed spaces to become porous, and all are touched by a certain Mexicanness.[68] Mexico, then, acquires a sense of normalcy in the mind of the protagonist, rather than an aura of foreignness.[69]

Through Magda, Mariana discovers and falls in love with the Zócalo, the main square in the heart of Mexico City, where she experiences popular culture. Mariana describes the Zócalo as "esa gran plaza que siempre se [le] atora en la garganta" (58). She even feels love towards the *plaza* and, for the first time in the novel, senses that she is part of her new country. By establishing a connection to the most important location in Mexico, she metaphorically belongs to Mexico:

> Amo esta plaza, es mía, es más mía que mi casa, me importa más que mi casa, preferiría perder mi casa. Quisiera bañarla toda entera a grandes cubetadas de agua y escobazos, restregarla con una escobilla y jabón, sacarle espuma, como a un patio viejo, hincarme sobre sus baldosas a puro talle y talle, y cantarle a voz en cuello, como Jorge Negrete, cuando lo oía en el radio gritar así: México lindo y querido si muero lejos de ti que digan que estoy dormido y que me traigan aquí. (58)

Not only does Magda introduce Mariana to a symbol of Mexicanness, the Zócalo, she also replaces the maternal figure in Mariana's mind. Magda is present and shows a consistent care towards the children, unlike the fleeting love of Luz. She ends up having more influence on

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[68] Serge Gruzinski, in *La pensée métisse*, argues that this porousness is a defining characteristic of the exchanges that took place after Columbus's arrival, especially in Mexico, where it is impossible to know "où commence le monde indigène, où finit celui des conquistadores ... Leurs confins sont à tel point imbriqués qu'ils en deviennent indissociables" (75).

[69] In the essay "A Question Mark Engraved on My Eyelids," Poniatowska claims that she "absorbed Mexico through the maids. ... I discovered Mexico through them, and not even Bernal Díaz del Castillo had better guides. Surrounded by Malinches ..., I was able to enter an unknown world, that of poverty and its palliatives. ... Without realizing it the maids provided me with a version of Benito Juárez; they were all like Benito Juárez. Like him they vindicated themselves: 'Dirty foreigners.' Like him they defended Mexico, as stubborn as mules" (99-100).

Mariana's search for identity than her own mother. Mariana loves Magda, and is aware of the many sacrifices she makes to attend to the family; something Luz could not bring herself to do. According to Mariana, Magda "Es sabia, hace reír, se fija, nunca ha habido en nuestra casa presencia más benéfica" (58). However, Mariana does not understand why Magda needs to make all those sacrifices for the family while no one else seems to be doing anything in the house:

> Veo sus manos enrojecidas cambiando los platos de un fregadero a otro; en uno los enjabona, en el otro los enjuaga. Los pone después a escurrir. ¿Por qué no soy yo la que lavo los platos? ¿Por qué no es mamá la que los lava? ¿O la nueva abuela? ¿O para eso Mister Chips? ¿O el abuelo, tantas horas sentado en Francia? ¿Por qué no es Magda la que toma las clases de piano si se ve que a ella se le ilumina el rostro al oír la música que tecleamos con desgano? (58-59)

Contact with popular culture allows Mariana to acquire new values and to understand the differences that exist between her home and the rest of society. She questions not only her role in the household, but everyone else's. Mariana regards Magda as more than a maid and a nanny, and is saddened to see how little she cares about herself: "Ella siempre se atiende a lo último. Para ella son los minutos más gastados, los más viejos del día, porque antes, todavía encontró tiempo para venir a contarnos el cuento de las tres hijas del zapaterito pobre" (59). Through Madga, Mariana becomes aware of the special place she has in society. Even though her family was financially ruined during the Revolution, they were able to retain their status; Mariana questions this state of affairs.

Magda also enables Mariana to accept the hybrid nature of her identity, allowing her to become Mexican. According to Mary Louise Pratt, "subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (6). It is my contention that Mariana can be likened to the marginal groups to which Pratt refers. In a country

full of Mexicans, she is the outsider, she is the one who has to internalize the cultural materials transmitted to her by the dominant culture of the country where she now lives. In some sort of reversed pattern, the nanny, the outsider in the French-dominated house, becomes the vessel of the culture Mariana needs to finally attain a sense of belonging.

This transformation embodies Octavio Paz's affirmation that Mexicans are fundamentally hybrid beings, and that only the acceptance of this legacy of the mixing of cultures for four hundred years can remedy the crisis of Mexico's cultural identity. A contemporary of Ortiz, Paz used the term *hibridismo*, semantically quite similar to the term employed by his Cuban colleague, to refer to the creation of Mexican identity.[70] In *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950), alluded to in Poniatowska's *Premio Cervantes* speech, the author affirms that the identity impasse comes from the fact that throughout history, the political and intellectual elite of Mexico have always attempted – often successfully – to deny a culture built on creative interaction during the long process of colonization. The Mexican, this fundamentally hybrid being, born of the contact between Pre-Colombian and Spanish societies, must accept his/her nature in order to overcome this identity deadlock. Paz argues that "Nuestro grito es una expresión de la voluntad mexicana de vivir cerrados al exterior, sí, pero sobre todo, cerrados frente al pasado. En ese grito condenamos nuestro origen y renegamos de nuestro hibridismo" (225). As long as Mexicans negate such hybridity, they are condemned not to find their true selves.

[70] The concept of *hibridismo*, or hybridity, as understood by Paz, differs from that of Nestor García-Canclini in *Culturas híbridas* (1995), which serves to identify the mixing of elite and popular cultures. In the early 1950s, Paz proposed hybridity contemporaneously to Ortiz's coining of transculturation; both were identifying the mixing of cultures in the context of colonialism. *Hibridismo*, as understood by Paz, could also be tied to Homi Bhabha's notion of third space (*The Location of Culture* 1994). Mariana, growing up in Mexico, yet living in a French home, can be seen as evolving in a third space. However, for the purpose of this investigation, I chose to use *hibridismo* and transculturation, for I analyze the novel against the historical background of the evolution of Mexican nationalism and the evolution of those very theories, which are linked to the emancipatory politics of the post-revolutionary context.

El laberinto de la soledad depicts a middle of the century Mexico full of contradictions which has yet to experience the cultural decolonization movement, and whose inhabitants are still at odds with their identity: "El mexicano no quiere ser ni indio ni español. Tampoco quiere descender de ellos. Los niega... El mexicano y la mexicanidad se definen como ruptura y negación" (225). The Mexican, then, "se vuelve hijo de la nada. Él empieza en sí mismo" (225). For Paz, the post-revolutionary Mexico of the twentieth century needed to become self-aware and recognize the importance of both cultural traditions. Years later, Paz was still contemplating the nature of his compatriots's identity. In *El ogro filantrópico, historia y política 1971–1978*, while reflecting on the inherent contradiction that is the Mexican identity, Paz affirms that "La ambigüedad mestiza duplica la ambigüedad criolla aunque sólo para, en un momento final, negarla: como el criollo, el mestizo no es ni español ni indio; tampoco es un europeo que busca arraigarse: es un producto del suelo americano, el nuevo producto" (46). In Poniatowska's novel, Mariana, growing up in Paz's Mexico of the 1950s, personifies the crucible of this new being, born of the contact between European and Mexican culture, who has yet to adapt to a new country.

Adaptation to a new setting remains a treacherous process for her and her sister Sofía. An adult Mariana comments: "Éramos unas niñas desarraigadas, flotábamos en México, qué cuerdita tan frágil la nuestra, ¡cuántos vientos para mecate tan fino!" (Poniatowska, *La "Flor de Lis"* 47). Even if it is easier for Sofía to acclimatize, both sisters are like tightrope walkers on a *cuerdita frágil*, a loose cord, and can lose their bearing at any moment. This reflects that Mariana is aware that her roots were not as deep as they could have been, had her family stayed in Europe. However, contrary to her sister, who is able to pass as a native of the country, Mariana, blonde with blue eyes, is always identified as a stranger, which does not help in her acclimatization. Children and adults alike question her Mexicanness and tell her she does not look the part, calling

her a *gringa*. Multiple times throughout the novel, Mariana asks herself, her mother, Magda, anyone who is willing to listen to her, where she belongs, and never seems to get a satisfactory answer. She is often deemed not Mexican enough, and told that one does not become Mexican, one is born Mexican:

—Pero tú no eres de México ¿verdad?

—Sí soy.

—Es que no pareces mexicana.

—Ah sí, entonces ¿qué parezco?

—Gringa.

—Pues no soy gringa, soy mexicana.

—¡Ay! ¿A poco? ...

Busco trabajo de secretaria:

—No vayas a decirles que no naciste mexicana porque ni caso te hacen.

—Si no eres de México, no tienes derecho a opinar.

—¿Por qué? Tengo interés en hacerlo.

—Sí, pero tu opinión no vale.

—¿Por qué?

—Porque no eres mexicana. (114)

Mariana is told she does not have a right to express her opinion since she was not born Mexican. Once again, she tries to belong to a society that constantly rejects her, based solely on her birthplace. She, her mother, and her sister are called terrible names, "Cochinas extranjeras que vienen a chuparnos la sangre," "pinche emigradas," and are told that being Mexican is a birthright: "Los que no han nacido en esta bendita tierra no tienen derecho a participar. Si no les gusta lárguense" (75). However, Mariana believes that she is "mexicana porque [su] madre es

mexicana; si la nacionalidad de la madre se heredara como la del padre, sería mexicana" (74). When she is told that she is not from Mexico and cannot be considered Mexican, her reply makes it clear where her allegiance now lies: "Soy de México porque quiero serlo, es mi país" (74). Indeed, even if she was born in France, she wants to be Mexican and to belong to Magda's Mexico. She claims her mother's Mexicanness as her own, more than her mother does, and goes one step further when she affirms that nationality is not necessarily something one is born with, but rather something one chooses. In this aspect, she behaves as her mother, who identifies solely as French.

However, Mariana cannot escape the hybrid nature of her being and her perceived incompleteness. As a teenager, she does not see herself as incomplete; she is made to think this way, which confuses her even more. She commits to being Mexican, but is constantly reminded that she is not, even during the most mundane activities, such as during a trip to the countryside:

> —Ay, Mariana, ¿qué no sabías que las mulas son hijas de yeguas y burros?
>
> —¡Ése es el origen de las mulas!
>
> —Por eso las mulas son estériles.
>
> Sammy comentó:
>
> —Hay cierto tipo de cruzas que no se deben hacer, que no se pueden hacer. ...
>
> Emilio pronunció la palabra híbrido. Híbrido, híbrido... se parece a Librado... Híbrido. Librado, híbrido. El maíz híbrido no se puede sembrar. No agarra. (193)

The last section of the quotation is particularly interesting, in that, mixing the voice of the adult with that of the child announces Mariana's path. Although both the *mulas* and the *maíz híbrido* are sterile, examples of why hybridity ought to be condemned – and thus embody her peers' rejection of *mestizaje* –, Mariana does not see it that way. The voice of the adult recalls Emilio's hard words about hybridity – "Emilio pronunció la palabra híbrido. El maíz híbrido no se puede

sembrar. No agarra." – , while the child plays with them and makes the word *híbrido* – hybrid, rhyme with Librado – the name of one of their horse grooms, which also means *liberated*. Hybridity and liberation are then linked in the mind of the protagonist, at least a posteriori. The repetition of the word in her discourse is a reflection of her condition, and of the difficulties Mexico has in embracing this notion of identity. An allegorical reading makes obvious the reference to identity; hybridity, then, is linked to freedom.

Mariana's adolescence, a period of conflict during which her desire to belong is amplified, is accompanied by the affirmation of her Mexicanness. Her friend Casilda puts her finger on Mariana's sense of self and understands that for Mariana, to love is to morph into the loved one (202), which is why her encounter with Father Teufel, a French priest, is worrisome.[71] Teufel is no stranger to Mariana's sudden awareness of class disparity and of the importance of embodying one's culture. The priest shares Marxist beliefs and hopes the young women he coaches as part of a scout organization will eventually reject their aristocratic heritage, beliefs, and values, and personify a new evolution of Mexican society – one that includes the poor and the indigenous. Teufel is vocal in his criticisms of Mexico, and during a meeting with industrialists, overreacts when discussing these issues:

> —Ustedes comparan al pueblo mexicano con los pueblos de Europa, concretamente con Francia, y sólo en la medida en que México se parezca a Francia, se justificará su pretensión de formar parte de la comunidad de los hombres. Esto es muy grave, señores trasterrados, porque ustedes mismos, aunque ya no viven en Francia, se erigen en civilización y pretenden civilizar a un pueblo que desprecian. ¡Oh no, no protesten, me han atestado su superioridad durante todos los días de mi estancia y conozco bien su

[71] In the essay "A Question Mark Engraved on My Eyelids," Poniatowska stated that "I have always wanted to lose myself in others, to belong to other people, to be the same as them. It is always the others who are right, who hold the key to the enigma" (100).

> acción civilizadora; hacerlos trabajar diez o doce horas en lo que ustedes quieran, regular su natalidad cuando este gran país tiene aún tantas zonas sin poblar, terminar con una religión primitiva y ciega, a su criterio pagana, sólo porque su mezquindad los hace incapaces de comprenderla, seguir aprovechando esa mano de obra sumisa, barata, ignorante, como a ustedes les conviene, porque de lo que se trata es de que no mejoren, no asciendan a ninguna posición de mando! Oh, no me digan que ustedes les han enseñado lo que saben, jamás encajarán los mexicanos pobres dentro de su mundo mientras no se parezcan a ustedes y a su familia. Ustedes no encarnan civilizadores ni cultura alguna. Ustedes sólo encarnan sus privilegios. Había terminado en un grito, ya sin aliento, lanzando anatemas a grandes salivazos blandiendo un índice amenazador: "¡Racistas, esto es lo que son ustedes, racistas y explotadores! ¡Y no se atrevan a decir que actúan en nombre de Cristo; sería intolerable su cinismo!" (231-32)

Teufel criticizes the upper class, and the Mexican industrialists that treat the lower classes badly. He tells them quite bluntly that they "no encarnan civilizadores ni cultura alguna ... Ustedes encarnan sus privilegios" (232). He criticizes their need to resemble Europe. He acts more or less the same way with the young girls under his supervision. He shows no respect for the way they were raised, believes the upper class is useless, and expects the teenagers to replicate the pattern of their parents, unless they assume his beliefs. He stresses that the girls need to *descastarse*, shed the class into which they were born and their social privilege: "Hay que vivir, descastarse, hí-bri-do, des-cas-vi-bri-do vivir" (253). For Teufel, becoming Mexican is a two-step process: the young scouts must reject their *casta* and accept the hybrid nature of their identity, finally to live. Naturally, this resonates with Mariana.

Teufel often tells the girls who attend his seminars that their way of life is not good enough, since it does not serve a higher purpose than to serve themselves: "Por Dios estudien

algo útil, sean enfermeras, laboratoristas, maestras, costureras, boticarias, algo útil, qué sé yo, algo que hace falta. ¿Por qué estudian lo que va a instalarlas en su estatuto de niñas bien? ... ¿Cuándo van a servir a los demás? ¿Cuándo van a perderse en los demás?" (126). The priest wants them to realize the chance they have to live in a country such as Mexico, and tells them they were born to change the world.[72] He wants them to "tomar parte, pertenecer, expresarse, dar" (155), but what strikes a chord with Mariana is his call to be Mexican: "Ustedes viven en un país determinado, denle algo a ese país, carajo. Sean mexicanas, carajo" (155). Teufel's speech echoes with Mariana, who takes his demands to heart, especially when his appeal is that they become Mexican, a process she has yet to complete. In a private meeting with Mariana, during which his objective is to get to know every member of the scout organization, Teufel casts some doubts on her sense of identity and reveals her own contradictions. He tells her that being, in her own words, "de buena familia" and "educada" does not mean that she is better than "la otra gente ... la de afuera" (144-45).

Mariana is especially troubled by their conversation about servants, for she has internalized her family's belief that servants cannot achieve anything better in life. This concept, of course, conflicts with the love and respect she feels for Magda:

—Ustedes ¿tienen sirvientes?

—Sí, padre.

—Y ¿comen en la mesa? ...

— ¡Ay no, padre!

—Ah, ya veo, ¿por qué no comen en la mesa con ustedes? ...

[72] By her own admission, this is something that Poniatowska took to heart: "desde joven, por mi propia formación pensaba: 'Bueno, yo le tengo que ser útil a mi país'. Pero, ¿cómo le puedo ser útil? Denunciando lo que vea, observando, escribiendo acerca de los problemas de cada día y dándoles voz a gente que simplemente me la pide" (*Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska* 27).

—Porque son sirvientes. No tienen modales... Son criados.

—¿Qué significa eso?

—Son distintos. A ellos tampoco les gustaría comer en la mesa con nosotros.

—Y usted ¿está de acuerdo en que los sirvientes coman en la cocina?

(Como un relámpago, Magda atraviesa frente a mis ojos, pero Magda es Magda.)

—No sé padre, nunca me he puesto a pensar en ello. (144-45)

At this point in her identity formation, Mariana has still not accepted all of her Mexican identity, and is still attached to some family traditions and to her status as part of the wealthier class. Although she perceives Magda as different from other maids – "Como un relámpago, Magda atraviesa frente a mis ojos, pero Magda es Magda." – she still perceives herself as a *niña bien* who could not work in a factory. Although she has added many Mexican elements to her worldview and sees herself as Mexican, she is not as Mexican as Teufel, based on his alledged Marxist beliefs, would want her to be. However, Teufel's understanding of Mexicanness is somewhat skewed by his perception of himself. Indeed, during a short stay with Mariana's family, he enjoys being served by the maids and by Luz, who grants him his every desire. Although Teufel calls into question Mariana's beliefs about identity, he is very hypocritical. When asked about what language he considers his first language, he states that although he learned Spanish first – a result of being born in Mexico – he considers French his mother tongue for it is "el de [su] gente," that of his people (233). If language and nationality are closely related, and nationality is something one chooses, then like Luz, Teufel, although born and raised in Mexico, considers himself more French than Mexican.

While the two main authority figures in her life reject Mexico and identify themselves with France, Mariana's grandmother loves her country and tries to convey – even to pass on –

this love to her granddaughter, who is eager to learn. An adult Mariana remembers how her grandmother loved her country until her last days, and how she is next in line to embrace it:

> Frente a sus ojos veía extenderse su país como la continuación de su falda, inspeccionaba los campos de trigo, se alegraba si descubría panales. ... Ahora, desde hace tres meses, mi abuela ya no quiere regresar a los sitios donde estuvo aquerenciada.
>
> —Tú tenías el afán de que el país te entrara por los ojos, abue...
>
> —Sí – me responde –, ahora te toca a ti memorizarlo. (177-79)

The relationship with her grandmother helps Mariana accept all the contradictions within her identity, and finally see herself as Mexican. It is the mission that her grandmother gives her. In commenting that Mariana is actively looking for an identity with which she could be at peace, María Elena de Valdés claims that "The salient truth that emerges is that her own identity is dominated by her apprenticeship in being able to look at herself as an other; specifically, as the other of the persons who share in her life" (128). This discovery of "myself as an other" is a painful coming of age experience that marks her transition into adulthood. With Madga and her grandmother, Mariana eventually accepts the hybridity of her identity.

Mariana is a complex, multi-faceted being, still torn somewhat between her double sense of belonging, "torn between contradictory spaces and loyalties" (Gruzinski, *Mestizo Mind* 188). Even if she is more certain than ever of where she belongs, Mariana still oscillates between various identities, that of her mother, the one her mother wishes for her, and the one she wants to embody. Her sense of doubt comes back as soon as she remembers her mother's wishes, yet the presence of Mexican people soothes her:

> No sé qué será de mí. Mamá piensa enviarme a Francia, para cambiar de aire; que no me case joven y con un mexicano como Sofía. "Verás los bailes en París, qué maravilla... Te vamos a poner en un barco, verás, o en un avión, verás, te vamos a subir a la punta de la

> Torre Eiffel; tendrás París a tus pies, te vamos a poner sombrero y guantes y bajarás por el Sena en un bateau mouche, verás te vamos a...” En la Avenida San Juan de Letrán, arriba del Cinelandia, tomo clases de taquimecanografía. En los días en que el recuerdo de Teufel me atosiga, camino entre la gente hacia la Alameda. Me siento junto a los chinos que platican en un semicírculo parecido al Hemiciclo a Juárez; allí también los sordomudos se comunican dibujando pájaros en el aire; me hace bien su silencio, luego escojo una banca junto a la estatua “Malgré tout” y miro cómo los hombres al pasar, le acarician las nalgas. Las mujeres, no. Me gusta sentarme al sol en medio de la gente, esa gente, en mi ciudad, en el centro de mi país, en el ombligo del mundo. (Poniatowska, *La “Flor de Lis”* 260-61)

Even with her doubts, Mariana now belongs to *her* city, *her* country. She names them as such, making them her own. For Mariana, to love is to morph into the loved one; as such she eventually melds into Mexico, she becomes a part of it. Ultimately, she is able to shift from one space to another and find herself in the middle. Consequently, at the end of the novel, an adult Mariana states, confident of the people to whom she belongs: “Mi país es esta banca de piedra desde la cual miro el mediodía, mi país es esta lentitud al sol ... mi país es el tamal que ahora mismo voy a ir a traer a la calle de Huichapan número 17, a la “Flor de Lis” (261). The title, *La “Flor de Lis,”* already alludes to the novel’s allegory of transculturation: it refers in part to the viewpoint of the noble French heritage, while also paying homage to Mexican popular culture, sharing a name with a popular *tamaleria* in Mexico City. In this title, two cultures and sensibilities converge, and the protagonist must face both at every step of her development. The title is not only indicative of the autobiographical nature of the novel, but also of the idea of transculturation inherent within it, as the French symbolism evolves, effectively becoming Mexican, and thus taking on a new meaning. It allegorizes transculturation since it represents the idea of cultures coalescing, and

creates a bridge between cultures, where cultures meet and interact. In the process, social groups never fully lose their own cultural background; Mariana never entirely forgets her European heritage, but instead adjusts her perspective and reshapes her identity within a new, hybrid culture. In my reading, the selection of the *Flor de Lis* is especially significant: Mariana accepts and appropriates the Mexican image from the French symbol, giving it new meaning. However, she chooses, interprets, and adjusts the past in a way that is useful to her in order to affirm her Mexican identity, as well as her right to adopt it and to speak of it. The Mariana who reaches the *tamaleria* has embraced and feels part of a Mexico conceived in transcultural terms. Mariana has evolved, from a cosmopolitan identity inherited from her mother, to a transcultural identity, generated slowly in her interactions with the country's multiple roots. She succeeds in negotiating a path between the Eurocentric and nationalist extremes, and from then on feels at home at the *Flor de Lis*.

In conclusion, the transformation of Mariana, read allegorically as I have proposed, represents the evolution of discourse on cultural identity in Mexico and the epitome of transculturation. In resolving the identity crisis, in accepting her hydridity, and in admitting the role her mother played in the development of her identity, Mariana personifies the Mexican renewal, a Mexico that has undergone a cultural decolonization and has accepted its culture as born of the blending of traditions and customs as a result of the Mexican Revolution. Poniatowska's novel represents the rejection of the poorly conceived Eurocentric cosmopolitanism of the time and the increased discursive currency of the concept of transculturation in post-revolutionary Mexico. *La "Flor de Lis"* is also reflective of the idea that cosmopolitanism has always played second fiddle to concepts such as miscegenation and transculturation in Latin America.

Chapter 4 – Mario Vargas Llosa – Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in the Global Era

> "Celui qui voit dans tout être humain son semblable, qui souffre de ses peines et jouit de ses joies, celui-là doit écrire ses mémoires, lorsqu'il s'est trouvé en situation de recueillir des observations, et ces mémoires feront connaître les hommes sans acception de rangs, tels que l'époque et le pays les présentent."
> Flora Tristan, *Pérégrinations d'une paria*

Cosmopolitanism and nationalism go hand in hand in Mario Vargas Llosa's oeuvre. Both utopian concepts are multi-faceted driving forces of humanity: after all, "lo más humano es tratar de alcanzar lo imposible" (Vargas Llosa qtd. in Camín). For the author, the quintessential space to explore utopian prospects is literature. In this context, one of the recurrent utopias – though less studied – in Vargas Llosa is precisely cosmopolitanism; often, much like in general discourse, he represents it as a counterpoint to nationalism. Vargas Llosa's interest in cosmopolitanism has evolved with the tumultuous times he has experienced as an engaged writer and public intellectual over several decades, from the 1950s until the present. From the cosmopolitan literary experimentation of the 1960s to the current tackling of global issues, the Peruvian's writings reflect the evolution of Spanish American literary production. I contend that his own production also runs parallel to the evolution of the discourse about cosmopolitanism.

Vargas Llosa's interest in cosmopolitanism is an important feature of his entire body of work, as is his aversion for all forms of absolutism and extremism. Nationalism is one such extreme against which he has most advocated. Throughout his career, in novels, literary manifestos, essays and newspaper articles, he has warned his readers against its dangers. He believes "that nationalists should be intellectually and politically challenged, all of them, head on, without apology, and not in the name of a different type of nationalism ... but on behalf of democratic culture and freedom" (*Wellsprings* 94). With this type of political positioning, he

joins a long tradition of public intellectuals in Latin America, where novelists, especially those of his generation, also have had a significant political voice.[73]

Born on March 28, 1936, in Arequipa, Peru, Vargas Llosa is one of the most prolific Latin American authors of the past decades, and the last living member of the *Boom*. He is also a very polarized, and polarizing, author. He is one of many Latin American writers to have led a very active cosmopolitan intellectual and literary life – along with Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes, to name but only a few: he has lived, given lectures and taught abroad. Holding both Peruvian and Spanish citizenship, he has been actively involved in the socio-political environment of both countries.[74]

Vargas Llosa spent his childhood between Peru and Bolivia; in 1958, he moved to Spain, only to relocate to Paris two years later. At the time, Paris was seen as the epicentre of the world of letters.[75] He has been crossing the Atlantic back and forth since then. In 1990, he ran for President of the Republic of Peru, losing to Alberto Fujimori, who incidentally became one of his most vocal opponents – both for his supposed lack of Peruvianness and his liberalism.[76] This is but an example of the rather tumultuous relationship Vargas Llosa has maintained with Peru. In fact, Vargas Llosa has always been a bit removed from his native land: he is part of an elite that lived abroad for many years, and as a result he wrote most of his novels in Europe. As a cosmopolitan, he has always made a point of thinking beyond the local aspects of his community,

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[73] One of Vargas Llosa's first stances as a public intellectual came in 1967, when he was awarded the *Premio Rómulo Gallegos* for *La casa verde* (1966). In his acceptance speech, entitled "La literatura es fuego," Vargas Llosa positioned himself against censorship, a thinly-veiled criticism of the policy of post-revolutionary Cuba, even if he had supported the Revolution itself. Although it has been thoroughly studied as the epitome of 1960s Latin American radicalism, and as such, should be read as aligned with the motivations of the Cuban Revolution, one cannot help, in retrospect, but see the – yet to come – infamous Padilla case floating beneath the surface of Vargas Llosa's words.

[74] He is a member of the *Academia Peruana de la Lengua* since 1975, and of the *Real Academia Española* since 1994.

[75] This is discussed later in this chapter, in relation to Vargas Llosa's literary and political evolution.

[76] For more biographical information, see Vargas Llosa's autobiography *El pez en el agua* (1993).

yet his fiction incessantly revisits Peru, where he has also participated in highly local endeavours. He embodies Reyes's formulation, being highly universal, while still remaining deeply national. In his own words, "¡Qué extraordinario privilegio el de un país que no tiene una identidad porque las tiene todas!" ("Discurso Nobel" 6).

This asymmetrical relationship was exemplified again in December 2010, when Vargas Llosa entered the world literary pantheon as he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat" (Nobel Foundation). Even if it is a great honour for any nation to have one of its citizens receive the Nobel Prize in any discipline, the Nobel Foundation was criticized harshly by Peruvians themselves for awarding such a prestigious prize to an author they deemed not sufficiently Peruvian. Although he has been living in Spain since the 1990s, and was perceived as a traitor by Fujimori's government (1990-2000), he nevertheless dedicated his Nobel to his home country and later stated that "El Perú soy yo aunque a algunos no les guste, Fujimori no me quería reconocer como peruano, lo que yo escribo es el Perú también, mientras que España se ha vuelto un país mío" ("El Perú soy yo").[77] On multiple occasions, he has reiterated that while Spain and France had allowed him to become a writer, his Peruvian experience remains the primary material from which he draws his inspiration.[78]

In his Nobel acceptance speech, Vargas Llosa addressed the issue of citizenship, as well as his life-long contentious relationship with his birth country. He claimed that living abroad not

[77] It must be noted, however, that throughout the 1950s and part of the 1960s, the author was a socialist, a supporter of the Cuban Revolution, somebody very much like his character Flora Tristán. He eventually became disillusioned with Cuba and socialism, and the Padilla Affair was the last of many incidents that cemented his distancing himself from the revolution. He detested nationalism in the 1950s, but not in the name of a liberal ideology like he does now, but rather in the name of socialism. He would also come to reject all forms of collectivism. This is further explored in the conclusion to this chapter.

[78] Indeed, most of his novels, even the deterritorialized ones, revisit Peru. More recently, after a stint of novels that took place in a global environment, he has returned to Peruvian settings in novels such as *El héroe discreto* (2013), which is set in Lima and Arequipa, and *Cinco esquinas*, that focuses on Lima, during the Fujimori regime.

only made him a citizen of the world, but also a better Peruvian, echoing Cortázar's affirmation that he had become Latin American while living in Paris.[79] Vargas Llosa describes feeling at home wherever he went: "Nunca me he sentido un extranjero en Europa, ni, en verdad, en ninguna parte. En todos los lugares donde he vivido, en París, en Londres, en Barcelona, en Madrid, en Berlín, en Washington, Nueva York, Brasil o la República Dominicana, me sentí en mi casa" (5). Travel and living abroad have brought him to great discoveries – "Siempre he hallado una querencia donde podía vivir en paz y trabajando, aprender cosas, alentar ilusiones, encontrar amigos, buenas lecturas y temas para escribir" (5) –, to the extent that he came to embody the very idea of cosmopolitanism, being open to other cultures while also embracing his own. In the speech, Vargas Llosa pointed out that becoming a global citizen was never a conscious goal, and that this state of affairs has never meant forgetting his home country.[80] On the contrary, being at a distance from Peru has given him the critical perspective necessary to better tackle issues affecting his country:

> Creo que vivir tanto tiempo fuera del país donde nací ha fortalecido más bien aquellos vínculos, añadiéndoles una perspectiva más lúcida, y la nostalgia, que sabe diferenciar lo adjetivo y lo sustancial y mantiene reverberando los recuerdos. El amor al país en que uno nació no puede ser obligatorio, sino, al igual que cualquier otro amor, un movimiento espontáneo del corazón, como el que une a los amantes, a padres e hijos, a los amigos entre sí. (5)

[79] Indeed, he said that "lo que más agradezco a Francia [es] el descubrimiento de América Latina" ("Discurso Nobel" 4).

[80] The conclusion of *La tía Julia y el escribidor* seems to indicate a very conscious understanding of world literature, as well as a clearly articulated goal of living in Europe. This hints at the fact that while he did not plan to be a world citizen, Vargas Llosa always thought of literature in worldly terms, and wanted to be part of that cosmopolitan community.

Peru, then, is a part of him, whether his detractors believe he embodies the country well enough or not. His life and his work are shaped both by Peru and by his time abroad, making for richer writing materials.

In his acceptance speech, Vargas Llosa also pondered the importance reading had had in his life from an early age. "La literatura convertía el sueño en vida y la vida en sueño y ponía al alcance del pedacito de hombre que era yo el universo de la literatura" (1), he recalled, and all the characters he encountered "hablaban un lenguaje universal" (4). Perhaps unconsciously, this idea of *universality* never left him, and is one of the main features of his oeuvre. His passion for writing stemmed from his interest in reading, that he describes as "vicio y maravilla" (1). Although he does not state it clearly in the Nobel speech, he implies that writing serves as some sort of catharsis, some way to turn ugliness into beauty, it "embellece lo feo" (1). Vargas Llosa is adamant: "Seríamos peores de lo que somos sin los buenos libros que leímos, más conformistas, menos inquietos e insumisos y el espiritú crítico, motor del progreso, ni siquiera existiría. Igual que escribir, leer es protestar contra las insuficiencias de la vida" (2).[81] As a matter of fact, most of his characters – and namely the three I study in this chapter, the fictionalized Flora Tristán and Paul Gauguin in *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) and Roger Casement in *El sueño del celta* (2010) – are strong leaders who do protest against *las insuficiencias de la vida*, who bring forward new ideas and try to change the world, to make it a better place for their fellow human

[81] Vargas Llosa has written extensively on the function of literature, and has also stated in various essays that the very act of writing also serves as a way to settle the score with reality and history, re-imaginaging, or rather improving, some aspects. In *Cartas a un joven novelista*, for instance, he argues that the very act of writing is an act of rebellion. See *Cartas a un joven novelista* (1997) and "The Power of Lies," among others. In the latter, he argues that "Because the real world, the material world, has never been adequate, and never will be, to fulfil human desires. And without that essential dissatisfaction with life which is both exacerbated and at the same time assuaged by the lies of literature, there can never be any genuine progress" (30).

beings.[82] In the same way Vargas Llosa believes in trying to make the world a better place through literature.[83]

El Paraíso en la otra esquina was considered one of Vargas Llosa's most cosmopolitan novels at the time of its publication. Two narrative strands run concurrently in the novel, that of social activist Flora Tristán, and that of her grandson, the painter Paul Gauguin, two characters who choose to be citizens of the world in a period marked by the rise of nationalism and the creation of modern nations. Both are thus defined by their hybrid trajectories, from France to Peru in Tristán's case, and from Peru to France to French Polynesia in Gauguin's. Both are utopian visionaries, who fail to bring their vision to life. *El sueño del celta*, for its part, presents the story of the nationalist drift of one of the greatest cosmopolitan figures of the early twentieth century, Sir Roger Casement. Unlike most of Vargas Llosa's narratives, which show the protagonist's shift from a local to a universal outlook, this last novel explores how one of the first global human rights champions turns into a fervent nationalist, if only for a short period of time. Both novels, albeit in a different manner – that I will explore later in the chapter – show that utopias – be it social or national ones – are bound to fail. As Vargas Llosa has himself admitted in a speech entitled "Confessions of a Latin American Liberal," "the search for Utopia ... is liberating when pursued as an artistic vision, but leads to bloodshed, disaster and tragedy when it becomes a political project". Although the three characters cannot be compared to Antonio Conselheiro in *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981) in terms of deadly fanaticism, they do show obstinacy that borders on religious fanaticism, and thus embody Vargas Llosa's criticism of

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[82] In my analysis of *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, I use the same spelling as Vargas Llosa to refer to the character of Flora Tristán, whereas I use the spelling Flora Tristan to refer to the historical figure.

[83] In an open-floor conversation after a conference held in his honour, to discuss his then latest novel *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, Vargas Llosa admitted that, like most authors, he tends to associate himself with the characters he writes: "Je me sens disséminé entre les personnages de ce roman et de mes livres. J'ai plus de sympathie pour quelques-uns, certainement. ... Je me sens proche de tous mes personnages. ... Je me sens disséminé parmi les personnages du roman" (Michaud et Bensoussan 231).

extremes; consequently, the treatment each character receives is proportionate to the depth of his or her extremism.[84] Both novels also advance the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism as the best articulation of a universal consciousness and engagement.

Early on in his career, Vargas Llosa already advocated in favour of what I call rooted cosmopolitanism, and presented himself as a cosmopolitan author with strong ties to his national identity. For instance, one of his first novels to gain international fame, *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, a work of autofiction published in 1977, delves into the tensions between the cosmopolitan and nationalist tendencies of the Latin American writer. In the novel, Vargas Llosa articulates, through his literary alter ego Varguitas, the type of author he aspires to become, namely one who evolves in a more sophisticated and wordly literary system. Varguitas dreams of going to Paris, the cosmopolitan space *par excellence*, and of living in the world of letters.[85] He hopes that distancing himself from his native land will open up new horizons, as well as allow him to develop a new perspective. The young Varguitas moves to Europe where he makes a name for himself, while the *escribidor* Camacho remains in Peru and goes mad, a consequence of being trapped in his national setting. Once famous, the accomplished cosmopolitan Vargas Llosa looks back on his years in Latin America, and states that "el problema era que todo lo que escribía se refería al Perú. Eso me creaba, cada vez más, un problema de inseguridad, por el desgaste de la perspectiva (tenía la manía de la ficción *realista*)" (473). This *manía*, or obsession, was a

[84] In *Vargas Llosa among the Postmodernists* (1994), Keith M. Booker maintains that the author had, to date, shown "an opposition to fanaticism of any kind, a thoroughgoing skepticism about Utopian and apocalyptic vision of history ... and a similar skepticism toward absolutes of all kinds" (183). The novels he published later proved that this was not just a phase. However, in "Vargas Llosa's Leading Ladies," Lynn Walford claims for her part that Vargas Llosa does not display an outright contempt for Utopian projects, "but a deep and troubled ambivalence toward them" (71). She cites as proof of that ambivalence the fact that, unlike Conselheiro, whom he calls "a wretched failure" (76), Flora Tristán, and I may add Roger Casement, "does not fade into oblivion" (77), and is shown respect by the author. She sees in Tristán's portrayal "the possibility – if not the promise – of redemption and suggesting, perhaps, that Vargas Llosa is adding yet another, more hopeful, dimension to his vision" (78). The same can be said of Roger Casement, who is offered a possibility of redemption by the narrative voice in the epilogue.

[85] This desire of the young writer is reminiscent of Casanova's *La république mondiale des lettres*, which posits that from the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, Paris was the capital of the republic of letters.

characteristic of Vargas Llosa's early fiction, which delved into Peruvian issues. However, in overcoming this obsession, the Peruvian author set the tone for the ever-expanding cosmopolitan concerns in his oeuvre, one that I would posit can be accurately called rooted cosmopolitanism. Indeed, even if "el Perú [le] ha parecido siempre un país de gentes tristes" (473), Varguitas makes a point of being able to go home at least once a year: "Para esa época, tenía un trato con una revista de Lima, a la que yo enviaba artículos y ella me pagaba con pasajes que me permitían volver todos los años al Perú por algunas semanas. Estos viajes, gracias a los cuales veía a la familia y a los amigos, eran para mí muy importantes" (472). His creativity is tied to Peru, but only Europe allows him to live off his writings – the best of both worlds.[86] Herein also lies the cosmopolitan impulse of Vargas Llosa's body of work, present from early on: both Europe and Peru are absolutely necessary for him to produce good literature. This cosmopolitan conception of literature is what triggered his embrace of cosmopolitanism proper, both thematically and philosophically; he is, then, a literary cosmopolitan rooted in reality. When the young Varguitas, who has always longed for Paris, arrives at the centre of the world republic of letters with the objective of fulfilling his destiny of being a cosmopolitan writer, he also, ironically, learns about his cultural roots in his idealized city. There, his aesthetic cosmopolitanism develops into a broader vision now encompassing world politics. The cosmopolitan question, which has been present from the very beginning – at least in literary terms, is, as we shall see, now, more broadly defined, a main feature of Vargas Llosa's current writing. The discovery of his true identity –

[86] Vargas Llosa's literary alter ego Varguitas explains that "Ese mes que pasábamos en el Perú, cada año, generalmente en el invierno (julio o agosto) me permitía zambullirme en el ambiente, los paisajes, los seres sobre los cuales había estado tratando de escribir los once meses anteriores. Me era enormemente útil (no sé si en los hechos, pero sin la menor duda psicológicamente), una inyección de energía, volver a oír hablar peruano, escuchar a mi alrededor esos giros, vocablos, entonaciones que me reinstalaban en un medio al que me sentía visceralmente próximo, pero del que, de todos modos, me había alejado, del que cada año perdía innovaciones, resonancias, claves" (*La tía Julia y el escribidor* 273).

cosmopolitan yet national – while abroad, is his own cosmopolitan trajectory, and expands until fully embracing global citizenship.[87]

With the publication *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, Vargas Llosa opened a new era in his corpus, that of deterritorialized novels.[88] This new creative phase, characterized by the omnipresence of the cosmopolitan question, seems to correspond to a particular understanding of the world order in the era of globalization, in which Vargas Llosa openly discusses global concerns, and presents characters who tackle them. His production has evolved, from the literary experimentation of the *Boom* years to his current articulation of cosmopolitan ethos. In *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, the recurrent topic of political utopia becomes intertwined with a reflection on cosmopolitanism, while in *El sueño del celta* such a consideration is tied to the extremes of nationalism, and the possible redemption of cosmopolitan patriots.

Vargas Llosa's oeuvre is particularly rich from a cosmopolitan point of view: his novels are set in a large number of settings, and as mentioned earlier, he has not hesitated to make cosmopolitanism a central theme of his latest books. He overtly acknowledges and discusses the challenges of this position in many essays and newspaper pieces. He is also one of the most politically engaged and politically active Latin American authors of his generation; his running for President was a logical step in his political involvement. The impact of his political views on his corpus is so strong that, according to Efraín Kristal, his work could be divided into three major cycles: 1) the pro-Cuban phase, 2) the refutation of Cuba's politics, and 3) open capitalism and free markets. This third phase coincides with his most cosmopolitan novels, written as the

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[87] His own trajectory mirrors that of some of his characters, namely Roger Casement. It will be explored in the second section of the chapter.

[88] *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981) and *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000) are also deterritorialized novels; they nonetheless take place in Latin America. Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat claims that "se acepta sin discusión que el territorio de Vargas Llosa coincide con los límites geográficos del Perú, dentro de los cuales se ha situado el grueso de su obra" (396). *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006) could conceivably be considered Vargas Llosa's most deterritorialized novel, for it takes place in Peru, France, England, Japan, and Spain.

borders of nation-states were becoming porous, and the very notion of state, archaic in some ways.[89] Although Kristal uses the term capitalism to refer to this third phase, Vargas Llosa discusses, in various interviews, his adherence to liberalism. In fact, his cosmopolitanism has been described, both by supporters and detractors, as liberal cosmopolitanism. Vargas Llosa himself is very open about his liberal positions, and has linked his conversion to liberalism to his second reading of French author Albert Camus – who was very critical of all sorts of revolutions –, as he was drifting away from the Latin American Left in the 1970s.[90]

While classical liberalism advocates for liberty and equality, two tenets of human dignity, neo-liberalism, articulated in the 1950s as the Cold War began, emphasized economic policy over other aspects of the nineteenth century philosophy, and "argued that inequality was a positive value – in reality necessary" (Anderson 10 in De Castro, *Vargas Llosa and Latin American Politics* 51) for the world to develop properly. Although he has been branded a neo-liberal both by adherents of the philosophy and by its detractors, Vargas Llosa, then, is not a neo-liberal in the strictest sense of the term, for he has always advocated in favour of equality. I posit that his

[89] Although this division of the corpus appears logical, it only takes into consideration the novels published before 2012. The publication of *El héroe discreto*, in 2013, and of *Cinco esquinas*, in 2016, seems to shake, at least partially, the foundations of this theorization, since the novels take place in Lima and Arequipa, two Peruvian cities that embody the idea of *peruanidad* in Vargas Llosa's works. *Cinco esquinas* also deals with so-called Peruvian themes, more specifically with the Fujimori regime. *El héroe discreto* does not openly discuss either cosmopolitanism or nationalism, but it does broach universal topics, such as corruption, greed, and family roots. The characters in *El héroe discreto* are not cosmopolitans by value – they show no moral commitment, and I would even argue that both protagonists display behaviour close to Gauguin's much criticized individualism in *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*. *Cinco esquinas* also deals with such themes. For her part, Walford argues that Vargas Llosa's literary production should be divided into two parts: "the novels of the sixties [that] are highly critical of capitalism, militarism and bourgeois ideology" (70), or, in Kristal's words, that show "an implicit socialist message" (*Temptation* 67), and the novels that came after 1971, a crucial year during which what she deems a "dramatic shift" (Walford 70) took place. The shift to which the critic refers is obviously Vargas Llosa's break with Cuba after the Padilla Affair.

[90] While Vargas Llosa's first *maître à penser* was Jean-Paul Sartre, a second reading of Camus' *L'homme révolté* (1951) in 1962, as Vargas Llosa was starting to have doubts about the Cuban revolution, allowed the Peruvian author to detect similarities between his still developing ideas and those of Camus. In the essay, Camus criticizes revolutions, which, according to him, fail because they end up betraying their precepts. This second reading allowed Vargas Llosa to conclude that the fight against injustice was moral rather than political, and not political rather than moral, as it was conceived by Sartre. This articulation planted the seeds of Vargas Llosa's rejection of Cuba after the Padilla Affair, and later his turn to liberalism.

intellectual trajectory shows that he rearticulated his political affiliations and intellectual philosophy. His evolution has led him to embrace liberal cosmopolitanism.

Vargas Llosa does not disavow his past allegiances, but is very critical of the young man he once was. In his Georges Lengvari Sr. speech, delivered in 2013 and entitled "Mon itinéraire intellectuel: du marxisme au libéralisme," he recalls his teenage and young adulthood years as a series of discoveries and disappointments that led to espousing liberalism.[91] He recounts how the military dictatorships that plagued most of Latin America during the 1950s and 1960s, and the social inequalities that arose from years of poor governments, drew him to the "radicalisme, l'extrémisme" of marxism, communism, and socialism (9). He is very lucid, admitting that in the historical and social circumstances, it could not have been otherwise. He uses the expressions "enthousiasme débordant" and "complète admiration" to describe his first steps into becoming a Marxist, even calling himself a "fervent stalinien" (11). He shared, it seems, the same blindness to the dangers of extremisms and absolutism he now reproaches in some of his characters; in retrospect, he appears to forgive his younger self for having fallen into "ce monde romantique de la clandestinité" (11), a characteristic attribute of collectivist ideologies. It soon became clear, however, that he was not suited to communist circles, for they aimed at constraining his creativity: "C'est pourquoi je ne pouvais plus rester bien longtemps avec les communistes. Ils pensaient d'une manière extrêmement dogmatique et je me sentais prisonnier d'une chose à laquelle je ne pouvais souscrire à 100%" (12). This rejection of dogmatic beliefs, in line with his much admired Camus, is still at the forefront of his philosophy.

The Cuban Revolution marked a turning point for young intellectuals in Latin America: while most of them rejected communism, they still believed in socialism, only to be disappointed

[91] The George Lengvari Sr. Lecture was given in English at the Institut économique de Montréal, then translated into French and Spanish. All quotes are from the French version.

some years later when the dictatorial tendencies of the regime became known. Once again, Vargas Llosa expresses his regrets at having been fooled by his own enthusiasm (15). A trip to the Soviet Union in 1966 was "la plus terrible déception de sa vie" (15) and the Padilla Affair of 1971 marked his break with collectivist ideologies; he even says that the years spent reading about Marxism were wasted (17). His disillusion with socialism brought him to the works of Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper, two liberal thinkers who shaped his thinking from then on.

His 2005 Irving Kristol Lecture, entitled "Confessions of a Latin American Liberal," expresses his liberal tendencies in an even more open fashion. In it, Vargas Llosa addresses directly his longstanding political affiliations, as well as the various problems that arose out of his outspokenness about such philosophical positions. He begins by thanking the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research for allowing him to be seen "as a unified being, the man who writes and thinks," rather than either as a writer or an essayist, the usual dichotomy proposed by scholars who admire his fictions but despise his political positions. He laments that the term *liberal* had become a dirty word, especially in Latin America, a word used "to exorcize or discredit" him, a variation of the criticism about his lack of national allegiance. Vargas Llosa understands liberalism as a philosophy, not an ideology, with numerous ramifications, and argues that there are as many liberalisms as there are liberals. He defines himself as a liberal in the strictest sense of the term, "a lover of liberty, a person who rises up against oppression," for whom "The free market is the best mechanism in existence for producing riches and, if well complemented with other institutions and uses of democratic culture, launches the material progress of a nation to the spectacular heights with which we are familiar". Individual liberties, as well as the free movement of people and goods, are two key elements of his liberalism.[92] The

[92] He claims that "Thanks to this freedom, humanity has been able to journey from the primitive cave to the stars and the information revolution, to progress from forms of collectivist and despotic association to representative

liberal he "aspire[s] to be considers freedom a core value"; in that he concords with most liberals. However, I propose that his positioning as a liberal is also based on cosmopolitanism, inasmuch as it echoes with the very premise of Appiah's conceptualization of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Indeed, Vargas Llosa expresses his liberalism as a commitment to others, deeply rooted in tolerance and understanding: "Basically, [liberalism] is tolerance and respect for others, and especially for those who think differently from ourselves, who practice other customs and worship another god or who are non-believers. By agreeing to live with those who are different, human beings took the most extraordinary step on the road to civilization". He went further in his George Lengvari Sr. Lecture, when he said that "ce genre d'ouverture est, selon moi, la vertu essentielle du libéralisme et c'est la raison pour laquelle le libéralisme est le berceau de la civilisation" ("Itinéraire intellectuel" 20).[93] This resonates with Appiah's conceptualization of two major strands, as well as his understanding that a cosmopolitan is someone who is willing to be open to difference. Vargas Llosa maintains that "Il nous faut co-exister dans la diversité" (21). His liberalism co-exists with globalization, and "the inter-dependence of nations in a world in which borders, once solid and inexpugnable, have become porous and increasingly faint" ("Confessions of a Latin American Liberal"), is unavoidable, which is the premise of global governance as proposed by liberal cosmopolitanism. He concludes the Lecture with perhaps his clearest articulation to date of his position as a liberal cosmopolitan: "We dream, as novelists tend to do: a world stripped of fanatics, terrorists and dictators, a world of different cultures,

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democracy. The foundations of liberty are private property and the rule of law; this system guarantees the fewest possible forms of injustice, produces the greatest material and cultural progress, most effectively stems violence and provides the greatest respect for human rights. According to this concept of liberalism, freedom is a single, unified concept. Political and economic liberties are as inseparable as the two sides of a medal" ("Confessions of a Latin American Liberal"). This is this position about political and economic liberties that has been most criticized in Latin America, for it is conflated with elitism, where the poorest strata of society are left out in favour of those who can actively participate in representative democracy.

[93] For Vargas Llosa, liberalism is about "tolérance. C'est admettre qu'on peut se tromper. Et admettre que l'adversaire pourrait avoir raison" ("Itinéraire intellectuel" 20).

races, creeds and traditions, co-existing in peace thanks to the culture of freedom, in which borders have become bridges that men and women can cross in pursuit of their goals with no other obstacle than their supreme free will". What Vargas Llosa expresses as a novelist's dream is close to the actual definition of liberal cosmopolitanism, which, along with uniting the world into one single entity, "wishes to overcome absolute states' rights through the development of a global order governing the internal as well as the external behaviour of states" (Gowan 2), through more transnational organizations.

The step from liberalism to liberal cosmopolitanism was a logical one. Vargas Llosa argues that people should be as free as things to move around – no frontiers for people, which is a very cosmopolitan attitude. In Kristal's views, this delimitation of his political beliefs coincides with the evolution of his artistic endeavours. In reality, Vargas Llosa saw a stepwise growth in his reflection regarding the openness to other cultures: his early works were usually set in Peru, and show literary cosmopolitan features, in that he is clearly influenced by American writer William Faulkner and Irish James Joyce. The fictionalized settings then grew to encompass Latin America, while still showing the same features but broaching more universal topics; and finally, his works are permeated with cosmopolitanism, and involve much broader settings, namely through the exploration of literary characters, and the problems generated by their cosmopolitan attitudes and values. This first transition from the national to the international framework occurred in *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981), which takes place in Brazil, and built up to his antepenultimate novel, *El sueño del celta* (2010). However, most of these novels, albeit international and cosmopolitan, involve Peru to varying degrees.

In the article "Mario Vargas Llosa et le démon de l'histoire – Entre histoire et narration," Christian Giudicelli argues that, although it has been thoroughly studied, setting is not everything

in Vargas Llosa's oeuvre.[94] He argues that history should be used as a lens through which the novelist's evolution can be assessed. "Quarante années d'écriture soulignent une sorte de constance, le retour régulier de l'Histoire et une tendance marquée à transformer l'historique en narratif" (189), he claims. This *tendance marquée* is not only a feature of Vargas Llosa's works, but more broadly, of Latin American authors of his generation. The fact that Vargas Llosa has written many historical novels is unsurprising, considering that it is a literary genre that has been, and still is, particularly dominant in Latin America. However, his historical novels do not fit neatly either into Georg Lukács's definition of the classical historical novel or Seymour Menton's assessment of its postmodern evolution in Latin America.

In *The Historical Novel* (1955), Lukács defines the genre as pedagogical in nature, in that it makes the reader reflect on a historical past, and it seeks a certain degree of accuracy: it "has to *demonstrate* by *artistic* means that historical circumstances and characters existed in precisely such-and-such a way" (43, italics in the original). The best way to tell a story in an authentic manner is to do it through a secondary character that did not partake in the historical events being recounted, and to avoid romanticizing these characters:

> What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality. And it is a law of literary portrayal which first appears paradoxical, but then quite obvious, that in order to bring out these social and human motives of behaviour, the outwardly insignificant events, the smaller (from

[94] However, Giudicelli also claims that as a young author, Vargas Llosa had a tendency to write about what he knew: "Avec la prudence qu'impose une oeuvre en devenir, on peut souligner deux aspects qui marquent un cheminement. Par rapport aux premiers romans de l'aire liméenne, en prise directe avec une réalité connue, vécue et subie, et avec tout juste quelques années d'écart seulement, les oeuvres suivantes marquent une approche du fonds historique avec davantage de recul, que ce soit dans l'implication directe, personnelle, ou que ce soit dans le temps historique" (191).

> without) relationships are better suited than the great monumental dramas of world history. (42)

A marginalized, low character is then the vessel of the narration, he sees History happen before his eyes, but is not part of it – he only witnesses it. In Lukács's understanding, historical novels are humanist by nature, since they teach and educate readers about different historical contexts, in the hope they will take something out of it.

In *Latin America's New Historical Novel* (1993), Menton rearticulated Lukács's theories of the classical historical novel to elaborate one that would be specific to the contemporary production of Latin America.[95] According to Menton, the publication of Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* in 1949 marked the emergence of this new historical novel, the main characteristics of which include "The subordination ... of the mimetic recreation of a given historical period to the illustration of ... philosophical ideas" – according to Menton "these ideas are a) the impossibility of ascertaining the true nature of reality or history; b) the cyclical nature of history; and c) the unpredictability of history" – "The conscious distortion of history through omissions, exagerations, and anachronisms", and "The utilization of famous historical characters as protagonists" (22-23).[96] This new articulation then differs from Lukács's since the historical context is distorted to fit the needs of the author – not everything is perfectly accurate as in Lukács's – and the protagonists are actual historical characters, not bystanders who watch as history is being made. Nevertheless, most of the characters do not actively try to change the course of history.

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[95] In his study, Menton defines historical novels as "novels whose action takes place completely (in some cases, predominantly) in the *past* – arbitrarily defined here as a past not directly experienced by the author" (16). Of course Menton's definition is highly arbitrary. Following this reasoning, Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000), among others, would not be a historical novel.

[96] Other than the ones previously mentioned, characteristics of the new historical novels include metafiction, intertextuality, and the "Bakhtinian concepts of the *dialogic*, the *carnivalesque*, parody, and *heteroglossia*" (23-24), all characteristics that apply to the Jorge Volpi novels I study in Chapter 5.

For Giudicelli, two major cycles can be observed in Vargas Llosa's body of work, and contrary to what Kristal claims, they are not delimitated politically. "Avec le recul des ans," he maintains, "on peut constater que sa production romanesque oscille entre deux pôles principaux, le roman dans l'histoire immédiate ou le roman à la recherche de l'histoire en tant que flot événementiel connu et constitué" (190). On the one hand, novels such as *Historia de Mayta* (1984) or *Lituma en los Andes* (1993) "s'enracin[ent] dans le présent de leur énonciation" (191); although not necessarily historical novels in the strictest sense of the definition, it could be argued that they make good use of the historical materials available to the author. On the other, *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981) or *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000) reflect on the historical past, using it as a means to improve the historical narrative, since "la literatura cuenta la historia que la historia que escriben los historiadores no sabe ni puede contar" (Vargas Llosa, *La verdad de las mentiras* 14). Literature, then, is means to counter *las insuficiencias de la historia*. Historical fictions are not less true than historiography; they only present a different version of History.

The two novels I study in this chapter have much in common. Both *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta* are set in the historical past, and present cosmopolitan characters with ties to Peru, who become aware of the depth of their cosmopolitan vision while in Peru. Although both novels are set in the historical past, the ideas explored are contemporary. In both novels, the remoteness of history and proximity of contemporary ideas are intertwined. This also reveals an interest in retelling the past to engage with the present thanks to the perspective of past lives and trajectories. The current wave of globalization triggers novels about (ideas of) internationalism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism; yet, these novels never propose a solution to the problems they highlight. Both novels also present these characters at a point in their life where all hope is lost, implying that the utopia of cosmopolitanism is hard to achieve in real life. Indeed, both novels present these characters as death is closing in on them: "cette dernière étape

d'une vie à chaque fois consacrée à un enjeu qui la dépasse est présentée comme une *course à la mort*" (Lefort 67, italics in the original), meaning that the three protagonists – Flora Tristán, Paul Gauguin, and Roger Casement – are trying to cheat death to attain their goals.

The two novels studied in this chapter are also, to date, two of the more explicit about cosmopolitanism in Vargas Llosa's body of work; both are incidentally historical novels. It would appear that this is his chosen genre to address ideas and concepts, in this case the cosmopolitan question and its intricacies.[97] Both these novels openly grapple with global concerns and depict characters who are active in trying to undo either the patriarchy or the colonial legacy, they are also about travelling, and how travel can awaken a passion for one's fellow human beings and broaden one's horizons. Travel is then key to understanding cosmopolitanism in Vargas Llosa; venturing outside a known culture and historical circumstances leads to envisioning other possibilities, expanding horizons, and embracing a desire to change how we engage with our culture and with the world. In Vargas Llosa, cosmopolitanism is acquired abroad, but realized at home. Interestingly, this mirrors his own trajectory, as portrayed in *La tía Julia y el escribidor*. Vargas Llosa, then, is, as he said himself, *disséminé* in his novels.

***El Paraíso en la otra esquina* – Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism**

The novel *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* presents cosmopolitanism as a grounded utopia, fuelled by dreams of change, but nevertheless bound to disappoint. The novel spans the nineteenth century, from France to French Polynesia, and tells the story of two historical figures that left their mark in their respective sphere: the social activist Flora Tristan, who worked towards a proletarian remapping of the world order, and her grandson, the painter Paul Gauguin,

[97] The historical novel appears to be Mario Vargas Llosa's genre of choice to portray extremism. In *La guerra del fin del mundo*, he discusses anarchism and republicanism, and the articulation of their most extreme forms.

who perceived a need to escape European decadence in order to create, paradoxically, European art.[98] In a narration reminiscent of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* interweaves the two destinies, draws parallels between the two characters, and highlights paradoxes. Born into wealth, Tristán's life turns into a nightmare when her father dies in her early childhood, leaving her and her mother penniless, and forced to fend for themselves. At a young age, Tristán must start to work, and eventually marries her boss, André Chazal, a man who shows little respect for his wife and children. Outraged by this treatment, and most of all by the fact that it is not punishable by law, she abandons her husband and two daughters to travel to Peru in search of her ancestors; her ultimate goal is to secure a pension for her and her daughters – although she does not tell her family in Peru, for it might hurt her chances. Rejected by her family, she returns to France, and motivated by all the hardships she has faced, turns to social activism. In fact, it is her Peruvian experience that cements her social commitment, and awakens her to the possibility of social fight and proletarian internationalism.

One of Flora Tristán's daughters is the mother of Paul Gauguin, the son who, in spite of a flourishing career as a stockbroker, turns to art. Like his grandmother, Gauguin also has strong ties to Peru; at an early age, his family migrates from France to Peru to escape social unrest. Years later, upon returning to France, he would refer to this period of his life as the first time he felt like a *savage*, a primitive state needed to paint. It is at the moment when Gauguin is dedicated to his true passion, painting, that his life experiences the greatest changes: to fulfill his drive to create groundbreaking art, he travels to several parts of Europe, where he lives with his friend, the painter Vincent Van Gogh, and finally settles in Polynesia, where he develops most of

[98] Mario Vargas Llosa first expressed interest in Flora Tristan in his biography, *El pez en el agua*. He later realized that he would need another character to balance the narrative, and the figure of Tristan's grandson, Paul Gauguin, prevailed, for "They had very similar personalities: stubborn, a propensity towards idealism, utopian constructions, very courageous in trying to materialize their utopias, even though they were very different ones" (qtd. in Rangel 11).

his artistic production. Both Flora and her grandson Paul are passionate beings who fight for their ideals, but while Flora's main opponents are the patriarchal society and the general apathy of workers, Paul enjoys a life full of love and passion in his search for pure art.

The novel is divided into twenty-two chapters, each alternating from Flora Tristán – odd-numbered – to Paul Gauguin – even-numbered. The symmetry of the structure allows for the parallel evolution of both characters, and for Gauguin to refer to his grandmother's work, and compare it to his own. Tristán's story starts in Auxerre, France, in 1844, Gauguin's in Mataiea, French Polynesia, in 1892; both their lives are recounted through various flashbacks and memories. An omniscient narrator recounts the story, but the narration is frequently altered by the interruptions of a second person narrator. Interpretations vary as to what purpose these breaks serve: the ambivalent use of *tú* could either be the mental voice of the character talking to herself/himself, or a highly informal way for the narrative voice to address the characters. Either way, it provides intimacy, and some insight into the thinking process of the characters, as well as the positioning of the narrator vis-à-vis a given character; the reader gets to see their minds at work.[99] During these short moments, the reader gains insight into the character's thoughts. That narrative voice is then part of an on-going dialogue with the characters: it questions their choice

[99] To this end, Sabine Köllmann has argued that "the frequent shifts from third-person to second-person-singular narrative voice and back do not hide but, on the contrary, underline the strong presence of the omniscient narrator in the background" (247). Some critics have pointed out that the use of *tú*, doubled with the fact that the narrator refers to Tristan as Madame-la-Colère, is somewhat condescending. The narrator seems to diminish women. Although this is a legitimate reading of the narrative voice, I contend that it is a reading that leaves aside the fact that the novel celebrates Tristán's obstinacy. Moreover, unlike Gauguin, she is redeemed at the end of the novel. In "Arabesques: Mario Vargas Llosa et Flora Tristan," Stéphane Michaud puts forth the hypothesis that the Peruvian author took this narrative tool directly from the historical Flora Tristan's writings, for she used to talk of herself as *Florita* or *l'Andalouse*, two nicknames the second-person-singular narrator uses when present. Vargas Llosa, in response to Michaud's proposition, states for his part that his main objectives were to provide intimacy, and reproduce internal monologues: "Si vous utilisez la deuxième personne grammaticale, vous introduisez un narrateur ambigu. On ne sait pas directement si c'est le narrateur impersonnel qui parle ou si c'est le personnage qui se parle à lui-même, en se dédoublant, comme nous faisons couramment quand nous réfléchissons. ... Dans ces petites parenthèses, il laissait le personnage se parler à lui-même, en montrant cette intimité qui introduit une perspective pas seulement subjective, mais aussi un peu ironique, établit une espèce de distance entre un personnage et sa propre expérience" (qtd. in Michaud et Bensoussan 224-225). According to Daniel Lefort, in "Mario Vargas Llosa, de la *Fête* au *Paradis*: fictions de l'histoire et pouvoirs de l'écrivain," this feature of Vargas Llosa's writings appeared for the first time in *La fiesta del Chivo*; it is thus a feature of the third cycle in his writing.

of action or expresses disapproval; it is often a voice of reason, but also an emphathetic and often consoling one.

Tristán's and Gauguin's search for a utopian location and their cosmopolitan outlook, as well as how they both led revolutions in socialist politics and modern art, have been widely noted, although not systematically studied, by readers and literary critics. For instance, in "Cosmopolitismo y hospitalidad en *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, de Mario Vargas Llosa," Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat states that both characters, as portrayed in the novel, are cosmopolitan individuals who have travelled and explored the world, and are a source of change in their milieu. Nevertheless, their differences lie in the type of cosmopolitanism they display: Tristán embodies what he calls *cosmopolitismo de la igualdad* while her narrative counterpart, Gauguin, thrives on *cosmopolitismo de la diferencia*. What they share are not only certain cosmopolitan traits, but also a longing for utopia that culminates in their demise.[100] While the social militant is pursuing a utopian ideal, rooted in a form of cosmopolitan socialism, the impressionist painter is looking for a lost Paradise, the search for which leads him to the verge of colonialism and nationalism, stances he once despised.

The quest for a perfect place and its inherent cosmopolitan character arises from the outset with the very title of the novel. The title "viene de un juego de niños que existe prácticamente en todas partes del mundo, aunque con pequeñas variantes. Los niños buscan un lugar que es imposible de encontrar, es como un espejismo que desaparece cuando uno se va a acercar a él" (Vargas Llosa qtd. in Camín). Vargas Llosa's explanation highlights that this search for Paradise is universal, but doomed, as he acknowledges that Paradise can never be found where one seeks it. Ultimately, the title implies that there is no way that such a perfect place can

[100] According to Köllman, "their breaking away from the norms of society in both cases leads to suffering, illness and premature death, a powerful symbol of the impossibility of achieving a Utopian ideal" (243). As I will show later, in Roger Casement's case, the break is with the hegemonic colonial ideology.

be reached, since it is bound to recede as the seeker approaches. From the outset, *el juego del paraíso* appears as the leitmotiv for both characters. Flora remembers playing the game as a child in Vaugirard, France, in the mansion where she was born, and later witnessing it in Arequipa as an adult:

> Cuando regresaba al albergue por las callecitas curvas y adoquinadas de Auxerre, vio ... a un grupo de niñas que jugaban ... al Paraíso, ese juego que, según tu madre, habías jugado en los jardines de Vaugirard con amiguitas de la vecindad ... ¿Te acordabas, Florita? «¿Es aquí el Paraíso?» «No, señorita, en la otra esquina.» ... Recordó la impresión de aquel día en Arequipa, el año 1833, cerca de la iglesia de la Merced, cuando, de pronto, se encontró con un grupo de niños y niñas que correteaban en el zaguán de una casa profunda. «¿Es aquí el Paraíso?» «En la otra esquina, mi señor.» Ese juego que creías francés resultó también peruano. Bueno, qué tenía de raro, ¿no era una aspiración universal llegar al Paraíso? (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 18-19)

Paul, two generations later, also remembers the game, to which he is exposed on various occasions during his life, among others in Arequipa, as a child, and shortly before his death, in the Marquesas Islands:

> Pero inmediatamente adivinó qué juego era ése, qué preguntaba la niña «de castigo» saltando de una a otra compañerita del círculo y cómo era rechazada siempre con el mismo estribillo:
>
> - ¿Es aquí el Paraíso?
>
> - No, señorita, aquí no. Vaya y pregunte en la otra esquina.
>
> ... Por segunda vez en el día, sus ojos se llenaron de lágrimas. ... ¿Por qué te enternecía descubrir que estas niñas marquesanas jugaban al juego del Paraíso, ellas también? Porque, viéndolas, la memoria te devolvió ... tu propia imagen, ... correteando también,

> como niño «de castigo», en el centro de un círculo de primitas y primitos y niños ... preguntando en tu español limeño, «¿Es aquí el Paraíso?», «No, en la otra esquina, señor, pregunte allá.» (466-67)

Ultimately, the universality of the game – "no era una aspiración universal llegar al Paraíso?" (19) – poses the leitmotiv of the novel as the universal search for the unattainable, and the ensuing engagement with cultures around the world to find it. This quest for the impossible is reminiscent of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). In his philosophical and political work of fiction, More describes a remote, yet paradisiacal island on which a perfect society – that is, an alternative to the one he knew – has come to exist. Naturally, this non-place displays an intrinsic ambivalence: it is utopian because it is longed for, but as soon as it can be grasped its perfection is bound to fade. Utopia, or el *Paraíso*, then, is an aspiration for a better life, which cannot be achieved.

Current articulations of cosmopolitanism emphasize that any cosmopolitan individual belongs first and foremost to a nation. Cosmopolitanism, then, is a dual stance between one's nation and one's desire to reach out to the world. However, Isaac Sanzana Inzunzahe holds that there is a significant discrepancy between ideal cosmopolitanism, that he calls "formal, universalista," that is grounded in philosophy, and possible cosmopolitanism, "aleatorio, propio a las culturas, esto es, interculturalista," in sum, concrete cosmopolitanism: "La metáfora adecuada para representar este tipo de cosmopolitismo, sería la del 'viaje' (en el sentido clásico y estricto) ... El viaje que proponemos es aquel que siempre implica cambios, transfiguraciones, encuentros y aprendizajes" (2). This first type of formal cosmopolitanism, then, is closely related to utopia, and hence can only exist in the realm of ideas. However, concrete cosmopolitanism, constructed by travels and encounters, is within reach of individuals with an open mind. While Tristán's and Gauguin's cosmopolitan stances are widely acknowledged, few scholars have explored the

complexities of both characters' quest around the globe. Travel is of the utmost importance to understand the evolution of the protagonists.

Through a double narration that alternates from one dreamer to the other, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* presents two characters that are polar opposites, yet who are defined by their trajectory around the globe. They share similar experiences with regards to travels, which shaped them into who they are. Accordingly, they have an interest in the foreign: "Por lo menos en eso coincidías con las locuras internacionalistas de la abuela Flora, Koke. Dónde se nacía era un accidente; la verdadera patria uno la elegía, con su cuerpo y su alma" (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 151).[101] Even if they express it and live it in radically different manners, their trajectories are intrinsically cosmopolitan.

In Varga Llosa's novel, Tristán's character undergoes a transformative experience that leads her from Eurocentrism to cosmopolitanism. However good they turn out to be, at first, her intentions are not those of a true cosmopolitan individual, but rather the result of her direct contact with other cultures. Indeed, when she travels to Arequipa in 1833-1834, to meet with her grandfather, Don Pío de Tristán, she does so because her life in France has become a nightmare. Separated from her husband, and alone with her children, she has no permanent place to live and is forced to tell everyone she meets that she is a widow, for fear that she will be forced to send the children back to their father. In 1829, she meets Captain Zacharie Chabrié, who later helps her contact her Peruvian family. That same year, she sends a letter to Don Pío de Tristán y Moscoco, her paternal uncle, asking him for financial assistance. He grants her a monthly allowance, but refuses categorically to give her the inheritance she deems is hers, since there is no document proving that she is the legitimate daughter of Don Mariano de Tristán. Furious, she

[101] This affirmation echoes that of Mariana in *La "Flor de Lis,"* who says "Soy de México porque quiero serlo, es mi país" (Poniatowska 74).

then starts to plan her travel to Peru, during which she hopes to convince her family of her birthright. She idealizes the voyage to her father's land, hoping that her grandfather will recognize her as a true Tristán, and grant the inheritance. She longs for

> [el] encuentro [con sus] parientes paternos, con la esperanza de que, además de recibir[la] con los brazos abiertos y dar[le] un nuevo hogar, [le] entregaran el quinto de la herencia de [su] padre. Así se resolverían todos [sus] problemas económicos, saldría de la pobreza, podría educar a tus hijos y tener una existencia tranquila, a salvo de necesidades y de riesgos, sin temor de caer en las garras de André Chazal. (176)

Accordingly, her trip to Latin America is motivated by her critical financial situation. To convince her family to fund her travel, she even omits key information about herself, that is, her marital situation and the very existence of her three young children. She rightfully fears that her plans would be doomed before she even left France. During this stay, she visits orphanages and convents, and becomes aware of other people's poverty and dreary situation, and is inspired to change things by Doña Francisca Zubiaga de Gamarra, also known as the Mariscala, the wife of President Augustín Gamarra, "un personaje cuya aureola de aventura y leyenda [la] fascinó desde que [oyó] hablar de ella por primera vez" (273). The Mariscala becomes her role model, the kind she never had in France. Her short stay in Lima shows Tristán more of the world than she would have thought possible, and awakens her to new realities:

> Curiosa ciudad esta capital del Perú, que, pese a tener sólo unos ochenta mil pobladores, no podía ser más cosmopolita. Por sus callecitas cortadas por acequias donde los vecinos echaban las basuras y vaciaban sus bacinicas, se paseaban marineros de barcos anclados en el Callao procedentes de medio mundo, ingleses, norteamericanos, holandeses, franceses, alemanes, asiáticos, de modo que, cada vez que salía a visitar los innumerables

> conventos e iglesias coloniales, o a dar vueltas a la Plaza Mayor, costumbre sagrada de los elegantes, Flora oía a su alrededor más idiomas que en los bulevares de París. (318)

At that point in her life Tristán understands Lima as a cosmopolitan city, and even a global city because it is a crossroads where cultures meet and interact; she has yet to fully add all the social layers to her cosmopolitan commitmment. She develops a cosmopolitan outlook in Peru – the European becomes cosmopolitan in Latin America, thus embodying the true spirit of unprejudiced discovery and opening. In fact, Peru's capital is her first cosmopolitan school.[102]

Here, the reader is also privy to the relation between the remoteness of history and the contemporaneity of ideas, as elaborated previously. Lima is not only cosmopolitan; it is also a vision of liberal Peru in the nineteenth century – a period of openness to commerce and foreign influence. This scene is reminiscent of today's globalization, further reinforcing my contention that Vargas Llosa's rearticulation of the historical novel is triggered by discussions about globalization, world government, and nationalist backlashes.

It is Tristán's engagement with other cultures, then, that underscores, to use Gutiérrez Mouat's proposition, her *cosmopolitismo de la igualdad*, but unlike him, I contend that she also exhibits *cosmopolitismo de la diferencia*. During her travel to Peru, she becomes cosmopolitan through not only the acknowledgment of difference, but also through the interaction with such difference, be it with the Mariscala, her own extended family, or Peruvians. Only then, after such close contact with difference, does she embrace cosmopolitanism. Tristán undergoes a major transformation: from a young, rather self-centred woman, to a strong promoter of equality between cultures, genders and classes.

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[102] Vargas Llosa relies heavily on Flora Tristan's writings and books, such as *Pérégrinations d'une paria*, to create her character. In fact, the novel's depiction of her experience in Peru seems to be supported by her travel accounts.

She later further develops her cosmopolitan sensibilities in England, where she works as a housemaid, but also visits brothels and factories as an observer. Her journey to London teaches her about the similarities in working conditions across Europe, or even the world, and that the abuse by the rich has to be stopped: "Flora se dedicó a estudiarlo todo ... para mostrar al mundo cómo, detrás de esa fachada de prosperidad, lujo y poderío, anidaban la más abyecta explotación, las peores iniquidades, y una humanidad doliente padecía villanías y abusos a fin de hacer posible la vertiginosa riqueza de un puñado de aristócratas y propietarios" (401). Even if she detests her experience in England, and particularly London, she is aware that her spirit of universal charity was born out of her various stays on that side of the English Channel:

> tenías que reconocer que, sin ese país, sin los trabajadores ingleses, escoceses e irlandeses, probablemente nunca hubieras llegado a darte cuenta de que la única manera de emancipar a la mujer y conseguir para ella la igualdad con el hombre, era hermanando su lucha a la de los obreros, las otras víctimas, los otros explotados, la inmensa mayoría de la humanidad. (402)

She reluctantly admits that her experience abroad, be it while working for the Spence family or investigating and documenting the workers' precarious living conditions, opened her eyes, and expanded her field of action. Consequently, her universalist project thrives on difference, since it seeks to create conditions of equality in different cultures. In fact, there can be no true universal utopia without proper appreciation of the various cultures. Tristán will thus promote her dreams of gender and economic equality only after becoming a true cosmopolitan.

Flora Tristán's character is partly developed through flashbacks: her thoughts, imaginary dialogues, and monologues include her intellectual engagement with the social utopians of the day, such as Robert Owen, a Welsh social reformer, Charles Fourier, a French philosopher, and Étienne Cabet, a French philosopher and utopian socialist. All three are quite influential in social

debates, and wish to create a perfect community, removed from their society. The novel highlights the lack of recognition on the part of her male counterparts, as none of them officially recognizes Tristán's influence on their own work, yet she is portrayed as having a great impact on the development of their thinking. The poverty experienced by numerous people, along with the atrocious living conditions, fuels their reflection on the reform of society. As stated by Roger-Michel Allemand in *L'utopie*, "loin d'être une vue politique ou sociale qui ne tient pas compte de la réalité, l'utopie s'appuie sur elle, pour la critiquer: elle est le plus souvent une fiction compensatrice à une réalité insatisfaisante" (8). Utopian thought, then, has a deeply rooted anthropological nature, in that it shows the wishing nature of man (Vieira 20). In recognizing shortcomings, societies are able to work towards overcoming them through inclusive projects. However, Vargas Llosa has maintained in many essays and newspaper articles that utopia, although a driving force of humanity, can also be problematic. In *La verdad de las mentiras*, he claims that utopias "no simbolizan, como los clásicos, la felicidad del paraíso venido a la tierra, sino las pesadillas del infierno encarnado en la historia" (131), for they embody a collectivist spirit that denies the basic human need for liberty. Both Tristán's and Gauguin's initiatives, then, are bound to face serious challenges.

The Stoics' views on cosmopolitanism are essential to understanding Vargas Llosa's Flora Tristán's, since she partially roots her views in their teachings. As a young lady she declares that "nuestra patria debe ser el universo" (*Paraíso* 352), thus rejecting the idea of limiting herself to only changing her nation and displaying a vision that encompasses all human beings. In opposition to most thinkers of her time, whom she engages in heated – real or imaginary – debates, Tristán acknowledges that all human beings are created equal, notwithstanding culture or gender. Her *Union ouvrière* is an inclusive project that leaves no one

behind. However, even if she dreams of a global workers' revolution, she must start, in true cosmopolitan spirit, within her own community: France.

From the outset the novel emphasizes the French activist's rejection of her contemporary universe. She is portrayed as a resolute woman who has but one objective in mind: to change France, perhaps the world. She is not daunted by the prospect of failure: her one goal is to build a new world order, and as such she believes that it is time for concrete actions. She is single-minded, driving herself to the point of exhaustion: "Abrió los ojos a las cuatro de la madrugada y pensó: «Hoy comienzas a cambiar el mundo, Florita». No la abrumaba la perspectiva de poner en marcha la maquinaria que al cabo de algunos años transformaría a la humanidad, desapareciendo la injusticia. Se sentía tranquila, con fuerzas para enfrentar los obstáculos que le saldrían al paso" (11). Through her travels in Latin America and around Europe, she becomes aware of the growing injustice plaguing the world. Her unwavering resolution, fuelled by her personal utopias, knows no limit. For Madame-la-Colère, as the narrator alternatively refers to her, political commitment is more important than anything else in her life; in Vargas Llosa's own conceptualization, the "obsesión matemática de todas las utopías delata lo que quieren suprimir: la irracionalidad, lo instintivo, todo aquello que conspira contra la lógica y la razón" (*Verdad de las mentiras* 136). Tristán embodies this *obsesión matemática*: for instance, she deems it necessary to leave her female lover Olympia. In Flora's opinion, close-knit human relationships, in forming a bond between two individuals, are deeply egotistic. They cannot therefore be more important than her ideal for justice and social change: "Le dijo, de manera categórica, que no insistiera: su misión, su lucha, eran incompatibles con una pasión amorosa. Ella, para dedicarse en cuerpo y alma a cambiar la sociedad, había renunciado a la vida sentimental" (*Paraíso* 367). This echoes Vargas Llosa, who mentions that "En la mayoría de las utopías ... el sexo se reprime y sirve sólo para la reproducción ... [L]os utopistas suelen ser puritanos que proponen el

ascetismo pues ven en el placer individual una fuente de infelicidad social" (*Verdad de las mentiras* 133). On her path to universal freedom, Tristán, then, puts her own desires on the back burner; her collectivist ideas are more important than she is. Even after having found love with Olympia Maleszewska, an artist who understands her, and with whom she could have had a meaningful – yet secret – relationship, she deems that the fate of women and workers is more important than her own happiness: "Y esta relación [with the workers] no tendría el sesgo excluyente y egoísta que tuvieron tus amores con Olympia – por eso los cortaste, renunciando a la única experiencia sexual placentera de tu vida, Florita – ; por el contrario, se sustentaría en el amor compartido por la justicia y la acción social" (*Paraíso* 130). In her mind, the love between two individuals is egotistic and lacks the collective dimension it requires in order to change the world; sacrificing love for revolution is then a proof of altruism.

In denying (repressing?) the basic human need for meaningful relationships, she paves the way for her grandson, who ends up following the same path. "Both protagonists have suffered the traumatic experience of being expelled from a childhood paradise," claims Sabine Köllman, "in Flora's case through her father's death when she was five years old, in Paul's through his mother remarrying and sending him off to boarding school. But neither of them had any scruples about abandoning their own families in order to pursue their projects, thus perpetuating a cycle of traumatic life experiences" (246). History, then, repeats itself.

Indeed, Gauguin's search for Paradise is ruthless and leaves no place for anyone else. He is willing to abandon almost anyone with whom he has been involved for the sake of his art, be it his wife and children, or his friends. While his grandmother is shown to understand human relationships as an impediment to grand social changes, the artist perceives them as a waste of time, even considering them detrimental to his art production: "En 1888 ya habías llegado a la conclusión de que el amor, a la manera occidental, era un estorbo, que, para un artista, el amor

debía tener el exclusivo contenido físico y sensual que tenía para los primitivos, no afectar los sentimientos, el alma" (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 290). After leaving for Polynesia a second time, Gauguin is fully aware that he and his wife, Mette Gad, will never be together again, nor will he ever be reunited with his children. However, this seems to be of little importance to him since his stay in French Polynesia allows him to produce great art. Like his grandmother, Gauguin seeks cosmopolitanism without taking his inner circle into consideration. However, while Tristán openly works on a universalist project, one that could improve workers' lives, Gauguin is looking for utopia through an individual project.

Gauguin's stance goes in complete opposition to the very definitions of utopia and cosmopolitanism, two projects that seek to transcend egocentrism. Hence, Gauguin's vision of Paradise is a break from most visions that had been formulated previously: it implies neither a collective experience nor redemption. In his rejection of the world, he shares the views of the Greek Cynics, whose philosophies claimed that organized civilization was the main problem of man, and that a return to a natural state – Gauguin's primitive state – would solve all problems. Their views on cosmopolitanism are of primary importance to understanding Gauguin's character. His utopian quest is undermined by the sheer selfishness of his actions; the negation of others, including family, undercuts the very collective notion of Paradise.

Louisa Shea explains, in *The Cynic Enlightenment*, that the Cynics were "fiercely opposed to any form of theoretical abstraction or institutional organization and famous for defying all codes of decency" (ix). Their main target "was the parochialism of civic and national attachments" (16). By living at the margins of society, they sought to purge themselves from the *polis* itself, but also of social ties of any sort: "Cynic cosmopolitanism is then, first and foremost, a refusal: the refusal to pay homage to a transient, man-made system of laws; the refusal to contribute to society through work or political office; the refusal to abide by the laws and

customs of the polis; the refusal to respect religious rituals, as well as local traditions" (76-77). Just as the Cynics aimed to remove themselves from society in order to criticize it with a clean perspective, so does Gauguin, fleeing, first to Polynesia, then to the Marquesas Islands, in order to remove himself from the European society, which he considers to be "corrompida por el becerro de oro" (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 245). Later on, he freely admits that Europe's contamination of Oceania is despicable, and has transformed his quest into a failure: "la sustitución de la cultura primitiva por la europea ya había herido de muerte los centros vitales de aquella civilización superior, de la que apenas quedaban miserables restos. Por eso, debía partir" (209). Wherever he goes, he is always dissatisfied with what he finds, for he is looking for a perfect culture in exclusivist terms, a culture untouched by other cultures, which contradicts the very premise of cosmopolitanism. Gauguin's many travels – to Denmark, Martinique, Panama, French Polynesia, and the Marquesas Islands, covering a greater span than his grandmother – never lead him to develop a truly cosmopolitan outlook on life, preferring a personal, even egotistical, search for a primitive state, which will be the basis for his artistic vision. This journey cannot be cosmopolitan, for it begins with a denial of his own culture, Europe. He looks for the perfect society that would correspond to his impossibly high ideals of perfection,[103] and has been for a long time:

> Él buscaba eso desde que se sacudió la costra burguesa en la que estaba atrapado desde la infancia, y llevaba un cuarto de siglo siguiendo el rastro de ese mundo paradisíaco, sin encontrarlo. Lo había buscado en la Bretaña tradicionalista y católica, orgullosa de su fe y sus costumbres, pero ya la habían mancillado los turistas pintores y el modernismo

[103] Gauguin's quest for perfection, for an *escurridizo lugar*, is a recurring topic throughout the novel. Near death, he remembers having chased it most of his life: "Su música llenaba los vacíos del espíritu, lo sosegaba en las crisis de exasperación o abatimiento, y, cuando estaba enfrascado en un cuadro o una escultura – rara vez, ahora que tenía la vista tan mala –, le daba ánimos, ideas, algo de la antigua voluntad de alcanzar la escurridiza perfección" (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 391).

occidental. Tampoco lo encontró en Panamá, ni en la Martinica, ni aquí, en Tahití ...

Apenas reuniera algo de dinero tomaría un barquito a las Marquesas. (209)

However, by definition, utopia can only be a project, a symbolic place that exists solely in thought and the imagination. It cannot, under any circumstances, become reality. As Allemand emphasizes, "l'utopie, on ne peut pas la vivre (il y a contradiction dans les termes); on peut seulement l'imaginer" (8). Moreover, Ernst Bloch stresses, in *L'esprit de l'utopie*, how crucial it is to differentiate between the ideal – the utopia, and the idealization – the realization of such utopia. Therefore, the problem in Gauguin's quest is simply to think that utopia is bound by place, that it has a specific locality upon which he will eventually stumble. His quest then becomes travelling to this very locality, which must disappoint him once reached. Moreover, one of Gauguin's flaws is that he shows little to no respect for the different places where he is seeking Paradise, or to his fellow human beings in general, making his quest, in Appiah's terms, hardly cosmopolitan. For instance, even if he knows how contagious syphilis is – Doctor Lagrange, although uncomfortable, does not shy away from reminding him: "Usted sabe, también, que ésta es una enfermedad muy contagiosa – murmuró el médico, mojándose los labios con la punta de la lengua. Sobre todo, si se tienen relaciones sexuales. En ese caso, la transmisión del mal es inevitable" (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 168) – he keeps having sexual intercourse with his many wives and girlfriends, thus spreading the disease. Not only does he reject Europe, but effectively Tahiti's culture as well through his destructive and reprehensible behaviour.

Another example of his lack of respect appears when, while in Papeete, he leads a quasi-revolution against what he considers to be a Chinese invasion of the island, with which most people, including his inner circle, disagree: "Cuando Paul convocó ... un mitin del Partido Católico contra «la invasión de los chinos», muchas personas, entre ellas su amigo y vecino de Punaauia, el ex soldado Pierre Levergos y hasta Pau'ura, su mujer, concluyeron que el pintor

excéntrico y escandaloso se había acabado de loquear" (279). What Gauguin fails to see is that the so-called Chinese invaders moved to Polynesia a long time before he arrived – he has no right to criticize their presence on the island, and that being a foreigner, with no official ties to Polynesia whatsoever, he is an intruder himself. He is unable to admit that the culture of the island has been shaped for over a century by the presence of the Chinese. His aversion for another people and its culture constitutes a denial of cosmopolitan ideals. It makes him narrow-minded and distances him from his ideal, which is to be open to the possibilities offered by encounters with other cultures. He reverts to colonial stances about what he deems to be inferior people, often referring to them as *savages*, which for him has the pejorative connotation that *primitive* lacks. In fact, Gauguin is arguably in search of the primitive, but often confronts the savage, thus oscillating between an artistic utopia and a colonial ideology. While his grandmother had *locuras internacionalistas* that encompassed the whole of humanity, and thrived on cosmopolitanism, both *de la igualdad* and *de la diferencia*, Gauguin *se loquea* through racism and colonialism.

My analysis has aimed at examining the characters' cosmopolitan engagements, so as to show *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*'s exploration of cosmopolitan utopia, as well as the complexity of their cosmopolitan position in the novel. While Tristán eventually develops a truly cosmopolitan attitude, especially after her time in Peru and England, her grandson, for his part, never ceases to perceive travelling as a means to escape a civilization he dreads. Consequently, he never actually sets out to live up to the contemporary cosmopolitan ideal of acknowledging one's nation as well as the world. Both Tristán and Gauguin dedicate their whole existence to this quest for Paradise; the French activist seeks to change France with her social utopias, hoping and expecting to be successful during her lifetime, while the impressionist painter, for his part, keeps

looking for a better inspiration for his art. Nevertheless, even though they keep looking, neither reaches Paradise in the end.

Florita dies before she can spread her revolutionary gospel and see the revolution into which she had put so much faith: "Si las cosas no habían salido mejor no había sido por falta de esfuerzo, de convicción, de heroísmo, de idealismo. Si no habían salido mejor era porque en esta vida las cosas nunca salían tan bien como en los sueños. Lástima, Florita" (459). This last intervention by the narrative voice highlights the relationship between utopia and *sueños* – dreams, hinting at the fact the Tristán's project was doomed to failure from the beginning. Her ill-fated *Tour de France* is the ultimate proof of her dedication to her collectivist project. She dies on November 14th, 1844, in the house of fellow activists in Bordeaux. She is 41 years old. Koke, for his part, never seems to be able to find his Paradise, even after having travelled to so many countries: "¡El juego del Paraíso! Todavía no encontrabas ese escurridizo lugar, Koke. ¿Existía? ¿Era un fuego fatuo, un espejismo?" (467). He dies without having found it.

Both Tristán and Gauguin have travelled and explored the world, which makes their trajectories cosmopolitan, but not in the sense Guttiérez Mouat has outlined. According to this scholar, their main difference lies in the distinct type of cosmopolitanism they display, which, I would contend, is a conceptually problematic stance on his part. He claims that "Flora proclama un *cosmopolitismo de la igualdad* mientras que su descendiente y contraparte narrativo aboga por un *cosmopolitismo de la diferencia*" (399), which is, I argue, conceptually flawed. In this theorization, Flora is reduced to fighting for equality for men and women, the rich and the poor, while Paul is rooted in the Cynic tradition and seeks exoticism as a counterpoint to European civilization – which is not a cosmopolitan stance. For Guttiérez Mouat, Gauguin's notion of Paradise is an engagement with difference. This quest for difference is problematic, since the painter ends up transmitting venereal diseases, defending French colonization, and rejecting not

only his own culture, but also the very Europe his grandmother died trying to change. In sum, on the one hand, contact and engagement with actual cultures leads Tristán to evolve, become cosmopolitan and eventually include all cultures in her utopian dream. She is a cosmopolitan with a well-defined political utopia in mind, which is socialist internationalism. On the other hand, engagement with the concrete cultures of Oceania only leads Gauguin to disappointment, since the concrete always leads him to abstraction, and then to the need to keep seeking the realization of such abstraction. Vargas Llosa's Gauguin is really a non-cosmopolitan with an artistic utopia, the tentative achievement of which leads him to flirting with nationalism towards the end of his life.

Both in Tristán's and Gauguin's existence, cosmopolitanism is closely related to utopia. Utopia is "universally recognized as the name of the perfect world we forever chase" (Hallman 7), and as such could be understood as intrinsically cosmopolitan. Since utopia is by nature elsewhere, rooted in another culture that has something to teach its seeker, it shows an engagement with other cultures and is a way of reaching out to the world. The major difference between the two concepts lies in the fact that while cosmopolitanism thrives through concrete cultures, utopia is about imagined cultures and societies. Tristán always has a positive attitude towards them – she learns to love Peru, ultimately even considering it superior to France when it comes to the freedom of women, who, under the guise of a *saya y manto*, are free to roam the streets of the capital without being bothered (Pratt 164). In that sense, she is a cosmopolitan who moves from the abstraction of utopia to a more concrete cosmopolitanism in her search for gender and social equality. She partially leaves behind the abstraction of thoughts and acts in order to improve the world.[104] Yet, she is incapable of half mesures, she is not balanced, and that

[104] Throughout *Tinísima*, Modotti's leitmotiv is the following question: "¿Cómo unir a hombres tan dispares en una sola voluntad?" (451). This obviously compares closely to some of Flora's thoughts.

causes her demise. Gauguin lingers in the realm of utopias and is always disappointed with concrete cultures, which never turn out to embody his expectations. Tristán's utopian and collectivist quest is the true cause of her downfall, and, according to Vargas Llosa, this is but the logical outcome of such projects: "La utopía representa una inconsciente nostalgia de esclavitud, de regreso a ese estado de total entrega y sumisión, de falta de responsabilidad, que para muchos es también una forma de felicidad y que encarna la sociedad primitiva, la colectividad ancestral, mágica, anterior al nacimiento del individuo" (*Verdad de las mentiras* 136). By putting her faith in the collectivity, she undermines her individuality, which, in Vargas Llosa's liberal thinking, can only bring doom. Yet, Gauguin's utopia, although rooted in art, is also destined to fail, for he goes to the extremes of individualism, and shows anti-cosmopolitan behaviour.

By being fuelled by utopian ideals, both Tristán and Gauguin embody Vargas Llosa's aversion for all types of extremism. However, the narrative voice is kinder towards the French social acticist: she is eager to change the world, and her utopian extremism stems from good intentions. Gauguin does not receive such a redeeming treatment from the narrator, for, in the latest stage in his life, he turns to nationalism, a stance the author despises as the worst form of extremism. Utopia can be realized in art, but as soon as Gauguin leaves his artistic realm and tries to realize his utopia concretely, he will fail. Politics is, as we shall see, also a space in which utopia is bound to fail.

El sueño del celta – The Fate of the Cosmopolitan Patriot

The characters of Antonio Conselheiro and of Paul Gauguin both embody, in unambiguous terms, Vargas Llosa's aversion towards nationalism. This is the position he has held since he severed his ties with the Cuban Revolution, seeing in nationalism a rejection of foreign cultural influence he deems necessary for artistic creation, but more broadly, for human development. Although this position appears rather unambiguous, it is my contention that *El*

sueño del celta explores the complex nuances of the nationalist position in an innovative manner within Vargas Llosa's body of work; still, it remains a harsh criticism of extreme ideologies. Unlike most of Vargas Llosa's narratives, which show the protagonist's shift from a local to a universal outlook, this novel explores how one of the first global human rights champions flirts with fervent nationalism, albeit only for a short period of time.

"Cada uno de nosotros es, sucesivamente, no *uno*, sino *muchos*. Y estas personalidades sucesivas, que emergen las unas de las otras, suelen ofrecer entre sí los más raros y asombrosos contrastes" (*El sueño del celta* 9, italics in the original).[105] And so begins *El sueño del celta*, announcing even before the narrative starts that it focuses on the evolution of the character, the multiple facets of his personality, and his stepwise growth. *El sueño del celta* (2010) is, in Köllman's conception of Vargas Llosa's body of work, the last – to date – in his series of "grand design novels" (223), or, as they were called during the Boom, *novelas totales*. This historical novel lays out the nationalist drift of Irishman Roger Casement, a cosmopolitan hero turned nationalist anti-hero.[106] Casement, a consul who worked for the British Foreign Office during the first decades of the twentieth century, became acquainted with Irish nationalist movement later in his life, after he attempted to put an end to colonialism in various regions of the world.[107] The novel opens in 1903 in the Belgian Congo, and ends in 1916 in Pentonville Prison, a British jail where Casement hopes to be pardoned by the King following his conviction for high treason.

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[105] According to Kristal, "In Vargas Llosa's novel, Casement is transformed into a man who embraces a number of utopias and fantasies, and who reinvents himself several times as each of the dreams he embraces come undone: the imperial dream, the dream that human rights activism can change society, the dream of Irish nationalism, and the dream of the afterlife" (141) "as one dream is shattered, another is born" ("From Utopia to Reconciliaton" 143).

[106] According to Köllman, "within Vargas Llosa's fictional world, Roger Casement is another example of the 'puro', the morally clean, idealistic type" (257).

[107] This is not the first time that Vargas Llosa writes about Roger Casement. In the chapter titled "El corazón de las tinieblas (1902) – Las raíces de lo humano" in *La verdad de las mentiras*, he referred to the historical Casement as one of the first people to have denounced King Leopold II abuses in the Congo. He states that "quienes, a base de una audacia y perseverancia formidables, consiguieron movilizar a la opinión pública internacional contra las carnicerías congolesas de Leopolodo II fueron un irlandés, Roger Casement, y el belga Morel. ... Ambos merecerían los honores de una gran novela" (38), foreshadowing his own work.

After a successful career in the diplomatic corps, Casement had given up his position to devote himself to the ill-fated Irish cause. In 1915, Casement had made an alliance with the Germans, then enemies of the British Empire, in a failed attempt to free Ireland during the doomed Easter Rising of 1916.

I maintain that the novel presents a cosmopolitan character who makes a tragic mistake, albeit one that is somewhat justified by historical circumstances. The Irish cause that Casement embraces implicates him in a type of nationalism that basically traps him and makes him stray from the universalist premises that had characterized his work in Africa and in Latin America. The protagonist is then forced to coexist with extreme nationalism – betraying his own principles – and becomes a tragic figure that dies without having been understood either by his compatriots or by his British enemies. In my reading of the novel, Casement embodies Vargas Llosa's ideas about the dangers of nationalism, but also the intricacies of the cosmopolitan position, namely that engagement with other cultures can awaken a passion for one's own, as well as give space to and co-exist with patriotism.[108] The novel also portrays the patriotic commitment of a cosmopolitan as fraught with the dangers of nationalism. Vargas Llosa makes a distinction between nationalism and patriotism, the latter being a stance he can reconcile with cosmopolitanism. As he himself explained in his Nobel Speech,

> No hay que confundir el nacionalismo de orejeras y su rechazo del "otro", siempre semilla de violencia, con el patriotismo, sentimiento sano y generoso, de amor a la tierra donde uno vio la luz, donde vivieron sus ancestros y se forjaron los primeros sueños, paisaje

[108] It is interesting to note that while Vargas Llosa's Casement rejects nationalism at the end of his life, real-life Casement stayed true to his beliefs until the very end. He is quoted as having said, shortly before his death, "Surely it is the most glorious cause in history" (Dudgeon 2). For more information on the actual historical figure, as well as on his diaries, see Adam Hochshild's *King Leopold's Ghost – A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, that focuses on the Belgian Congo as a whole, with chapter 13 "Breaking into the thieves' kitchen" dedicated to Casement, *The Eyes of Another Race – Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*, edited by Séamas Ó Síocháin and Michael O'Sullivan, and *Roger Casement's Diaries – 1910: the Black and the White*, edited by Roger Sawyer.

> familiar de geografías, seres queridos y ocurrencias que se convierten en hitos de la memoria y escudos contra la soledad. La patria no son las banderas ni los himnos, ni los discursos apodícticos sobre los héroes emblemáticos, sino un puñado de lugares y personas que pueblan nuestros recuerdos y los tiñen de melancolía, la sensación cálida de que, no importa donde estemos, existe un hogar al que podemos volver. (8)

Patriotism, then, can be reconciled with one's cosmopolitan commitment, as the attachment to one's home is a crucial aspect of rooted cosmopolitanism.

The protagonist of *El sueño del celta* neatly fits within the conceptualization of the tragic hero as defined in Aristotle's *Poetics*. First, the Irishman is noble in nature, not from birth but does have a title and shows nobility of character throughout the novel, and he "is highly renowned and prosperous," his magnus opum being his works in the Belgian Congo and in the Putumayo region of Peru. Second, he commits an error of judgment, or *hamartia*, and thus proves that he is a man "who is not eminently good and just, whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty," namely the alliance with the Germans in an attempt to free the Irish population. Third, his reversal of fortune (*peripeteia*) is of his own making, something he readily acknowledges (*anagnorisis*). Finally, he invokes a sentiment of pity when he falls from grace, be it in his falling out of love after a lover's betrayal or more broadly the homophobic slander that tarnishes his good name when he is arrested and jailed. Casement, like any other human being, makes mistakes, and his "change of fortune [is] from good to bad," another characteristic of the tragic hero. However, his major flaw is not his extreme hubris, but his longing for love and his incapacity to set his mind on only one goal. The construction of Casement as a tragic hero seems to be an indication of the textual intention to redeem the cosmopolitan hero. This idea of redemption is apparent in the portrayal of Casement, who is described as a candid idealist. Unlike *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*'s character of Paul

Gauguin, who also turns to nationalism, Casement is depicted as a sympathetic person who is caught up in historical circumstances. Casement, although he embraces a dangerous ideology, appears to have a chance at redemption, for he made a tragic mistake and must pay the price.

El sueño del celta closely follows Roger Casement's life trajectory and recounts his many travels. Like most Vargas Llosa novels, it has a relatively dense structure, which reflects precisely the literary form of a *novela total*. It is divided into three major sections, respectively entitled "El Congo," "La Amazonía," and "Irlanda," and fifteen chapters, which chronologically follow the protagonist's career.[109] Each part represents his state of mind. "El Congo" takes place both in Great Britain and in the Belgian Congo, consists of seven chapters, and first introduces a Roger Casement that can still be described as naive when it comes to his work in Africa, only realizing later the extent of the horrors perpetrated by Leopold II. The second part, "La Amazonía," plays out in Ireland, Brazil, and Peru, consists of five chapters, and highlights Casement's slow awakening to nationalism. Finally, the third part, "Irlanda," takes place in Norway, the United States, and Germany, consists of three chapters, and reveals Casement's dedication to the Irish cause. Oddly enough, not much of it actually occurs in Ireland, although the country remains the sole focus of his thoughts. The novel, then, is divided into three parts that correspond to the character's three progressive states of mind: first, Casement internalizes the colonizer's perspective and seeks to spread civilization to less fortunate souls; then he becomes disilusioned with colonialism, embraces a more cosmopolitan outlook and becomes an Irish patriot in rediscovering his roots and reivindicating Irish culture; and finally, he turns to nationalism, seeing it as the only way for Ireland to earn respect. In every stage of his

[109] The epilogue stands apart from the rest of the narration, as the implicit author is not only aware that Casement has been rehabilitated in the 1960s, but also advocates for a balanced understanding of his trajectory. This paratextual intervention by the implicit author points to the textual sympathy that I have identified.

development, his single-mindedness is his defining characteristic; in a way, he is fanatical every step of the way. Every trip he makes brings him one step closer to his true self.

Within the three sections of the novel, the narration alternates between past and present. In the odd-numbered chapters, the reader is privy to Casement's last weeks in prison – with a clear focus on his state of mind and new-found religious convictions, and in the even-numbered chapters, the major events that shaped his life, and ultimately led to his being jailed, are recalled in great detail, almost in a pedagogical tone. Most of the narration is through a third person omniscient narrator, but other passages, namely the ones in which Casement recalls his life while he is waiting for royal clemency, are told through his own perspective. In most instances, the narrator appears to be sympathetic to Casement's situation.

Casement is depicted as an Irish intellectual who develops from an early age a keen interest for various cultures.[110] "El Congo" concentrates on his childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, a period that is synonymous with his discovery of the world. The first phase of Casement's life is one of awakening to other cultures from a Eurocentric or British-centric perspective, during which he endorses the colonizer's perspective and sees himself as superior to colonials. This interest for travel and cultures different from his own appear to come from his father, who served in the Light Dragoons, a cavalry regiment in the British army: "Lo que de veras le interesaba en ese tiempo [his childhood] eran las historias que, cuando estaba de buen ánimo, le contaba el capitán Casement a él y a sus hermanos. Historias de la India y Afganistán, sobre todo sus batallas contra los afganos y los sijs" (*Sueño* 19). As a child Roger is fascinated by the descriptions of these foreign lands, these "remotas fronteras del Imperio" (19), that somehow belong to the same kingdom he lives in: "Aquellos nombres y paisajes exóticos, aquellos viajes

[110] According to Kristal, "The novel might also be loosely inspired by a Jorge Luis Borges story, 'Tema del traidor y del heroe', 1944, in which an Irishman is remembered as a hero because his people want to remember him as such, even though he was deeply flawed" ("From Utopia to Reconciliation" 141).

cruzando selvas y montañas que escondían tesoros, fieras, alimañas, pueblos antiquísimos de extrañas costumbres, dioses bárbaros, disparaban su imaginación" (19). At such a young age, these others whom his father must fight to maintain order intrigue Casement. His father's memories and tales are surrounded by an oriental aura, which only adds to the fascination they provoke in the child.[111] Although his father was part of the army, Roger is not interested by the military feats: "no eran los hechos de armas lo que más encandilaba la imaginación del pequeño Roger, sino los viajes" (19-20). He hopes to be able to visit these faraway countries someday. When both his parents die – his mother in 1873 and his father three years later (22), Roger moves in with relatives. His "tío Edward Bannister, que había corrido mucho mundo y hacía viajes de negocios en África" (24), is a perfect match for the adolescent, for he encourages Roger's hopes of seeing more of the world. His dream of travelling is fuelled by his readings of David Livingstone and Henry Morton Stanley (24-25) and he too dreams of discovering Africa.[112]

In 1883, at 19 years of age, Casement embarks on a ship sailing to West Africa as a purser for the Elder Dempster of Liverpool, making three trips this very year. He becomes familiar with the life of a sailor, and catches a glimpse of the terrible conditions of the African populations, which will eventually allow him to develop a humanistic spirit that will lead him to overtly criticize the colonial system some twenty years after he first sets foot in Africa. However, at first,

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[111] This fascination with foreignness is reminiscent of the West's attitude towards the East during the eighteenth century. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that the West has always held patronizing perceptions of "the East" and that the scholarship it produced was tied to an imperialist view of society. Such an understanding of the world already sets a binary distinction in young Casement's mind, since he internalizes that the British are superior to whatever foreign/subaltern people they encounter.

[112] His uncle appears to have a more concrete impact on Casement than his own father. Less strict, he allows an older Casement to associate travel to discovery, removing its military implications: "Gracias al tío Edward Bannister oyó hablar por primera vez del doctor David Livingstone, el médico y evangelista escocés que desde hacía años exploraba el continente africano, recorriendo ríos como el Zambezi y el Shire, bautizando montañas, parajes desconocidos y llevando el cristianismo a las tribus de salvajes. ... Roger soñaba con él, leía los folletos que describían sus proezas y ansiaba formar parte de sus expediciones, enfrentar a su lado los peligros, ayudarlo en llevar la religión cristiana a esos paganos que no habían salido de la Edad de Piedra. ... De grande, él también sería explorador, como esos titanes, Livingstone y Stanley, que estaban extendiendo las fronteras de Occidente y viviendo unas vidas tan extraordinarias" (*Sueño* 24-25).

he believes and internalizes the Elder Dempster values, and makes their publications his own sacred text, to the extent that he is sometimes the object of ridicule at the hands of his colleagues: "Su pasión por África y su empeño en hacer méritos en la compañía lo llevaban a leerse con cuidado, llenándolos de anotaciones, los folletos y las publicaciones que circulaban por las oficinas relacionadas con el comercio marítimo entre el Imperio británico y el África Occidental. Luego, repetía convencido las ideas que impregnaban esos textos" (26). He is confident, almost to a fanatical degree, of the inherent good of his work. Casement is imbued with the sense of entitlement characteristic of colonial power in the period, and he feels, in Rudyard Kipling's famous expression, the "white man's burden" to bring civilization to those less fortunate:

> Llevar al África los productos europeos e importar las materias primas que el suelo africano producía, era, más que una operación mercantil, una empresa a favor del progreso de pueblos detenidos en la prehistoria, sumidos en el canibalismo y la trata de esclavos. El comercio llevaba allá la religión, la moral, la ley, los valores de la Europa moderna, culta, libre y democrática, un progreso que acabaría por transformar a los desdichados de las tribus en hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo. En esta empresa, el Imperio británico estaba a la vanguardia de Europa y había que sentirse orgullosos de ser parte de él y del trabajo que cumplían en la Elder Dempster Line. (26)

During his twenties, Casement is sure that what he is doing is good work, work that must be done to help the Africans overcome their backwardness. His certainties are so strong that, as he renounces his job with the Elder Dempster and is about to leave for Africa for good, his uncle remarks that Roger is exalted "como esos cruzados que en la Edad Media partían al Oriente a liberar Jerusalén" (27), a thinly-veiled allusion to the dangers of fanaticism.[113]

[113] The image of crusaders, although only a subtle allusion in the beginning of the novel, becomes more important as the narrative progresses, and ultimately triggers the Easter Rising.

In 1884, "en un arranque de idealismo y sueño aventurero, [Casement] decidió ... dejar Europa y venir al África a trabajar para, mediante el comercio, el cristianismo y las instituciones sociales y políticas de Occidente, emancipar a los africanos del atraso, la enfermedad y la ignorancia" (35). Casement is blinded by his chance to work with Morton Stanley, his childhood hero, and believes that the work he and his team are accomplishing is "la punta de lanza del progreso en este mundo donde apenas asomaba la Edad de Piedra que Europa había dejado atrás hacía muchos siglos" (38). Casement is convinced of "las intenciones benévolas de los europeos" who come to Africa: "vendrían a ayudarlos a mejorar sus condiciones de vida, librarlos de plagas como la mortífera enfermedad del sueño, educarlos y abrirles los ojos sobre las verdades de este mundo y el otro, gracias a lo cual sus hijos y nietos alcanzarían una vida decente, justa y libre" (39). He does not need much time to shed his illusions, and as such opens a new phase in his intellectual and professional development, that of criticizing colonialism and awakening to a more cosmopolitan outlook on life. This awakening happens as a result of conversations with Morton Stanley. Casement becomes aware of the many injustices faced by the native populations, the main one being that the Africans are signing away all power over their own affairs: not only do they not understand the various contracts they are forced to sign – for they are written in French,[114] and translation in African languages are not provided – but they are also enslaving themselves by agreeing to the terms outlined in them. Morton Stanley is well aware of that, but maintains that it is for their own good.[115] Casement is outraged and cannot agree to be involved

[114] Morton Stanley claims that "Si supieran francés, tampoco entenderían esos contratos ... Ni yo entiendo lo que quieren decir" (41).

[115] Morton Stanley claims that "Todo esto es por su bien, claro que sí ... Vendrán misioneros que los sacarán del paganismo y les enseñarán que un cristiano no debe comerse al prójimo. Médicos que los vacunarán contra las epidemias y los curarán mejor que sus hechiceros. Compañías que les darán trabajo. Escuelas donde aprenderán los idiomas civilizados. Donde les enseñarán a vestirse, a rezar al verdadero Dios, a hablar en cristiano y no en esos dialectos de monos que hablan. Poco a poco reemplazarán sus costumbres bárbaras por las de seres modernos e instruidos" (43).

in such a scheme – a first step in the development of his cosmopolitan outlook and his becoming a defender of human rights.

Casement's certainties about the various atrocities committed by the foreigners become stronger when he reaches the Congo of King Leopold II of Belgium, where he works for several companies, and where he meets Joseph Conrad.[116] In 1903, the Foreign Office charges him with investigating the alleged abuses perpetrated under the rule of Leopold II. He denounces the hardships suffered by the local population at the hands of settlers and entrepreneurs. He is utterly disillusioned and even comes to regret having worked for the Belgian monarch:

> Todo el resto de su vida, Roger lamentó ... haber dedicado sus primeros ocho años en Africa a trabajar, como peón en una partida de ajedrez, en la construcción del Estado Independiente del Congo, invirtiendo en ello su tiempo, su salud, sus esfuerzos, su idealismo y creyendo que, de este modo, obraba por un designio filantrópico. (49)

The *Casement Report*, published in 1904, details the atrocities carried out in the name of civilization and monetary gains, causes a great scandal, and confirms the universalist pretensions

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[116] Anglo-Polish novelist Joseph Conrad is the author of *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Its narrator Charles Marlow recounts a trip up the Congo River in the Congo Free State, and epitomizes the dichotomy civilization/barbarism, implying that the white man is as barbaric as the African native populations (as perceived by Europe at the time). Although very popular and still a required reading in high school and college, *Heart of Darkness* has been harshly criticized by eminent scholars in post-colonial studies, who argue against its dehumanization of Africans. Published in 1975, Chinua Achebe's "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" maintains that the novella "projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (3), where Africans are depicted as "dumb brutes" and cannibals who grunt (7). Vargas Llosa addresses Achebe's paper in his essay "El corazón de las tinieblas – Las raíces de lo humano". While he does not dispute Achebe's claim, he maintains that the novel is "pese a las severísimas condenas que lanzó contra ella el escritor africano Chinua Achebe acusándola de prejuiciada y salvajemente racista *(bloody racist)* contra los negros, una dura crítica a la ineptitud de la civilización occidental para trascender la naturaleza humana, cruel e incivil" (43). In the novel, Casement and Conrad meet for the first time in the Congo, and later in 1903 after the publication of *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad makes clear that he owes a lot to Casement, and tells him that he should have appeared "como coautor de ese libro ... Nunca lo hubiera escrito sin su ayuda. Usted me quitó las legañas de los ojos. Sobre el África, sobre el Estado Independiente del Congo. Y sobre la fiera humana" (*Sueño* 74). Later on, in jail, Casement discusses the novel with the historian Alice Stopford Green, to whom Vargas Llosa gives the part of Achebe: "Esa novela es una parábola según la cual África vuelve bárbaros a los civilizados europeos que van allá. Tu *Informe sobre el Congo* mostró lo contrario, más bien. Que fuimos los europeos que llevamos allá las peores barbaries" (76). Casement, for his part, speaks the words of Vargas Llosa and sees the novel as a metaphor for the original sin ("El corazón de las tinieblas – Las raíces de lo humano" 38, *Sueño del celta* 76).

of the protagonist, who has now become a vocal opponent to colonialism. His stay in Congo also makes him reassess his origins. In a letter to his cousin Gertrude, he admits that his time in Congo has allowed him not only to discover his own country, but also his true self: "te parecerá otro síntoma de locura pero este viaje a las profundidades de Congo me ha servido para descubrir a mi propio país ... También he encontrado mi verdadero yo: el incorregible irlandés. ... Tengo la impresión de haber mudado de piel ... de mentalidad y acaso hasta del alma" (109).[117] His stay in Congo allows him, then, to become another man, *uno de los muchos hombres* of the epigraph, although it must be noted that the protagonist refers to his own discovery of Ireland as *locura*.

Casement ponders the state of Ireland to draw parallels between the two countries he has most experienced, and he notices a sad similarity that will shape his thinking from then on[118]:

> ¿No era también Irlanda una colonia, como el Congo? Aunque él se hubiera empeñado tantos años en no aceptar esa verdad que su padre y tantos irlandeses del Ulster, como él, rechazaban con ciega indignación. ¿Por qué lo que estaba mal para el Congo estaría bien para Irlanda? ¿No habían invadido los ingleses a Eire? ¿No la habían incorporado al Imperio mediante la fuerza, sin consultar a los invadidos y ocupados, tal como los belgas a los congoleses? Con el tiempo, aquella violencia se había mitigado, pero Irlanda seguía

[117] A quotation like this one reveals the work and preparation Vargas Llosa put into the writing of the novel. The expression "incorregible irlandés" is taken from a 1907 letter Casement sent to Alice Stopford Green, one of his closest friends: "I had accepted Imperialism – British rule was to be extended at all costs, because it was the best for everyone under the sun, and those who opposed that extension ought rightly to be 'smashed'... Well the [Boer] War gave me qualms at the end – the concentration camps bigger ones – and finally when up in those lonely Congo forests where I found Leopold I found also myself – the incorregible Irishman" (qtd. in Ó Síocháin 1).

[118] In "El sueño del celta: Postcolonial Vargas Llosa," Helene Carol Weldt-Basson criticizes the fact that "at times the reader has the sense that the novel's most pressing point is not the denunciation of colonization in Africa and South America, but rather the criticism of Ireland's colonial status in the early twentieth century. The character Roger Casement, although a clear denouncer of colonialist abuse both in the Congo and in the Putumayo region, inteprets these geographical regions from a Eurocentric perspective and seems at time more concerned with European politics and his own nationalist agenda, than with Third-World realities" (234). She maintains that while the novel "exposes the economic motivation of colonialist 'civilizing' discourse, [it also] falls into the colonialist trap of de-emphasizing national peculiarities in favor of a generalizing discourse that runs the risk of being racist and essentialist through eliding ethnic, racial, and social differences between nations and favoring the European 'First-World' problematic versus the Third-World reality" (236).

> siendo una colonia, cuya soberanía desapareció por obra de un vecino más fuerte. Era una realidad que muchos irlandeses se negaban a ver. (110)

This was a reality that had escaped him, like many Irishmen and Irishwomen, until then, the recognition of which has a deep impact on Casement. Although convinced of what he discovered in the Congo, it is an epiphany that he dares to share only with his closest friends:

> A la segunda o tercera vez que estuvieron solos, Roger abrió su corazón a su flamante amiga, como lo habría hecho un creyente a su confesor. A ella, irlandesa de familia protestante como él, se atrevió a decirle lo que no había dicho a nadie todavía: allá, en el Congo, conviviendo con la injusticia y la violencia, había descubierto la gran mentira que era el colonialismo y había empezado a sentirse un 'irlandés', es decir, ciudadano de un país ocupado y explotado por un Imperio que había desangrado y desalmado a Irlanda. Se avergonzaba de tantas cosas que había dicho y creído, repitiendo las enseñanzas paternas. Y hacía propósito de enmienda. Ahora que, gracias al Congo, había descubierto a Irlanda, quería ser un irlandés de verdad, conocer su país, apropiarse de su tradición, de su historia y su cultura. (119-120)

After his stay in Congo, Casement is happy to return to the United Kingdom, first to England, then to Ireland, to recover both his physical and mental strength, and become "un irlandés de verdad" (120). Having discovered his Irishness, he is particularly pleased to go back to Magherintemple House, "la casa familiar de su infancia y adolescencia" (121). He immerses himself in Irish culture, discovers its mythology, and attempts to learn the language – to no avail, but also becomes acquainted with members of the Gaelic League, an organization that promotes "el irlandés y la cultura de Irlanda" (122). He even starts writing politically oriented newspaper columns under a pseudonym, defending Irish culture. Since he is still working for the Foreign Office, he dares not criticize Great Britain too openly.

Casement's immersion in Irish culture is for him the first step into the reappropriation of his Irish past, but also the character's undoing, for it marks the beginnings of his patriotic fervour, which eventually becomes his nationalist trajectory. According to Vargas Llosa, in *Wellsprings*, a conference he gave at Harvard University, this is natural behaviour for nationalist movements: "the victim nation may be forced to feign 'acculturation' for a time; but underneath, it continues to resist, preserving its essence, remaining true to its origins, holding its soul intact, awaiting the hour when its sovereignty and liberty will be redeemed" (76). This form of ethnic nationalism, based on myths, customs, and traditions is pernicious. However, Vargas Llosa disagrees with Casement's view on the necessity of the preservation of Irish culture at all costs: "Nationalism's defenders start with a false assumption: that the culture of a country is, like the natural riches and raw materials harbored in its soil, something that should be protected from the voracious avarice of imperialism, and kept stable, intact, unadulterated, and undefiled" (98). The Irish culture, although obviously worth preserving, cannot be defined in absolute and fixed terms – a culture *de verdad*, and can only be enriched by the coexistence with foreign cultural elements. This is reminiscent of Paul Gauguin in *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, who also sees cultures as pure artefacts worth preserving as they are, and for whom contacts between cultures is equivalent to a loss of *primitivity*.

This view of cultures subject to change and enrichment by interaction is the basis of current theorizations of cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitanism that is understood as a conversation between cultures, based on mutual respect. Casement, a rooted cosmopolitan, gives credence to other cultural practices, and accepts their specificity, aware that cultural enrichment only happens through difference. Casement, a cosmopolitan patriot, is willing to accept such differences between people for he feels a moral obligation towards all of them, whatever their birthplace. Like Flora Tristán, he embraces both a *cosmopolitismo de la igualdad* and a *cosmopolitismo de la*

diferencia. Moreover, he reaches a cosmopolitan outlook through his acceptance of differences. However, his path is somewhat inverse to the canonical one, for Casement first takes a keen interest in foreign peoples, then in his own. His various stays in Ireland are milestones in the definition of his worldview. For Casement,

> Aquellos meses significaron el redescubrimiento de su país, la inmersión en una Irlanda que sólo había conocido por conversaciones, fantasías y lecturas, muy distinta de aquella en que había vivido de niño con sus padres, o de adolescente con sus tíos abuelos y demás parientes paternos, una Irlanda que no era cola y sombra del Imperio británico, que luchaba por recobrar su lengua, sus tradiciones y costumbres. (*Sueño* 143)

Being in Ireland brings him to better understand his origins, but also makes him more aware of the everyday struggles with which the Irishmen must deal. Around this time, some friends and acquaintances start telling him jokingly that he "[ha] vuelto un patriota irlandés" (143). Casement thinks that "[está] recuperando el tiempo perdido" (143). "All nationalist doctrine is based on a act of faith," claims Vargas Llosa, "not on a rational, empirical conception of history and society. Nationalism is a *collectivist* act of faith that imbues a mythical entity – the nation – with a fictive coherence, homogeneity, and unity preserved over time, untouched by historical change" (*Wellsprings* 75, italics in the original). In *El sueño del celta* the protagonist's behaviour falls under the idea of the recovery of a past – the mythical Irish past, that he idealizes and wants to make his own, a sort of paradise lost that he wants to recover. Still according to Vargas Llosa, such melancholy, a "longing for what did not exist" (81), is a useful tool in imagining the nation:

> The fact that this nation was never a tangible reality is no obstacle for people who, blessed with the terrible, formidable instrument that is the imagination, manage to fabricate it. This is why fiction exists: to populate the emptiness of life with phantoms that human beings require in order to make sense of their own cowardice, generosity, fear,

> pain or stupidity. The ghosts that fiction inserts into reality can be benign, innocuous, or malignant. Nationalism's specters falls into this last group. (81)

This desire to recover a past that is beyond reach is similar to Paul Gauguin's lost primitive state. Much like Tristán and Gauguin, the search for this Paradise triggers Casement's demise.

From this time on, Casement makes a point of correcting his interlocutors about his origins. He often repeats: "No soy inglés sino irlandés" (*Sueño* 297). He wants Ireland to become a proper State, but he remains a pacifist and believes that Irish institutions can replace most British ones, if only they are given the chance:

> Había que ir creando, junto a las instituciones coloniales, una infraestructura irlandesa (colegios, empresas, bancos, industrias) que poco a poco fuera sustituyendo a la impuesta por Inglaterra. De este modo los irlandeses irían tomando conciencia de su propio destino. Había que boicotear los productos británicos, rehusar el pago de impuestos, reemplazar los deportes ingleses como el cricket y el fútbol por deportes nacionales y también la literatura y el teatro. De este modo, de manera pacífica, Irlanda iría desgajándose de la sujeción colonial. (144)

The objective for Ireland is then to become an independent country by creating new Irish foundations. However strong his feelings for his native land may be, the protagonist can still reconcile his cosmopolitan openness and his willingness to denounce the poor living and working conditions of the oppressed peoples with his love for Ireland. His cosmopolitanism and nationalism are not irreconcilable; they are, in fact, complementary. This complementarity embodies the contemporary conceptualization of cosmopolitanism, rooted in locality yet open to the world. This is Casement's vision: every person he encounters, be it in Africa, Latin America or Europe, is someone towards whom he has a moral responsibility. In the first years of his nationalist drift, Casement appears to be a moderate nationalist – in fact, more a patriot than a

nationalist as defined by Vargas Llosa – who sees Ireland as a case of human rights. The colonialism that Casement experiences abroad leads him to nationalism. His awareness of the atrocities committed in foreign lands and his commitment to the cause of colonized peoples allows him to identify coloniality at home, in his own culture. Ultimately, he adopts the Irish nationalist cause because of his openness and empathy towards others, and his cosmopolitan vision. However, he understands nationalism in a way that does not contradict his cosmopolitan engagement. Indeed, Casement never disavows the work he has performed during his service for the British Foreign Office. Even if he does not share many affinities with the United Kingdom, and does not want it to rule Ireland, after leaving the consular services he remains happy with his work as a foreign officer. Casement perceives as quite ironic the fact that a country that denounces atrocities due to colonialism has colonies and oppresses them itself. Embracing other cultures leads Casement to accept his own, which had been somewhat sidelined during in his career in the British service.

Indeed, his concern for Ireland coexists with his interest for other cultures and histories. His second mandate as a diplomat changes this pacifist perception of things. In 1906, the Foreign Office sends Casement to Peru to investigate abuses in the Putumayo, a district on the border between Peru and Colombia. During his stay, he concludes that the employers who exploit rubber treat the indigenous populations in the same way that the English have treated the Irish for centuries: while the *indios* are made to forget their traditions, "A [the Irish] se les hacía creer que Irlanda era un bárbaro país sin pasado digno de memoria, ascendido a la civilización por el ocupante, educado y modernizado por el Imperio que lo despojó de su tradición, su lengua y su soberanía" (135). The protagonist cannot handle the idea of his people being inhumanely treated, and is aware that "Los irlandeses somos como los huitotos y los boras, los andoques del Putumayo. Colonizados, explotados y condenados a serlo siempre si seguimos confiando en las

leyes, las instituciones y los Gobiernos de Inglaterra, para alcanzar la libertad. Nunca nos la darán" (239). He becomes convinced that Ireland will only free itself through an armed-rising: why would "el Imperio que nos coloniza" give the Irish their freedom "si no siente una presión irresistible que lo obligue a hacerlo? Esa presión sólo puede venir de las armas" (239). Casement returns to Europe in 1911 with only one idea in mind: to free Ireland.

The *Blue Book*, Casement's accounts of the atrocities perpetrated in Latin America, comes out in July 1912 y "produ[ce] una conmoción" (324), first in Europe, then in the United States. Even before its publication, Casement quits the diplomatic services to focus on the Irish cause and to "ocuparse de otros indígenas, los de Irlanda. También ellos necesitaban librarse de las 'arañas' que los explotaban, aunque con armas más refinadas e hipócritas que las de los caucheros peruanos, colombianos y brasileños" (378). His commitment as a cosmopolitan patriot, when it becomes political engagement, turns into nationalism, and his interest in liberating Ireland becomes an obsession: "Una idea volvía una y otra vez a su conciencia, una idea que en los días, semanas y meses siguientes retornaría obsesivamente y empezaría a modelar su conducta: 'No debemos permitir que la colonización llegue a castrar el espíritu de los irlandeses como ha castrado el de los indígenas de la Amazonía'" (247). Casement fears that the Irish will turn into puppets and lose their desire to fight for the freedom of their homeland. Gradually, he loses most of the friendships he made during his stays in Africa and Latin America, "Pero pese a todo ello, no había cambiado de manera de pensar. No, no se había equivocado" (197). He shows the same single-mindedness and obstinacy that had been his trademark during his period with the Elder Dempster, and later as as human right activist in Congo and Peru. His best friend Herbert, whom he met in Congo, "desconfiaba de todos los nacionalismos. Era uno de los pocos europeos cultos y sensibles en tierra africana" (183). Through many conversations, he reminds Casement that "el patriotismo es el último refugio de las canallas" (184) and overtly laughs at his friend's

conversion to nationalism, exhorting him to "volver a la realidad y salir de ese 'sueño del celta' en el que se había encastillado" (268).[119] For Herbert, it simply cannot be: Casement's openness to the world and desire to save the oppressed populations of Africa and Latin America are irreconcilable with the idea of nationalism, and he is *encastillado*, too stubborn to realize it. Herbert ends up burning his bridges with Casement:

> Herbert Ward nunca tomó muy en serio la progresiva conversión de Roger a la ideología nacionalista. Solía burlarse de él, a la manera cariñosa que le era propia, alertándolo contra el patriotismo de oropel – banderas, himnos, uniformes – que, le decía, representaba siempre, a la corta o a la larga, un retroceso hacia el provincialismo, el espíritu de campanario y la distorsión de los valores universales. Sin embargo, ese ciudadano del mundo, como Herbert gustaba llamarse, ante la violencia desmesurada de la guerra mundial había reaccionado refugiándose también en el patriotismo como tantos millones de europeos (345).

Casement's turn to nationalism is likened to a religious conversion, and some friends call him "extremista" (383) and "intolerante" (388), tell him that he has become "un revolucionario radical" (399) and abandon him.[120] They do not understand his desire to sacrifice his knighthood and forskake all the work he has done to save the oppressed peoples of Africa and Latin America. For Casement, his friends are unable to universalize the conditions of oppression in which the Irish live. In Vargas Llosa's words, this would be an example of "victimization – it serves up a long list of historical grievances to demonstrate the ways in which colonizing powers have tried

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[119] This is obviously a reference to English writer Samuel Johnson's famous phrase, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel."

[120] Herbert is particularly hurt by Casement's behaviour: it pains him to see "lo intolerante que te has vuelto. Antes, dabas razones, Roger. Ahora sólo vociferas con odio contra un país que es el tuyo también, el de tus padres y hermanos. Un país al que has servido con tanto mérito todos estos años. Y que te lo ha reconocido ¿no es verdad? Te ha hecho noble, te ha impuesto las condecoraciones más importantes del reino. ¿No significa eso nada para ti?" (388).

to destroy or contaminate the victim nation" (*Wellsprings* 76). Casement's allies and friends do not share his victimized view of history and warn him that this will feed the revolutionary potential in Ireland. This outlook mirrors Vargas Llosa's criticism of nationalism:

> the truth is that in the conception of humankind, society, and history endorsed by the ideology of nationalism, there is a seed of violence that inevitably germinates whenever nationalists try to meet the demands of their own postulates, especially the main one: to rebuild what Benedict Anderson calls the "imagined community," an illusory nation that is culturally, socially, and linguistically integrated and whose human offspring gain their identity from membership in this collective. (79-80)

However, the tragic dimension of the protagonist is that, by his very own universal concern, he advocates a moderate nationalism that is impossible in these historical circumstances. He wants to free Ireland, and is willing to die doing so, but he does not profess an exclusionary nationalism nor does he possess the momentum of other extremist patriots with whom he ends up working. At first, he thinks that the process of liberation of their country has to be sought through dialogue, not necessarily bloody conflict. He agrees with the idea of Home Rule. In a sense, he seems to be in agreement with the criticism some of his friends voice against extreme patriotism and nationalism; it may be that he thinks he is able to overcome the problems of such a position:

> El patriotismo cegaba la lucidez. Alice había hecho esta afirmación en un reñido debate, en una de esas veladas en su casa de Grosvenor Road que Roger recordaba siempre con tanta nostalgia. ¿Qué había dicho exactamente la historiadora? «No debemos dejar que el patriotismo nos arrebate la lucidez, la razón, la inteligencia.» Algo así. Pero, entonces, recordó el picotazo irónico que había lanzado George Bernard Shaw a todos los nacionalistas irlandeses presentes: «Son cosas irreconciliables, Alice. No se engañe: el patriotismo es una religión, está reñido con la lucidez. Es puro oscurantismo, un acto de

> fe». Lo dijo con esa ironía burlona que ponía siempre incómodos a sus interlocutores, porque todos intuían que, debajo de lo que el dramaturgo decía de manera bonachona, había siempre una intención demoledora. «Acto de fe», en boca de ese escéptico e incrédulo, quería decir 'superstición, superchería' o cosas peores todavía. (*Sueño* 197)

The word *patriotism* is often used by Casement' interlocutors as a synonym for *nationalism*. However, Vargas Llosa makes a distinction and it seems that Casement's rediscovery and promotion of Irish roots, his love for Ireland, is not pernicious *per se*. Problems arise when it becomes nationalism, tied to the realm and excesses of politics; it can then lead down a treacherous path. Nationalist politics invariably tend to become exclusionary, and therefore asphyxiating.

Eventually, Casement comes to terms with the fact that the United Kingdom is unlikely to agree to Irish autonomy: "Ésta no era la solución para Irlanda. Lo era la independencia, pura y simplemente, y ella no sería jamás concedida por las buenas" (397). He does not reject the idea of the Irish Brigade, a military brigade that would help Irish forces against the British Empire. In 1914, Casement sails to Germany through Norway, in the hope of setting in motion a mutually beneficial plan on which the Irish and German leaders had previously agreed: if Germany agreed to sell guns to the Irish rebels and provide military leaders, they, in return, would stage a revolt against England, diverting troops and attention from the war. Once in Germany, when Casement tries to convince the Irish war prisoners to enroll in the Brigade, his proposal is met with little interest. Most soldiers call him "traidor," "vendido" or "cucaracha" (185), which shows that even if they are Irish-born, their allegiance lies with Great Britain, something that is a cause of great disappointment to him.

Over time, he becomes acquainted with more extreme forms of nationalism and seems to embrace these views, for reasons of political expediency, although he does so with an ambivalent

and critical mind. While some nationalists believe that "De la inmolación de los hijos de Eire nacería ese país libre, sin colonizadores ni explotadores, donde reinarían la ley, el cristianismo y la justicia" (416), he is worried by "la obsesión de [unos colegas] de concebir a los patriotas irlandeses como la versión contemporánea de los mártires primitivos": 'Así como la sangre de los mártires fue la semilla del cristianismo, la de los patriotas será la semilla de nuestra libertad', escribió [Patrick Pearse, a colleague] en un ensayo. Una bella frase, pensaba Roger. Pero ¿no había en ella algo ominoso?" (391). Casement is indecisive in front of such passion, such "celo ardiente, [tanta] glorificación de la sangre y la guerra" (420). He sees that his colleagues are bordering on fanaticism, and, while he, as a patriot, wants to free Ireland, he is still not willing to sacrifice lives to do so, and never will be.

However, an impulsive Casement ends up believing, out of empathy and loneliness, in all they say:

> A Roger, el romanticismo un tanto enloquecido de Joseph Plunkett y Patrick Pearse lo había asustado a veces, en Irlanda. Pero estas semanas, en Berlín, oyendo al joven poeta y revolucionario [Plunkett], en esos días agradables en que la primavera llenaba de flores los jardines y los árboles de los parques recobraban su verdor, Roger se sintió conmovido y ansioso de creer todo lo que el recién venido le decía. (416-17)

Isolated from the rest of his group in Berlin, Casement ends up believing in "materializar el sueño místico," and in "el martirio de los santos" (351). He listens to Joseph Plunkett as he speaks "con la seriedad de quien se sabe poseedor de una verdad irrefutable" (420). Casement is blinded by his faith and desire to save Ireland; Plunkett is a die-hard nationalist who knows too well that the planned uprising is bound to fail and cost many supporters their life, yet he is

convinced of the necessity of such a sacrifice: the immolation of combattants is a new martyrdom, such as that of the first Christians fed to the lions.[121]

One of the priests with whom Casement works in Germany, Father Crotty, balances the nationalist discourse and echoes something Casement had already heard back in Peru, namely that martyrs, or people who see themselves as potential martyrs, are dangerous:

> Este muchacho es alguien fuera de lo común, sin duda. Por su inteligencia y por su entrega a una causa. Su cristianismo es el de esos cristianos que morían en los circos romanos devorados por las fieras. Pero, también, el de los cruzados que reconquistaron Jerusalén matando a todos los impíos judíos y musulmanes que encontraron, incluidas mujeres y niños. El mismo celo ardiente, la misma glorificación de la sangre y la guerra. (419-20)

Casement realizes eventually that the priest is right. There is no nuance in Plunkett's approach to nationalism, for him the end justifies the means. This scares the priest, who tries to convince Casement: "Te confieso, Roger, que personas así, aunque sean ellas las que hacen la Historia, a mí me dan más miedo que admiración" (419-20). Father Crotty echoes Vargas Llosa's concerns with nationalism, for he deems that it turns men into irrational beings and dehumanizes them. Aware that the arms will get to Ireland in time, Casement returns to the island in a hurry, and is intercepted and arrested by the British Army.

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[121] For Vargas Llosa, the comparison between religion and nationalism is an obvious one: "like churches, nationalist groups do not engage in true dialogue: they sanctify and excommunicate. Nationalism feeds on instinct and passion, not intelligence; its strengths lie not in ideas but in beliefs and myths. For this reason it is closer to literature and religion" (*Wellsprings* 82). This echoes Benedict Anderson who, in *Imagined Communities*, argues that "national imaginings [have] a strong affinity with religious imaginings" (10), and traces the rise of nationalism in the eighteenth century to a certain erosion of religious beliefs (12). Plunkett is a prime example of santification and excommunication, since he is both absolutist and categorical. There is no room for conversation or middle ground. Father Crotty believes that this is aligned with the profound Catholicism of in Ireland: "La nuestra es una religión sobre todo para los que sufren. Los humillados, los hambrientos, los vencidos. Esa fe ha impedido que nos desintegráramos como país pese a la fuerza que nos aplastaba. En nuestra religión es central el martirio. Sacrificarse, inmolarse. ¿No lo hizo Cristo? Se encarnó y se sometió a las más atroces crueldades. Traiciones, torturas, la muerte en la cruz. ¿No sirvió de nada, Roger?" (*Sueño* 436-37).

In one of his last conversations with his confessor Father Carey, in the Pentonville Prison, Casement recognizes his shortcomings and now admits that his hatred towards England was pointless:

> —Si me ejecutan, ¿podrá mi cuerpo ser llevado a Irlanda y enterrado allá?
>
> Sintió que el capellán dudaba y lo miró. Father Carey había palidecido algo. Lo vio negar con la cabeza, incómodo.
>
> —No, Roger. Si ocurre aquello, será usted enterrado en el cementerio de la prisión.
>
> —En tierra enemiga – susurró Casement, tratando de hacer una broma que no resultó–. En un país que he llegado a odiar tanto como lo quise y admiré de joven.
>
> —Odiar no sirve de nada – suspiró el padre Carey –. La política de Inglaterra puede ser mala. Pero hay muchos ingleses decentes y respetables.
>
> —Lo sé muy bien, padre. Me lo digo siempre que me lleno de odio contra este país. Es más fuerte que yo. Tal vez me ocurre porque de muchacho creí ciegamente en el Imperio, en que Inglaterra estaba civilizando al mundo. Usted se hubiera reído si me hubiera conocido entonces. (357)

Casement has gone full circle and has lived through all of his contradictions. In the last conversation he has with Alice Stopford Green in the Pentonville Prison, she reminds him of his cosmopolitan oscillation, perhaps his most beneficial contradiction:

> A mí y a ellos nos pasaba algo parecido contigo, Roger. Envidiábamos tus viajes, tus aventuras, que hubieras vivido tantas vidas distintas en aquellos lugares. Se lo oí decir alguna vez a Yeats [the Irish poet]: 'Roger Casement es el irlandés más universal que he conocido. Un verdadero ciudadano del mundo.' Creo que nunca te lo conté. (358-59)

Travels are a defining characteristic of Casement as a character, and a determinig factor of his cosmopolitan trajectory. Even on the eve of his execution, he inevitably continues to embody the

tension between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Historical circumstances do not allow him to overcome it. According to Kristal, "Vargas Llosa's Casement slowly abandons all of his commitments and convictions: the dedication with which he had served Great Britain as a diplomat, the passion with which he had defended human rights in Africa and the Amazon, his adherence to Germany during the Great War, and his dedication to the cause of Irish independence" ("From Utopia to Reconciliation" 145). His indecisiveness and oscillation cause his demise.

Vargas Llosa's position on nationalism is clear and well documented: it is a fatal ideology that has to be avoided at all cost; it destroys everything – and everyone – it touches. *El sueño del celta* is a case in point, and can thus be seen as a cautionary tale about its well-known dangers. Most of Vargas Llosa's writings do not allow for the possibility of cosmopolitan patriots, since all types of nationalism are rejected as evil; whereas in the novel Casement is treated in a more nuanced way, precisely because he is a cosmopolitan patriot. However harsh the criticism of this ideology, the novel portrays Roger Casement in a positive light and redeems the historical character, for he is a tragic hero whose patriotic fervour fatally leads, in convoluted historical circumstances and in the the turmoil of political expediency, to extreme nationalist politics. Vargas Llosa's Casement, a cosmopolitan patriot, never ceases to oscillate between the two apparent ends of the spectrum of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. In spite of the author's rejection of nationalism, the novel interprets the historical character through the prism of a nuanced reflection on the intricacies of the nationalist position, which essentially advocates for the sympathetic portrayal of Casement as a cosmopolitan patriot.

Conclusion

My investigation of *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta* has been predicated on the following proposition: they are, to date, the two most cosmopolitan novels of

the Peruvian author, in terms of ideas and conceptual articulations.[122] Furthermore, they plot cosmopolitanism proper and advocate for what I have chosen to call rooted cosmopolitanism; yet, they do not shy away from arguing in favour of this position by using counter-examples. Indeed, neither Flora Tristán nor Paul Gauguin is a rooted cosmopolitan: it is precisely the fact that they deny one aspect of rooted cosmopolitanism that causes their demise. Tristán is not rooted in her milieu, and does not see the purpose of being so; her goals are global. Gauguin ends up being so rooted, turning to nationalism, that he denies the importance of cultural contacts in the preservation of cultures. Roger Casement does not fare much better: his temporary rejection of rooted cosmopolitanism in the historical turmoil of the fight for Irish independence brings him to nationalism, causing his death. However, it is precisely because he was, at heart, a rooted cosmopolitan that he is given a chance at redemption.

The three protagonists have in common their extensive travel, their interest in other cultures, the contact with which marks the beginning of their intellectual, artistic, and political journey. The contact with other cultures alters them in a radical way, and triggers their reflection about the world, but also about the very role cultural diversity has in the life of individuals. While Flora Tristán and, except for a brief and fatal moment, Roger Casement thrive on cultural diversity, Paul Gauguin rejects it as a dangerous force. The three characters are also openly dissatisfied with their environment, and through an extra-national encounter with cultural diversity, come to embrace their role in changing the world order. It is this contact with cultural diversity that leads them to develop a cosmopolitan position, however problematic it might turn out to be.

[122] *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006) is quite cosmopolitan too, but in a very broad understanding of cosmopolitanism, where it is only associated with travels, and not articulated as a philosophical position.

Flora Tristán closely resembles Roger Casement. Both discover their ideological affiliations in Latin America: Tristán in Lima, Casement in the Putumayo. The contact with different cultures is beneficial for both of them, and cements their respective philosophical positions. While Lima and its cultural diversity allows Tristán to discover cosmopolitanism, Casement's stay in Peru allows him to move from the cosmopolitan outlook he had developed in Africa to a more nation-centred one. This brings him to universalize the indigenous suffering, to argue that the Irish are but a different type of indigenous peoples, exploited and stranded in their subalternity. While Peru opens up Tristán to new possibilities, it reinforces Casement's feelings that his nation needs his help. Peru, and Latin America more broadly, mark a turning point in the protagonists' lives. It is also the first step in their undoing.

Both Tristán and Casement are ruled by their feelings, by the experiences they share with those they want to help. In her case, it is the workers and the women to whom she dedicates most of her time; in his, it is the indigenous populations of Africa and Latin America. Both devote their life to helping people they perceive as their equal but subalternized by exploitative capitalism, colonialism, or patriarchy. While the French activist universalizes her own suffering – be it at the hands of André Chazal and the injustice she feels at being considered an illegitimate child – to articulate her fight for all women, the Irish cosmopolitan patriot's understanding of the indigenous populations' sufferings leads him to the realization that the Irish are but a different type of subaltern. He follows a reverse pattern to that of Tristán: she universalizes her own condition, she goes from the specific to the universal (one woman, all women); Casement, for his part, goes from the universal to the specific (indigenous populations in the Belgian Congo and the Putumayo, the Irish). For Tristán and Casement, the discovery of cosmopolitanism leads to the development of some sort of messianic spirit; they both see their work as their mission in life. In each case, the narrative comments on their respective *locura* – internationalism and nationalism,

respectively. Such fanaticism does bring their demise, but the narrator also redeems both characters: indeed, the narrative voice appears sympathetic to their suffering, and is never judgmental. The same cannot be said of Gauguin, of whom the narrative voice is highly critical, for his extremism – in the form of colonialism – is permeated with racism and the rejection of other cultures. Although Gauguin and Casement share, in nationalism, the same political preference, their treatment could not be more different.

Paul Gauguin and Roger Casement both turn to nationalism, at first glance for the very same reason: the preservation of cultures as *pure* artefacts. Gauguin, in his search for an artistic utopia, cannot bring himself to admit that it is the plurality of cultural backgrounds that make the Marquesas the very Paradise he was seeking. He rejects the cultural exchanges – the Chinese cultural elements – as some sort of perversion of what he understands to be *pure* Marquesas culture, without grasping that cultures are porous and can only be enriched by coming into contact. Casement, for his part, wants to recover a mythical Irish culture that has been destroyed by the English colonizers, but ironically, it is his contact with a plurality of cultures that enables him to detect the importance of his own. Gauguin's rejection of other cultures leads him to colonialism, the worst form of nationalism, a stance despicable in the eyes of the narrative voice. Casement, for his part, turns to nationalism precisely as a rejection of colonialism, and even then he remains first and foremost a convinced patriot tragically caught up in the nationalist movement. Gauguin, on the contrary, becomes a radical exclusionary French colonial nationalist.

In a narration reminiscent of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* intertwines the destinies of Flora Tristán and Paul Gauguin, draws parallels between grandmother and grandson, and highlights paradoxes. In addition to allowing Gauguin to refer to his grandmother, this structure also reinforces my contention that the narrator acts as a voice of reason and tries to extract lessons from the protagonists' behaviour. In a few instances, when

Gauguin is about to make the same type of mistakes Tristán once had, the narrator highlights how grandmother and grandson, although extremely different in their philosophical leanings, are made of the same wood. The narrative voice does not stop Gauguin from making mistakes; it only comments on the protagonists's similarities. They are both stubborn and will not stop short of their goals, even if it kills them. The counterpoint structure also reinforces my contention that liberalism is at play: Plutarch's objective was to study the way individuals affect the course of history, which is, in modern terms, a liberal view of history.

As in Plutarch's text, which presents, by way of conclusion, four unpaired lives, *El sueño del celta* only explores the life of Roger Casement. However, a close reading brings me to sustain that the novel is nevertheless about parallel lives, albeit in a broader sense. The epigraph is already a clear indication of the textual intention to present *muchos hombres*, in this case, three different men. Casement's evolution, from a young, naive colonizer to a cosmopolitan patriot, and in the end to a full-fledged nationalist, albeit for a short period of time, runs in parallel to the indigenous populations he encounters. Whereas Tristán and Gauguin are clearly parallel lives, Casement's counterpoint is the indigenous populations he meets at every stage of his life, and the individual he becomes, with the beliefs and values that he develops as a consequence.

The cosmopolitan question has always permeated Vargas Llosa's body of work. Some of his recent novels embody the urgency of addressing the cosmopolitan question in the context of debates about globalization. The plotting of characters in narrations reminiscent of *Parallel Lives* promotes a liberal view of history, but also the enunciation of the idea that lessons are to be extracted from the trajectories of exceptional individuals. It should not come as a surprise, then, that the Peruvian author chose to address these themes in historical novels, for they are usually a means of returning to the past to reflect on the present. For Vargas Llosa, *literatura es fuego*: it is a space to inspire, to motivate individuals to change things. I have proposed that Vargas Llosa's

historical novels fall within both Lukács and Menton's articulation, yet also differ from both; they represent an evolution of the historical novel, in that the characters take on a very active role. Through their awakening to a global conciousness, they tackle global concerns: while Flora Tristán confronts women and workers' issues, Roger Casement fights colonialism. Vargas Llosa's novels are framed in historicity and pedagogical in nature, and the extensive investigation the author undertakes before writing each of his novels indicates a detail-oriented mind that attempts to reproduce the historical context of the characters in the most accurate way possible (Lukács), while his protagonists are based on historical characters and discuss philosophical ideas (Menton). Both *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta* show the same attention to detail, and use extensively the actual writings of the historical figures turned literary characters, be they journals or reports. Within these novels, Vargas Llosa goes one step further than in Menton's theorization: the novels are *about* ideas – cosmopolitanism, nationalism, rooted cosmopolitanism; he focuses on real characters, and these characters are the main focus of the narrative. This is, I contend, a powerful example of his liberal positions: his novels are about individuals and the very active role they play in the making of history.

Another major difference is that the characters he portrays are not only witnesses to history (Lukács), they register what is happening, and more importantly, criticize and overtly denounce the failings of their historical context in unambiguous terms. Flora Tristán writes a travel journal during her stay in Latin America, and publishes it under the title *Pérégrinations d'une paria*, and Roger Casement publishes reports after his stays in Congo and Peru – such accounts serve to criticize the abuses they have witnessed, and the implicit author of Vargas Llosa's novels makes the narrators interact with those documents, or the documents are introduced and paraphrased often extensively in the novels. Unlike in the new historical novel, where Latin America plays a central role, in Vargas Llosa's historical novels the continent plays

what appears, at first sight, to be a minor role: only a section of each novel takes place in Latin America. Yet, it is also a major one: it is the source of the awakening to cosmopolitanism for both Tristán and Casement, and the *paraíso* Gauguin longs to reproduce. Thus, unlike major contemporary historical novels, Vargas Llosa's works are in dialogue with Latin America's history in an oblique manner, but nonetheless they are deeply engaged with the continent's debates and ideas.

The choice of the historical novel corresponds to the Peruvian author's literary intention and vision. I contend that Vargas Llosa's historical novels "exprime[nt] une vérité" (qtd. in Michaud et Bensoussan 219), namely his own. About historical novels and truth, he has said that "cette vérité n'est pas celle des faits qui se sont réalisés objectivement, en dehors de nous-mêmes. Elle relève de la vérité intérieure de l'homme" (219).[123] This truth, this different version of the historical past the two novels I studied in this chapter depict, has to do with the philosophical perspective the author has chosen to frame each novel as a whole, but most specifically, the very characters he plots.[124]

Both *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta* are about collectivist ideologies – internationalism and nationalism; yet their literary treatment is framed through liberalism. Albeit in a different counterpoint manner, both novels focus on the lives of individuals rather than on historical processes, once again relating them to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. This serves to highlight the role of individuals, rather than collectivities, in the making of history, and consequently is conceptually framed in a liberal vision of societal processes. While for Marxism,

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[123] According to Vargas Llosa, "The reconstruction of the past through literature is almost always misleading in terms of historical objectivity. Literary truth is one thing, historical truth another. But, although it may be full of fabrication – or for that very reason – literature presents us with a side of history which cannot be found in history books. For literature does not lie gratuitously. Its deceits, devices, and hyperbole all serve to express those deep-seated and disturbing truths which only come to light in this oblique way" ("Power of Lies" 28).

[124] This treatment of the historical past is especially clear in the case of Roger Casement: while Vargas Llosa's Casement recognizes the error in his ways, and rejects extreme nationalism, real-life Casement never disavowed his nationalist convictions, proclaiming them anew minutes before his execution.

individuals are subordinated to the processes of history and societal structures, liberalism emphasizes the very role of the individual in the making of history. These philosophical and historical intertexts – Marxism, liberalism, and *Parallel Lives* – illuminate Vargas Llosa's political tendencies: through the plotting of individuals, their impressions of things, the way they struggle and shape history and society, as well as their production – philosophical, literary, and political, in Tristán's case; artistic, in Gauguin's; and political, in Casement's – shine the liberal beliefs of the author, for whom liberty is of the utmost importance. The literary form reflects his liberalism, the aesthetics reveal the political, and ultimately, the focus is on individual liberty. In rejoicing in a collectivist project, both Tristán and Casement deny their individual freedom, which leads them to failure: indeed, for Vargas Llosa, "detrás de las utopías sociales yace la fascinación por la servidumbre, el terror primitivo, atávico, del hombre de la tribu – de la sociedad colectivista – a asumir aquella soberanía individual que nace del ejercicio pleno de la libertad" (*Verdad de las mentiras* 136). The *tribu* to which both Flora and Casement want to belong is problematic: for her, because in embracing the whole of humanity she denies the very basic human need for meaningful relationships, for him, because in supporting the Irish national cause, he shuts himself off from the rest of the world. Gauguin, for his part, does enjoy individual liberty, to the extent that he denies his fellow human beings their own, a stance as problematic as that of his grandmother.

It has been my contention that Vargas Llosa's rearticulation of the historical novel not only allows him to frame his subjects through his liberal positions, but also to discuss ideas and tackle contemporary issues. As a liberal, he is engaged in polarizing debates about democracy and globalization. The Peruvian author plots in fiction the debates in which he is involved as a public intellectual; he transposes in fiction the ideas found in his debates, newspaper articles, and essays, for, as he himself acknowledges, the majority of people are more likely to read and

appreciate his fictions, since it is wrongly perceived as less politicized than his essays ("Confessions of a Latin American Liberal"). Both *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta* deal with the dangers of extremism, and are thus an allusion to the contemporary world. Both these fictional worlds invite readers to establish meaningful parallels with the present. Although opposed on many fronts, from the way they understand sexuality to the articulation of their desire to save the world, the characters of Flora Tristán, Paul Gauguin, and Roger Casement all share the same cosmopolitan ethos, and their struggle resonates with current issues.

The character of Flora Tristán is a case in point: Vargas Llosa plots her to defend contemporary concepts, and to criticize the drift of liberal globalization. For instance, when she travels to Lima and is exposed to its cosmopolitan characteristics for the first time, the reader is also privy to the relation between the remoteness of history and the contemporaneity of ideas. Lima is not only a cosmopolitan city; it is also a vision of liberal Peru in the nineteenth century – a period of openness to commerce and foreign influence, of coexistence between various groups. Tristán's travel to London to work with the Spence family, whom she despises, takes place during the liberal period of industrialization and early globalization; a situation that can be read as a mirror image of today's globalization and its shortcomings. Yet, the novel does not propose any solution, it merely makes clear that socialism is not the key to past or current problems. However, in Flora's case, the novel also makes a case for globalization: indeed, it is this nineteenth century globalized Peru that turns her into a social activist, thus proving the author's point, namely that "globalization must be welcomed because it notably expands the horizons of individual liberty" ("Culture of Liberty" 69). Furthermore, it is worth clarifying that the author's liberalism does not amount to complacency with the current global order. On the contrary, both novels uphold the denunciations made by the characters, vindicate them, and suggest that their struggles were justified in the past, and would be again today.

Vargas Llosa's current criticism of nationalist forces as killers of freedom is clear through both Gauguin's and Casement's depictions, and resonates with some interventions he has made about separatist movements, be it in Catalonia or in Scotland. Gauguin's adherence to nationalism is despicable, a return to the primitive state Vargas Llosa claims to be removed from civilization; moreover, it is dangerous and has terrible consequences. Casement is only redeemed through his balanced approach to both his homeland and the world, although, much like Gauguin, he comes close to not being allowed any redemption at all. For example, during his stay in Germany, the once open-minded Casement tries to impose his views on Irish-British soldiers, who refuse to cede to his impassioned nationalist speech. "Seeking to impose a cultural identity on a people," claims Vargas Llosa, "is equivalent to locking them in a prison and denying them the most precious of liberties – that of choosing what, how, and who they want to be" (69). In trying to impose his will on the Irish soldiers, Casement denies them freedom of choice.

Moreover, both characters embody Vargas Llosa's criticism of nationalist views of cultural identity. Indeed, he claims that "If there is anything at odds with the universalist propensities of culture, it is the parochial, exclusionary, and confused vision that nationalist perspectives try to impose on cultural life. ... Cultures must live freely, constantly jousting with different cultures" (70). This is both Gauguin's and Casement's mistake: by arguing that cultures must be preserved, they show an exclusionary vision that rejects the premise that cultures thrive when enriched by others. They conflate *preservation* and *purity*. This comes to reinforce Vargas Llosa's stance that "globalization does not suffocate local cultures but rather liberates them from the ideological conformity of nationalism" (69).

In conclusion, Vargas Llosa posits that in an era such as ours, rooted cosmopolitanism is the most adequate way through which to tackle the issues facing the world. By discussing these ideas in historical novels, Vargas Llosa starts a conversation that is not only cosmopolitan in

nature, but that also puts cosmopolitanism proper at the forefront, an evolution in his own literary production that mirrors that of Spanish American letters. His rearticulation of the historical novel allows him to discuss contemporary ideas under the guise of historical fiction. Ultimately, both *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta* are about current issues and the role of individuals in resolving them, sparking a reflection without providing answers.

Chapter 5 – Jorge Volpi – Cosmopolitanism in the Age of the End of History

"Yo soy mexicano y seguramente escribo como mexicano,
por más que lo que escriba no ocurra en México."
Jorge Volpi

Mexican author Jorge Volpi is known for his complex, deterritorialized, narrative worlds. He is, in his own words, "un latinoamericano que – rara cosa – no escribe sobre América Latina" (*Insomnio* 24). He even doubts that such a thing as Latin America actually exists, a perspective that has led him to conceptualize literature in cosmopolitan and global terms. He has an acute understanding of his place in the ever-changing Latin American and Mexican canons.[125] Born on July 10, 1968, Volpi is a lawyer-turned-novelist, and is also known for his involvement in the *Crack* movement and his thought-provoking essays. In 1996, after practicing law for a few years, he travelled to Salamanca, Spain, to complete his doctorate in Hispanic philology. The prologue of *El insomnio de Bolívar* (2009) reminisces about this period in his life.[126] Volpi asserts that he discovered his Latin American affiliations while studying in Salamanca – in Spain, of all places. He recalls that he "Acababa de cumplir 28 años y hasta entonces había vivido en México, donde jamás fui consciente de esta condición y donde nunca tuve la fortuna o la desgracia de toparme con alguien que se proclamase miembro de esta especie" (17). Volpi claims that for him, and many Mexicans of his generation, "América Latina – término rimbombante, resbaladizo – era un hermoso fantasma, una herencia incómoda, una carga o una deuda imposible de calcular" (18).[127]

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[125] Even if he has been criticized for not being Mexican enough, Volpi's first novels tend to prove this affirmation as false. *A pesar del oscuro silencio* (1992) concentrates on the life and works of Mexican poet Jorge Cuesta; *Días de ira* (1994) is inspired, from a narrative and thematic perspective, by Salvador Elizondo's *Farabeuf*; and *La paz de los sepulcros* (1995) is perhaps the most Mexican novel of all, since it was written in Mexico, has a Mexican narrator and protagonist, and is about Mexican events.

[126] It alludes to the well-known Julio Cortázar letter to Roberto Fernández Retamar, in which the Argentinean explained to his Cuban counterpart how he had discovered his Latin Americanness in Europe.

[127] This is contrary to Vargas Llosa, for whom Peru was, and still is, the very material from which he draws his inspiration. However, Volpi shares with Vargas Llosa a tendency to produce thoroughly documented novels aimed at critical and well-informed readers.

This is perhaps one of the reasons why Latin America has no more place of privilege than other parts of the world in the novels I study in this chapter. It is, after all, a *fantasma*, a ghost, something that escapes its very seeker.

The two novels I analyze here are cases in point: both *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra* articulate Mexico and Latin America in a global context by erasing major indicators of identity of the Spanish American novel, whether through their narrators, the events depicted, or the very settings, and concentrate on events that marked and shaped the twentieth century. *El fin de la locura* (2003) starts on November 10, 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and chronicles the journey of Aníbal Quevedo, a Mexican psychoanalyst, from the Paris of May 1968 to Mexico under President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94). Quevedo talks to Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes, and then travels to Fidel Castro's Cuba and Salvador Allende's Chile. The novel explores the figure of the intellectual in order to represent it as a global category of the twentieth century, one whose representation requires the articulation of a global conscience. The novel also concentrates on intellectual history, another departure from most of the Spanish American narrative. *No será la Tierra* (2006) starts with the nuclear Chernobyl disaster (1986) in Ukraine, and interweaves the fates of three women scattered across the world: Irina Gránina, a Russian biologist, Jennifer Moore, an American economist with a senior position in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Éva Halász, a Hungarian-American computer genius. These three women must learn to live in a world influenced by the implosion of the communist bloc and the emergence of the anti-globalization movement. *No será la Tierra* is about the emergence of the so-called New World Order and the end of history discourse of the 1990s. In my reading, the novel explores how the cosmopolitan aspirations of characters of different nationalities serve to probe modes of universal engagement and advances rooted cosmopolitanism as a desirable mode of community membership in the global era. In both

these texts, Latin America is but a ghost that can be seen below the surface of the narrative, but they nevertheless embody Volpi's contentions about the future of Latin America. For the author, the way forward is to "renuncia[r] de una vez por todas a estas convicciones patrióticas, a los himnos y banderas, a los odios y las exclusiones, a las caducas ideas de soberanía, para entrar en un mundo nuevo, en una era donde la pertenencia a un solo país no sea crucial, donde sea posible articular una ciudadanía – y una identidad – más amplia," in which "la aplicación de soluciones primero *regionales* y luego *globales* sirva para mejorar las condiciones de vida" (*Insomnio* 249-50, emphasis added) of both the national and global setting. Both these narratives, then, propose an articulation of globality.

Since he produces a hybrid prose, Volpi is hard to place in any literary category: "la amplitud de fuentes y recursos que emplea complica atribuirle categorías, establecer una graduación definitiva o precisar sus avatares y devenir" (Corral 369). He is part of a group of contemporary novelists who publish widely acclaimed narrative works, while also being involved in critical debates about culture, literature and politics. Much like the *Boom* authors, Volpi and his peers are more than writers: they are Latin American intellectuals, whose voice can be heard across many platforms. In various literary manifestos, such as the "Manifiesto *Crack*" (1996) and essays, Volpi has pondered the question of literary production and its reception in the domestic and international arenas. A recurring theme in his reflection is that of a literary tradition conceptualized in cosmopolitan terms; he also has a profound understanding of the Mexican tradition.

The *Crack* emerged in 1996; its members describe it as a literary friendship, since it is both a group of novels and the very authors that aimed at renovating Mexican literature.[128]

[128] *The Critical Dictionary of Mexican Literature: (1955-2010)* is not laudatory toward the objectives of the Crack: "the Crack novels form a heteroclitic band of uneven ... tales that fly the banner of false cosmopolitanism. It's

Twenty years after the publication of the original manifesto, they are still active. In the "Manifiesto *Crack*" of 1996, Ignacio Padilla explains that at the beginning of the 1990s, he and his fellow members, including Volpi, did not identify with the writing of contemporary Mexican and Latin American writers. The manifesto, then, was a way to articulate their literary vision, express new concerns, and open a new way.[129] In short, they seemed to be rejecting the previous fifty years of Latin American literary tradition. While they admired the literary experimentation of the *Boom*, they despised what had come after it, for it was *easy* literature, a thinly veiled criticism of the writings of the *Post-Boom*. They advocated for a return to more complex narratives, for a step forward. In the "Postmanifiesto del Crack, 1996-2016," Pedro Ángel Palou addressed this very issue, tied to universality: "El *Crack* apostó por esa globalidad de la novela desde las tradiciones locales. No buscó destruir al Boom, como se dijo, sino continuarlo. Hizo *Crack*, una fisura en la tradición," a *crack* that is nevertheless part of that very tradition of global novels that discuss local themes.

According to Alberto Castillo Pérez, in *El Crack y su manifiesto* (2006), "el título mismo, elegido para definirse, señala ya un afán de internacionalización, sino de anglofilia; *crack*, palabra que en inglés significa fisura o grieta y es también la onomatopeya de algo que se quiebra" (83). According to the scholar, there is a clear genealogical intent in the *Crack*, in that his members aimed at defining themselves as heirs of a novel they call *profound*, which signalled a break with the literature produced after the *Boom*. Much like the *novela total* of the 1960s, the

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literature written by Latin Americans who decided to abandon – as if this in and of itself were novel or radical – old national themes and present themselves as contemporaries not of all men but of the superstars of world literature" (532).

[129] They claimed that "Ahí hay más bien una mera reacción contra el agotamiento; cansancio de que la gran literatura latinoamericana y el dudoso realismo mágico se hayan convertido, para nuestras letras, en magiquismo trágico; cansancio de los discursos patrioteros que por tanto tiempo nos han hecho creer que Rivapalacio escribía mejor que su contemporáneo Poe, como si proximidad y calidad fuesen una y la misma cosa; cansancio de escribir mal para que se lea más, que no mejor; cansancio de lo *engagé*; cansancio de las letras que vuelan en círculos como moscas sobre sus propios cadáveres" ("Manifiesto Crack" 5).

Crack novels propose complex literary worlds, nonlinear structures, and narrative polyphony. There does not seem to be a thematic legacy in the production of the *Crack* authors; their only concern is that the topics broached be substantial and worth developing.[130]

The members of the *Crack* consider that they "tienen el derecho – como todos los escritores del mundo – de escribir sobre cualquier tema que se les ocurra" (Volpi, "Código" 183) and "de ubicar la acción de sus novelas en el lugar que se les ocurra" (183). Using international settings and global events in their narrative does not make them less Latin American than authors who choose to set theirs in a familiar environment; indeed, "la ubicación es subsidiaria de la forma y no al revés" (184), and using global settings is a choice that allows them to write about all topics in a credible manner. However international it may be, the *Crack* is above all "un grupo mexicano" (186) that "se siente orgulloso de pertenecer a la rica tradición literaria latinoamericana" (186), but who "detesta el nacionalismo entendido como marca excluyente" (186). Nationalism, then, is an "Invento del siglo diecinueve, orgullo impuesto en el veinte, atavismo que nos enfermó de amor a lo particular para alejarnos de lo universal que ... nos empuja a decir 'mi cultura' en detrimento de 'la cultura'. ... La nación en singular no existe" (Palou, *Pequeño diccionario* 202). It is not surprising, then, that Volpi, much like Vargas Llosa, denounces all forms of nationalism and extreme ideologies, for "cualquier ideología es, de entrada, una forma excluyente de otras variedades de pensamiento" ("Yo soy una novela"), which goes against his very understanding of literature and fiction. This also sets the tone for the supranational narratives for which the members of the *Crack* are known.

[130] In this sense, it could be argued that the *Crack* had a more intellectual and elitist approach than *McOndo*, another literary manifesto that appeared in the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, they come together in their rejection of a restrictive vision of the continent, understood through magical realism only. They both reflect Latin America's reality as more than ever globalized and decentralized.

Like his fellow authors of the *Crack*, Volpi transgresses the traditional values of Mexican society, and, as we have already seen, expresses an existential ambivalence when asked to define his identity. According to Wilfrido H. Corral, in *La prosa/cultura no ficticia según Leonardo Valencia y Jorge Volpi*, "si hasta cierto punto Volpi parece argüir que todos podemos ser ciudadanos en la república de las letras, lo cual es cierto, por otro parece decir que primero hay que ser ciudadano del país donde uno ha nacido. Esta impresión se desprende de su invariable elección de autores mexicanos, y su constante mención de ellos como ejemplos a seguir" (377). As such, Volpi is aware that his literary production is part of his national history, although he is very critical of it. In this regard, he appears to relate to the cosmopolitan outlook of authors such as Alfonso Reyes and Jorge Luis Borges, who stated that the identity did not lie in national stereotypes, but in a common sense of belonging and openness to others. This is an articulation of what I call rooted cosmopolitanism. Volpi has expressed this view of literature, literary tradition, and criticism in various short stories, essays, blog posts, and newspaper articles. In what follows, I examine two representative texts of his multi-generic prose.

Volpi uses satire in "El fin de la narrativa latinoamericana" (2004). It arguably mirrors Borges's "El escritor argentino y la tradición" and could be considered Volpi's own cosmopolitan manifesto. Volpi's examination led to some of the same contradictions, disagreements, and disputes within Mexican letters, not unlike when Borges pondered ironically on the essence of Argentinean identity in his time. These ties to his predecessors, in genre and form, reveal a powerful articulation of Volpi's understanding of the literary tradition in which he is evolving.

In the essay, Volpi parodies, in the form of a literary review, the work of critic Ignatius Hieronymus Berry, an apocryphal Professor at the University of North Dakota. The hybrid writing allows him to formulate a critical perspective, sarcastic in tone, on the pessimistic view

allegedly held by scholars of the new generation of Latin American authors. The fictional Berry, with whom the Mexican disagrees, is a fierce critic of new Latin American novelists like Alberto Fuguet and Jorge Volpi himself.[131] The author's antagonist argues that the *Boom* was the golden age of Latin American narrative, and as such, anything that came afterwards is of little critical interest: "como se sabe, a toda época de esplendor le sigue una de decadencia, y es justamente lo que ocurrió a partir de este momento" (33). He notes the decadence of the new production, and how it strays from what he deems proper literature. Berry harshly criticizes the status of certain international authors, and explains that

> a partir de la década de los noventa, un grupo de escritores comenzó a revelarse torpemente contra su condición hispánica. Nacidos a partir de los sesenta, no experimentaron las convulsiones ideológicas de sus predecesores y tal vez por ello no se involucraron con los problemas esenciales de sus países. Su desarraigo fue tan notorio, que al leer sus obras hoy en día, resulta imposible reconocer sus nacionalidades. (35)

First, Berry comments that these authors rejected their Hispanic identity, which could not be further from the truth. The novels of the younger generation are written in Spanish – even if all the authors speak English, and most of them French – which makes these novels part of the Hispanic tradition *de facto*. Second, he criticizes their supposed lack of national allegiance based on the premise that they are not using explicit identity markers. The scholar thus disregards the production of Mexican cosmopolitan authors such as Carlos Fuentes and Jorge Cuesta, to name but a few, who are giants of Mexican letters, but who also produced a corpus of deterritorialized narratives that do not openly discuss national identity. The fictional Berry firmly believes that the cosmopolitan and ahistorical outlook of this *grupo de escritores* towards Latin American literary tradition is wrong. He regrets their obstinacy and stubbornness in rejecting the legacy of great

[131] Alberto Fuguet (1964) is a Chilean writer, and one of the founding members of the *McOndo* movement.

writers, such as Jorge Luis Borges and Juan Rulfo, who achieved worldwide success without despising their country of origin and their national identity (33). This criticism echoes the one made by many actual literary critics who deemed the works of the new generations not national enough. The American professor suggests that novelists born after the 1960s forgot true national concerns "con el propósito de integrar su obra al mercado internacional" (35). In addition to their imputed commercial interests, Berry points out a flaw in their reasoning: while the younger generation condemns the idea of a light literature – as did their forefathers, from whom the younger generation wants to distance itself at all costs – they are complacent with the global literary market, since they do not mind adapting their novels to the marketplace needs. Berry states that they do not long to join the Latin American canon, or even the global one, which would ensure their longevity, but that they would rather succeed by selling books, a stance that the professor considers despicable.

Berry has a position similar to that of Argentinean nationalists who criticized Borges in the 1950s, which prompted him to write "El escritor argentino y la tradición". He completely disqualifies the members of the new wave due to the absence of distinctive national traits in their work: he affirms that their abandonment of the homeland, as well as its literary tradition, is clear evidence of their disdain for their country and continent. He deplores that globalization has blurred the boundaries between different Latin American national cultures, and appears frustrated that, today, it would be completely impossible to distinguish a Mexican writer, such as Volpi (*Crack*), from a Chilean counterpart, such as Fuguet (*McOndo*). For him, 1996 marked the beginning of the "tarea de demolición, a través de dos sucesos paralelos" (36) that doomed Latin America literature:

> la publicación de la antología *McOndo*, prologada por los chilenos Alberto Fuguet y Sergio Gómez – su título era ya una burda sátira del territorio imaginario de Márquez – y

> la provocadora presentación del Manifiesto del autodenominado "grupo del *crack*" en México. Ambos fenómenos inaugurales evidenciaban ya las disfunciones de ambas cofradías: su afán teatral, su vocación de dirigirse a los *mass media* y su común rechazo del realismo mágico eran pruebas suficientes de que sus ambiciones estaban más del lado de la publicidad y del mercado que de la verdadera literatura. (36)

He calls them *dysfunctional*, which implies that, for him, as for many scholars before him, there is only one literary tradition in Latin America: the national one.[132] He also considers that magical realism is the true Latin American literary tradition. Moreover, this new group of writers "se encargó de eliminar para siempre la identidad de la narrativa hispánica" (35), "comportándose públicamente como cualquier escritor occidental corriente" (36). Accordingly, there is such as thing as a defined *Latin American literary identity*, which should always be evident in their works. It would thus appear that the world literary tradition is available for all writers, saved for the Latin American ones. This satire aims to underscore the obvious contradictions in the points outlined by the professor, since he, as previously mentioned, gives much credit to Borges's input into the Latin American canon, but conveniently forgets that the Argentinean short-story writer was once criticized for having set aside national concerns, as well as the question of identity definition.

The creation of the Berry character positions Volpi to comment upon – and satirize – the alleged academic opinion and myopia regarding the new generations. Well aware of the tradition, as well as of his precursors' works, he maintains that literary critics of Berry's kind are mistaken, since "se olvidan de algo muy importante: desde el siglo XVI, los escritores de lo que hoy es América Latina siempre han creído pertenecer a Occidente" (38). There is no contradiction

[132] The RAE defines *disfunción* as follows: "... desarreglo en el funcionamiento de algo o en la función *que le corresponde*" (emphasis added). The young generations should then be writing novels with a national articulation.

whatsoever in being a Mexican Western author. Thus, cosmopolitanism is not such a far-fetched stance for the new generations; it has always been part of the literature of the continent. Volpi then dismisses the idea that literature should be defined "por los rasgos diferenciales del país que la produce" (38), and adds that

> en América Latina han coexistido estos dos bandos irreconciliables: los "nacionalistas" y los "cosmopolitas". Sin embargo, no fue sino hasta los años treinta del siglo XX cuando el escritor mexicano Jorge Cuesta asentó el argumento definitivo en contra de los primeros: el nacionalismo – afirmó – es también, a fin de cuentas, una invención europea. Por desgracia, sus palabras no lograron terminar la discusión, la cual se ha prolongado con diversos ropajes hasta nuestra época. (38)

Cuesta made this affirmation about twenty years before Borges published "El escritor argentino y la tradición," which highlights the ever-going character of that discussion. Instead of lamenting the supposed demise of Latin American letters as they came to be known in the 1970s, the Mexican "prefiere preguntarse con cierto escepticismo qué significa, a fin de cuentas, ser latinoamericano al principio del siglo XXI" (39). However, it is a question that no one can answer with certainty, since identity refers to an ever-evolving process.

In the spirit of his forefathers, and unlike the fictional Berry, Volpi is in favour of cosmopolitan writing, one that is in dialogue with a global canon:

> lo cierto es que los mejores escritores latinoamericanos han sido, en la mayor parte de los casos, "cosmopolitas" ... En distintos momentos de la historia [various authors] fueron acusados por los nacionalistas de copiar modelos extranjeros y de dejarse seducir por las tendencias de moda, cuando en realidad hacían exactamente lo contrario: fundar y preservar la mejor tradición literaria del país, esa tradición que, a fuerza de ser generosamente universal ... se volvió también ricamente nacional. (39)

He, like Carlos Fuentes in *Geografía de la novela*, makes Reyes's proclamation – "Para ser provechosamente nacional, hay que ser generosamente universal" (qtd. in Fuentes 25) – his own. The novelists who started writing during the 1990s are part of this universal tradition, and are resisting a diktat that forces them to be authentic followers of the Latin American style, or rather, proud heirs of the *Boom*. Although they reclaimed some aspects of this production, such as the depth of their texts and literary experimentation, they reject the stereotype of the *Latin American writer*, and choose instead to adhere to "la mejor tradición latinoamericana, es decir, la que siempre ha promovido un cosmopolitismo abierto e incluyente" (Volpi 40), making them the successors of both Borges and the *Boom*.

Along with other authors who emerged in the 1990s, Volpi rises up – in that movement of creative affirmation to which Harold Bloom refers in *The Anxiety of Influence* – against the canonical figures of the 1960s, while also rescuing both the literary exploration, and their universal perspective.[133] He reformulates arguments of his precursors, such as Borges, Fuentes, and Reyes, and establishes a personal genealogy in which a cosmopolitan perspective is the outstanding criterion. In fact, both in his novels and in his essays, Volpi rejects nationalism and claims a place in the canon of the continent while establishing a critical distance from the national and Latin Americanist concerns of the previous generations.

El insomnio de Bolívar is another patent example of Volpi's multi-generic prose, for it combines political forecast, fantasy literature and science fiction. The essays raise many

[133] One could argue that Berry's stand on the integration of a Latin American canon, as well as how to ensure one's legitimacy and longevity in literature, can be tied to that of Harold Bloom in his seminal *The Anxiety of Influence.* Bloom associates literary tradition with authors who have a certain influence over others, and says that "Every disciple takes away something from his masters" (6), whether consciously or unconsciously. In addition, Bloom proposes a gradation to explain the development of what he calls the *strong poet*. He posits that such poets maintain an ambiguous relationship with their predecessors and with the literary canon, since their influence creates a feeling of anxiety in the new poet. Bloom considers that as long as the works of his precursors inspire the young poet, he is doomed to produce works that are unoriginal and weak. Therefore, the poet must forge a personal poetic vision for himself, in order to ensure his survival in the literary world, and eventually his inclusion in a new canon.

questions, several of which remain unanswered, and cover, among other topics, history, government systems and the economic problems of Latin America. Each *consideración* – as he entitles each chapter – proposes a reflection on a different aspect of the continent, explores its meaning through the analysis of its past, its present, and its possible and probable future, and concludes, in an ironic manner, that the best thing Latin America could do would be to disappear and merge with North America, *à la* European Union. Although seemingly an imaginative work of futuristic fiction, it can also be classified as a political essay.

Volpi's reflections on Latin American literature and literary tradition are obviously the most relevant to this study, which is why I choose to concentrate on this specific aspect of the essay. While the third essay is openly about literary tradition, and reflects on the new literary generations that came up on the literary scene during the 1990s, as well as on the concept of the *Latin American author*, Volpi's thoughts on literature are scattered throughout the book. One major criticism Volpi makes in *El insomnio de Bolívar*, as well as elsewhere, is that of the prevalence of magical realism in Latin American literature.[134] Not only is he dissatisfied that it has come to be synonymous with Latin American literature, but he also resents the fact that it has become an expectation, an "etiqueta sociopolítica" (70). He recalls that

> Como estudiantes de filología hispánica – lo que en México se llama simplemente literatura española – los latinoamericanos éramos asociados, irremediablemente, con

[134] While Volpi applauds García Márquez's skills, and does not deny that magical realism had a tremendous impact in Latin American literature, he laments that it has become some sort of brand that is expected from Latin American authors. He also claims that the fact that magical realism is seen as the defining characteristic of a whole continent is inevitably reductive, for it erases large parts of Spanish America's literary history, "desde los balbuceos del siglo XIX hasta algunos de los momentos más brillantes de nuestras letras, incluidas las vanguardias de principios del siglo XX, Borges y Onetti, la novela realista o comprometida posterior – en especial la novela de la Revolución mexicana –, las búsquedas formales de los cincuenta y el contagio de la cultura popular de los sesenta. ... Y, acaso lo más grave, ha exacerbado el nacionalismo frente a la rica tradición universal de la región" (69-70). He also despises the hypocrisy of some critics, who were fast to criticize the *Boom* for its use of foreign literary devices, but who eventually changed their mind when their novels became successful: after the publication of *Cien años de soledad* "el realismo mágico© fue elevado a paradigma y, de ser tachados de vendepatrias, los miembros del Boom pasaron a encarnar la esencia misma de América Latina" (70). (Volpi uses the copyright sign (©) to highlight how magical realism has turned into a brand.)

> García Márquez y el realismo mágico. Poco importaban la tradición prehispánica, los tres siglos de virreinato, el moroso siglo XIX o las infinitas modalidades literarias exploradas en América Latina a lo largo del siglo XX: si uno decía "estudio literatura latinoamericana", el 98 por ciento de los oyentes asumía que uno era experto en mariposas amarillas, doncellas voladoras y niños con cola de cerdo. Y ello no gracias al denodado estudio de los entresijos de Macondo, sino a la convivencia diaria con lo maravilloso presente en nuestras tierras. (21)

This understanding of Latin American literature almost as an ideology is *excluyente* and, much like nationalism, draws clear boundaries around it. However, it is the reactions to the publication of *En busca de Klingsor* (1999) that made him realize the extent of the expectations towards Latin American authors faced: the novel was deemed not Mexican enough, and as a result, some critics argued it should not be called a Mexican novel; he claims that a literary critic even demanded "que se [le] retirara el pasaporte por no escribir sobre México" (25). While in the first drafts of the novel, the protagonist was Mexican, the author eventually realized that for credibility's sake within the literary world, he had to change his nationality; the protagonist became American.[135] While this was a minor change in the novel, Volpi claims that

> Aquella decisión pragmática de transformar a un mexicano en gringo se convirtió en un inesperado manifiesto. Si a ello se suma que, en efecto, al lado de mis amigos mexicanos del *Crack* yo llevaba años renegando del realismo mágico que se exigía a los escritores latinoamericanos – y que nada tenía que ver con la grandeza de García Márquez –, el

[135] Volpi explained that he never intended to portray an American physicist, but that the authenticity of the novel depended on it: "A fines de 1998 comprendí que había algo ridículo en que un mexicano, y para colmo físico, se dedicase a cazar nazis en Alemania. Sólo entonces decidí, por una simple cuestión de verosimilitud, cambiar la nacionalidad de mi personaje, que se tornó estadounidense y pasó a llamarse Francis Bacon, como el filósofo isabelino" (*Insomnio* 24). Volpi even shared, in an interview with Areco, that the first portrayal of Bacon was named Jorge Cantor, a wink to the German mathematician Georg Cantor. For an analysis of Volpi's supposed lack of national allegiance, see Christopher Domínguez Michael's various interventions in *Letras Libres*.

> malentendido estaba a punto. En medio de aquel alud de elogios y ataques, igualmente enfáticos, desperté como un autor doblemente exótico. Exótico por ser latinoamericano. Y más exótico aún por no escribir sobre América Latina (¿cuándo se ha cuestionado a un escritor inglés o francés por no escribir sobre Inglaterra o Francia?). De nada servía aclarar que antes de Klingsor todas mis novelas se situaban en México o que había escrito dos ensayos sobre historia intelectual mexicana: esta novela me transformó en un apátrida literario, celebrado y denostado por las mismas razones equivocadas. (24-25)

Volpi found himself in the same predicament as some of the *Boom* writers. What makes a Latin American author truly Latin American? The fact that the novels take place in the hemisphere? The fact that the author was born in the continent? In Volpi's perspective, literary critics find it quite difficult to see past nationality when it comes to establish literary belonging:

> Nada detenía la avalancha: en cada entrevista y presentación pública me veía obligado a aclarar mi nacionalidad y a señalar, en vano, que los escenarios no hacen que una obra sea más o menos latinoamericana. Aquella ruidosa querella tuvo, por fortuna, sus ventajas: me hizo enfrentarme a las permanentes contradicciones del nacionalismo y me animó a reflexionar sobre lo que significaba ser mexicano y latinoamericano. (25)

This reflection led him to reject nationalism, based on the fact that it is *excluyente*, both in political and literary terms. Indeed, according to Volpi and many writers of his generation, the *Latin American author* no longer exists. He maintains that "ninguno se asume ligado a una literatura nacional — Fresán define: mi patria es mi biblioteca –, y ninguno cree que un escritor latinoamericano deba parecer, ay, latinoamericano" (156).[136] He even maintains that "Si bien

[136] Rodrigo Fresán is an Argentinean author and journalist. He now lives in Spain. He was a close friend of Chilean Roberto Bolaño, with whom he shares his tendency to write hybrid narratives that make use of different media. He is openly influenced by American fiction, which has obviously caused some commotion in Argentina, where his writings are deemed by some not national enough.

ninguno reniega abiertamente de su patria, se trata ahora de un mero referente autobiográfico y no de una denominación de origen. A diferencia de sus predecesores, ninguno de ellos se muestra obsesionado por la identidad latinoamericana – y menos por la mexicana, la boliviana o la argentina – aun si continúan escribiendo sobre sus países o incluso los de sus vecinos" (168). This is a departure from the literature of both the *Boom* and the *Post-Boom*, and a clear rejection of literature conceived in national terms. Moreover, he claims that "Ninguno tiene ni la más remota idea de cuál es el estado actual de la literatura latinoamericana, e incluso alguno duda que la literatura latinoamericana aún exista" (162). If neither national nor continental literature exists, what is left is literature understood within a global, or universal, framework. Volpi proposes that authors be radical and find new ways to tell their stories, venturing outside any artificially conceived boundaries. If the *Latin American author* does not exist anymore, he does not have to abide by random literary dogmas. Volpi, thus, argues for complete literary freedom:

> Seamos radicales: la literatura latinoamericana ya no existe. Preciso: existen cientos o miles de escritores latinoamericanos o, mejor dicho, cientos o miles de escritores chilenos, hondureños, dominicanos, venezolanos, etcétera, pero un cuerpo literario único, dotado con rasgos reconocibles, no. ... Y la verdad es que no hay nada que lamentar. La idea de una literatura nacional, dotada con particularidades típicas e irrepetibles, ajenas por completo a las demás, es un anacrónico invento del siglo XIX. (165)

Not only is national literature an *anacrónico invento del siglo XIX*, so is nationalism.

The two novels I study herein belong to the category of the global novel, which has yet to be properly defined as a genre. Many definitions coexist, and scholars either see the global novel as a positive type of literature, for it opens up possibilities for authors who would otherwise be confined to their own national market, or see it as extremely negative, for novels deemed *global*

lack national elements, discussions that clearly mirror those in Latin America and that Volpi considers obsolete. Indeed, the author explained in an interview that "la novela es en el mundo contemporáneo el espacio ideal para las reflexiones globales, fuera de la hiperespecialización de la ciencia y las ciencias sociales" (qtd. in López de Abiada 151); there is but a small step from understanding the novel as the best space to discuss global issues to writing global novels. Héctor Hoyos, in *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel*, sees the emergence of the global novel as positive, since Latin American global novels can dialogue with universal topics and universal memory, and acquire a "world literary standing" (6). He defines global novel as novels that "can contribute to consolidating both the world and Latin America as their chambers of resonance" (7), "cultivate the tension between the global and the local" (22), and that show a "profound articulation of globality" (23). For him, "The global Latin American novel seeks not to flatten, but to give an almost tactile quality to the conflicting forces that define world-consciousness" (23) and show a clear "articulation of a global conscience" (24), always from a Latin American perspective. In this articulation of both Latin America and the world, I contend that Volpi's global Latin American novels depict rooted cosmopolitanism as a positive mode of engagement.

Others disagree with Hoyos's view. According to Tim Parks, this type of fiction is tantamount to erasing national particularities and renders obsolete "the kind of work that revels in the subtle nuances of its own language and literary culture." The global novel, then, by erasing identity markers, would homogenize literature, and make narrative a mere product that can be consumed anywhere in the world.[137] He fears that authors, in a conscious attempt to make their

[137] This criticism is aligned with that of scholars such as Fernando Rosenberg, in "Derechos humanos, comisiones de la verdad y nuevas ficciones globales". In spite of being in favour of cosmopolitan and/or global novels, that tackle universal concerns, Rosenberg argues that we, as readers, approach these novels "dentro de una gramática transnacional en la que participa el mercado editorial" (143-144). He claims that some of these "nuevas ficciones

material easier to translate, will shy away from broaching national topics and from using their own linguistic variety, such as Mexican Spanish. This is a valid criticism by Parks, as it has indeed been noted in the production of some authors, but I contend that it does not apply to Volpi.[138] Also, such an outlook on the global novel does not take into consideration that, by having both the world and a national setting as its chamber of resonance, the genre can serve as a space to tackle the intricacies of local and global concerns. Moreover, this outlook ignores the premise of the *Crack*, which is to challenge readers, whether the novel is set in a national or an international setting.

The two novels studied in this chapter are, to date, two of the more explicit ones about cosmopolitanism and globality in Volpi's body of work; they are incidentally both global novels that articulate a concrete tackling of world concerns, both by characters who succeed and fail in their projects. It would appear that this is his preferred genre to address ideas and conceptualization of a global identity at critical moments, linked to cosmopolitanism and its complexities. Both these novels deal openly with global concerns, global events, and the effects they have on individuals. They are also about travelling, be it abroad or within one's nation, and how travel can make one move from loved ones, not only physically but also emotionally, and reject them. They both concentrate on times that were especially loaded from the point of view of politics and definition – or redefinition – of identity worldwide. These novels shy away from the Latin American context, but nevertheless engage it. They propose international narrative universes and hybrid characters that are put under the stress of the breakdown of a world order. I

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globales" in Spanish are but marketing success stories, created by the publishing market in Spain. He posits that the success of these Latin American novels depends on Spain, which, to this day, grants the continent's literary production an official seal of approval. Acknowledgement in Spain leads to translation in English, then wide distribution in the United States.

[138] Volpi addresses this very criticism in *El insomnio de Bolívar*. He says, in an ironic manner, that "un español me acusó de usar un lenguaje desprovisto de localismos para conquistar el mercado mundial (que un oficial nazi dijese 'me lleva la chingada' me parecía una simple falta de sutileza)" (25).

would even argue that in Volpi's novels, global events and the processes that result from them are the main characters. Volpi concentrates on defining moments of the twentieth century, showcasing them from an ironic distance. Since the life-changing events are the true protagonists of the novels, Volpi's characters appear as empty shells that serve primarily as a pretext to discuss global events.

El fin de la locura – Cosmopolitanism and the Global Intellectual

El fin de la locura (2003) recounts the European and Latin American trajectory of Mexican psychoanalyst Aníbal Quevedo, from the Paris of 1968 to Carlos Salinas de Gortari's Mexico, the emblematic moment of the triumph of neo-liberalism and the discourses on the end of ideologies. The novel presents cosmopolitanism from the perspective of a Europeanized character, which serves to parody the Latin American intellectual of the twentieth century, and explores global madness, understood as the global ideas of revolution and utopian thought, which it interprets as a totalitarian impulse, and its multi-faceted failures. *El fin de la locura* addresses Latin American history obliquely since it analyzes it in the broader context of the history of ideas and world history.[139] This global novel is particularly relevant in studying the evolution of the relationship between history and fiction in contemporary Latin American novels, and the figure of the intellectual. Indeed, the novel looks at the figure of the intellectual as a global category of the twentieth century, and concentrates on its flaws and failures. I contend that *El fin de la locura*, by the oblique fictionalization of Latin American history, and the use of parody, intertextuality and irony, critically tackles issues pertaining to the intellectual history of Latin

[139] Florence Olivier argues, in "La 'pensée 68' française et l'intellectualité mexicaine: satire et parodies dans *El fin de la locura* de Jorge Volpi," that the novel is inspired by Carlos Fuentes's *París la revolución de mayo*, which chronicles the Mexican author's experience of May 1968 (260). Volpi himself commented on Fuentes's work in *La imaginación y el poder*, and stated that "Fuentes era demasiado novelista para describir una mera crónica de los hechos," which is why "se convierte en un personaje más en el escenario de los jóvenes rebeldes" (208). *El fin de la locura*, then, fictionalizes Mexico and Latin America in an oblique manner, yet is intertwined with Mexican literary tradition.

America in recent decades. The novel is Volpi's criticism about the political situation in Mexico at the turn of the century, and a criticism of the role of the intellectual in the twentieth century. It is a novel about the intersection of global and Latin American intellectual histories, and how that history has influenced the continent and the world.

El fin de la locura showcases two major characters in a constant ideological battle: the Mexican psychoanalyst Aníbal Quevedo and his ever-disappearing French love interest, Claire. Quevedo is crazy about Claire, and is willing to do everything to make her fall in love with him. Claire, a young university student, is involved in a variety of social revolutionary movements, "está obsesionada con América Latina" (190), and the Cuban revolution. She is an idealist and a true revolutionary. Quevedo, for his part, does not share her enthusiasm, but is willing to convert himself to revolution if it gives him Claire's love. Whereas Quevedo questions the revolutionary movements, Claire stays true to them until the end.

The novel is divided into two major parts: the "Primera parte" takes place in France during the revolutionary movements of May 1968, the "Segunda Parte" takes place mostly in Mexico. The first part is itself divided into two major sections, "Amar es dar lo que no se tiene a alguien que no lo quiere" – which recounts Quevedo's arrival in France, and his meeting with Claire, who rejects his love time and again – and "Si Althusser permanece en cura de sueño, el movimiento de masas va bien" – which recounts Quevedo's first foray into revolutionary movements. The second part is also divided into two sections, "Quevedo por Quevedo" – which recounts Quevedo's disenchantment with revolution, and "Microfísica del poder" – which concentrates on the downward spiral that leads to his suicide in 1989, as a new world order is emerging.

El fin de la locura is at the intersection of two literary genres. Like most of Volpi's multi-generic prose, the novel is hybrid in its form: it is a collection of essays, literary and critical, of

correspondence between various characters, interviews, psychological analysis, and personal journal entries, compiled by an editor – a key figure of the historical novel (Pons 48) – which confronts the reader with complementary points of view.[140] The use of various sources of writings serves to highlight the fact that both as a writer and a psychoanalyst, Quevedo does not seem to have his own style. His incompetence, doubled with his desire to learn from the best, means that every time he encounters one of the intellectual figures, he ends up imitating his way of thinking and writing, mimicking the colonial mindset and passively reproducing it; the intellectual from the periphery copies the metropolitan discourse and style, instead of producing his own. The texts of Quevedo's personal file, compiled by a publisher that is unknown until the end of the novel, emulate the theoretical production of philosophers. For example, the texts of the third part, following Barthes's style, are fragmentary and chaotic, while the fourth and last part, consisting of various manuscripts, newspaper clippings, interviews and letters, is reminiscent of Foucault's archivist type. Each section of the novel is structured around the life of a French structuralist – Lacan, Althusser, Barthes, and Foucault – and besides painting the European intellectual context of the 1960s and the 1970s, portrays the life story of each thinker; from intellectual history we move to the history of intellectuals, with some literary permissiveness.[141]

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[140] Towards the end of the novel, the reader learns that the editor of the novel is none other than Jorge Volpi. In a section entitled "Peor libro del año," journalist Juán Pérez Avella provides a devastating critique of "*El fin de la locura*, de Aníbal Quevedo (edición a cargo de Jorge Volpi, Seix Barral, 2003)". The criticism presented in this section is twofold. First, in an ironic manner, Volpi questions journalists and literary critics who are still interested in a literary tradition that would mostly be of a national sort, and who dislikes this "intensa – y estéril – globalización" that does not bring about great literature. Second, he mocks openly the supposed identity of the novel at hand, calling it "un libro francés escrito en español," which, according to literary critics well versed in national tradition, cannot make it Mexican.

[141] Volpi made that clear himself during an interview: "lo que yo quería era que cada parte se correspondiese con cada uno de los estructuralistas a los que Quevedo imita. Entonces, la primera parte es la más torrencial, porque es un poco como si fuera un psicoanálisis, pero no sesión corta sino larga. La segunda parte es con ese mismo estilo moroso y complicado de Althusser. La tercera se fragmenta, porque Barthes escribía todo al final así, en sus fichitas. Y luego, en la última parte, lo que quería era el Foucault archivista, que el documento hablase, por eso la última parte son los documentos. Eso hace que la novela sea una novela muy poco coherente estilísticamente de principio a fin" (qtd. in Areco 307).

Quevedo, who, given his initials, already alludes to the connection with *Don Quijote*'s Alonso Quijano and his famous *locura*[142], wakes up one day in Paris suffering from amnesia: "Sin saber cómo, un buen día había despertado en París, sin memoria de los días anteriores; por lo visto llevaba allí una buena temporada y, cuando al fin [se] había atrevido a pasear por la ciudad, [se] encontr[ó] en medio de una batalla campal entre policías y estudiantes" (Volpi, *El fin de la locura* 31). Quevedo claims not to remember anything from his past life: "Al despertar, los murmullos se habían desvanecido, pero seguía sin saber por qué estaba lejos de mi hogar, de mi familia, de mi consultorio. Mi mundo se había desvanecido para siempre. Como si hubiese renunciado a la cordura, ahora yo era incapaz de distinguir la fantasía de la realidad" (22). One of the few things he remembers is his *consultorio*, his clinic, which justifies his pursuit of the key figures of French psychoanalysis. The lack of memories from his previous Mexican life allows him to slowly become French. Quevedo, an intellectual and psychoanalyst, ends up meeting and exchanging with his role models, and travelling to Cuba to psychoanalyze Fidel Castro and to Chile, to provide the same treatment to Salvador Allende. These encounters have a great impact on him: "en vez de enloquecer[lo] leyendo novelas de caballerías, [lo] enloquece con tratados de marxismo y maoísmo" ("Política y literatura" 76). Quevedo embodies the subordination of the Latin American intellectual to foreign models – namely, the European one –, that he not only assimilates, but later brings back with him to Latin America.

El fin de la locura is, in fact, the history of many failures that push the protagonist towards his own end: at the global level, it is the failure of the revolutionary utopia of 1968, both in Paris and in Mexico, but on a personal level, it is the failure of Aníbal Quevedo, first as an

[142] The intertextual references to Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote* are obvious throughout the novel: Josefa Ponce, whose last name sounds like that of Sancho Panza, acts as a helper to Quevedo; the psychoanalist publishes his work with a publishing house called Rocinante; and he spends the major part of his life trying to seduce Claire, whom he calls his Dulcinea.

intellectual and as a psychoanalyst, then as a Mexican intellectual and revolutionary. In the novel, Volpi analyzes, in addition to the debates generated by the student movements, the psychoanalytic, Marxist and structuralist theories, and criticizes the role of Latin American intellectuals inside and outside their country or continent in recent decades, so as to provide various examples of failures that defined, according to the novel, the last decades of the twentieth century. Another global aspect explored by the novel is that of the intellectual as a key figure in public life in the twentieth century, notwithstanding national categorization.

The protagonist is, as some characters of the contemporary historical novel, the quintessential antihero. Quevedo has big ambitions but not the personality to succeed. As a fallible individual, he is aware of his flaws as a human being; in retrospect, about his flight from Mexico he says: "Si salí de mi patria fue porque en ella me sentía atrapado, porque un paciente demostró de modo brutal mi incompetencia, porque tal vez ya no soportaba a mi familia" (289). His move to France, which was initially presented as accidental, then becomes a way to start over in all aspects of his life. There are two major motivations to his escape from Mexico. First, he feels *atrapado* within the borders of his country, which he deems lacks a psychoanalytical culture. Second, he feels *atrapado* by his family, which he abandons and never sees again before his death. By travelling to Paris, the quintessential cosmopolitan city, he rejects those closest to him, which makes his cosmopolitan project flawed from the start. This reveals the ambiguities of Quevedo's discourse: first, he claims to be suffering from amnesia and not to remember much of his past life, but later on, in the section allegedly written around 1980, he refers to leaving Mexico of his own volition.

Once in France, he tries to restart his career as an intellectual. He spends time with Lacan, Althusser, Barthes, and Foucault, so as to learn everything he can from these great masters. Foucault is the thinker that he emulates and works with the most, yet he does not find his place

with him either. Nor does he find it with struggling students who fight within several revolutionary movements based on the ideas of the structuralists. Although she keeps rejecting him, Quevedo wants to prove himself to Claire, his Dulcinea, and enters the Parisian student movement. After several confrontations during which members of the revolutionary cell are jailed, the group decides to start a hunger strike in "La capilla de Saint-Bernard, en plena estación de Montparnasse" (181). At first, Aníbal attempts to convince Claire of the madness of her plan – ¡Una huelga de hambre! – me aterroricé –. Claire, ¿no te parece que exageras? (179) – but in an effort to seduce her, "no [le] qued[a] otra alternativa que sumar[se] a ella" (181). Claire is an idealist, who believes that she can actively take part in changing the world; according to Quevedo, "Lo único que la mantenía lúcida era la idea de que, a pesar de la inquina y los errores, aún era posible modificar las reglas del mundo" (179). Claire, a true revolutionary, believes in the power of the hunger strike because she is convinced it can change the world – although, conveniently, her physician does not allow her to take part in it. Quevedo, however, only wants to please her: he takes part in the strike through no will of his own, making his commitment to Claire hypocritical.

It does not take long for the young revolutionaries to become "esqueletos revolucionarios, *zombis*" (181) and "moribundos" (181). Quevedo claims that his love for Claire has brought him too close to "degradación," a state in which he does not wish to persevere for long. He tries to convince his fellow strikers that "[fingir] la inanición sin llegar a padecerla" would be a better option and bring similar results without any suffering. He argues that they could fight more effectively if they ate, but the group rebukes him. He is told that they are "revolucionarios honrados" (182), which only offends Quevedo even more. Since "la perspectiva de matar[se] de hambre [le] parec[e] muy poco atractiva" (182), he finds a way out of the chapel every night and dines with *éclairs* and *petits-fours*, hiding in the bathroom of the subway station. He believes that

"no cometía ninguna infracción contra la causa, simplemente [se] rendía a las inquebrantables leyes de la supervivencia" (183). Although nobody sees through his revolutionary disguise, Quevedo has some remorse; he is aware of his moral failure and lack of ethics. While his comrades are willing to starve to death to defend their revolutionary cause, Quevedo does not understand why so much suffering is needed, and fails as a revolutionary.

On top of the madness caused by students's movements, Quevedo is faced with his own lunacy, in the form of the role of the Latin American intellectual who ends up far away from his country and continent. He is the embodiment of the Latin America intellectual of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries who travels to France – in certain cases, England – and all of a sudden forgets his origins and assimilates a different worldview. Quevedo, then, is not a special case in Latin American history. Indeed, he reproduces the model represented by many artists who were trying to emancipate from their national context and ended up merging – in a metaphorical manner – with the metropolis. In *Littératures et cultures en dialogue*, French sociologist Daniel-Henri Pageaux defined this behaviour as *maniac*, that is an attitude according to which

> la réalité culturelle étrangère est tenue par l'écrivain ... comme absolument supérieure à la culture 'nationale', d'origine. Cette supériorité affecte tout ou partie de la culture étrangère. La conséquence pour la culture d'origine, regardante, est qu'elle est tenue comme inférieure par l'écrivain ... . À la valorisation positive de l'étranger, correspond la vision dépréciative de la culture d'origine. (47)

This explanation of manic behaviour summarizes well Quevedo's attitude, since during his first years in Europe he values, to the detriment of his Mexican culture, French culture and philosophy.[143] His only link to Mexico is through his friend Josefa, whom he likes but judges

[143] As Pageaux explains, "on peut dire que cette attitude maniaque a prévalu dans les rapports culturels entre Europe et Amérique Latine jusqu'au début du XX^{e} siècle: tous les artistes et hommes de lettres latino-américains avaient les

with the eyes of a foreigner, even though they share the same origin. When Josefa succeeds in developing an intimate relationship with Althusser – no small accomplishment, since the philosopher does not like to see people often – Quevedo becomes jealous, and does not understand why his spiritual master has no interest in discussing philosophical matters with him. Angered by the fact that his Mexican friend has a privileged access to the philosopher, without the intellectual capacities Quevedo deems necessary, he violates her personal space, and, analyzing the content of her bedroom, claims that "Su habitación reflej[a] los gustos y las manías de la clase media mexicana: pequeñas reproducciones de cuadros impresionistas, un par de vasijas con enormes flores secas, una imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe junto a un recorte de Elvis Presley" (Volpi, *El fin de la locura* 171). He criticizes the Mexicanness of some her belongings, and behaves in a condescending manner with Josefa, for in his view she does not have the necessary clout to have a romantic relationship, as well as an intellectual one, with Althusser. What Quevedo fails to see is that Althusser loves Josefa *because* she is authentic and does not reject her roots. He calls her "mi añorada estrella mexicana" (176) and "jirafa mexicana" (185), terms of endearment that emphazise her origins, rather than erasing them.

While Josefa keeps alive her ties with her homeland, Quevedo seems to a have a complicated relationship with his Latin American identity. The massacre of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in October 1968, also known as the Tlateloco massacre, makes him sad, but he admits unwillingly that these dead are not his:

> La tarea era espantosa y aburrida: ninguna información paliaba mi dolor. Una aciaga casualidad me había conducido a París y ahora me resultaba imposible sentir verdadera

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yeux rivés sur les modes et révolutions culturelles parisiennes si bien que les productions nationales latino-américaines ont très longtemps été subordonnées aux schémas et techniques élaborés dans la capitale française" (294).

> indignación ante aquellos muertos lejanos, mis muertos. Las imágenes de la manifestación del 2 de octubre, las luces de bengala en el cielo, del tiroteo, los heridos y los cadáveres lucían como simples manchas en el papel: no me concernían. Sentí ganas de vomitar. Lo peor no era mi incapacidad para odiar a Díaz Ordaz y a sus secuaces, sino la falta de un odio verdadero. Yo también estaba muerto, tan muerto como los jóvenes atravesados por las balas de los militares en Tlatelolco. (141)

Quevedo pushes away anything that has to do with national identity, but feels sympathy for the students who fight in France. He universalizes the fight of the Mexican students without empathizing for them. This national death is symbolic, and does not mean that Quevedo has rid himself of all aspects of his Mexican identity. According to Steinberg, even if Tlatelolco is mostly absent from the narrative, it remains central to its development. The critic posits that

> An image travels from Mexico to become the sign that drives Quevedo's future. If, on one level, Tlatelolco initiates and organizes the protagonist's stated emancipatory desire, then on the other, more formal, level, Tlatelolco initiates and organizes the narrative's disenchantment of this desire, that is, transition, turning on the decline of the Mexican state's national-popular form and its reconfiguration in the neo-liberal era. (267)

Although Quevedo declares he is as dead as the students at the heart of Mexico City, the massacre serves as a first step in his conversion to leftist ideologies, the first step into his *locura*, although it must be noted that it is also a first step into the reaffirmation of some aspects of his identity.

When Lacan sends him to meet Althusser, he explains to Quevedo that getting close to the philosopher should be easy:

> —Yo le enviaré una nota diciéndole que usted está muy interesado en conocerlo ... . ¿Qué le parece si le decimos que usted prepara una memoria sobre marxismo y psicoanálisis? Además, como usted es sudamericano...
>
> —Mexicano... – lo interrumpí.
>
> —Además, como usted es *mexicano* – corrigió con enfado – , y él mantiene unos lazos especialmente afectuosos con colegas de esa parte del mundo, estoy seguro de que no dudará en recibirlo. (Volpi, *El fin de la locura* 151)

In this very moment, Quevedo, although very French, reclaims his Mexican identity. He wants to be known for his country, not for a continent. He also laughs at Claire's lack of understanding of Latin America, as she, much like Lacan, lumps together the whole region:

> Estuve a punto de contarle mi experiencia posterior al dos de octubre, pero preferí seguirla escuchando; Claire me reveló entonces que ella no había estado muy lejos del lugar de la masacre y que no había dejado de pensar en mí...
>
> —¿Estuviste en México? – salté.
>
> —No, en Venezuela.
>
> —¡En Venezuela!
>
> Poco importaba que entre Caracas y Tlatelolco hubiese miles de kilómetros de distancia: para ella América Latina carecía de fronteras. (164)

Claire perceives Latin America as lacking borders. She also sees the hemisphere as the perfect playground for her revolutionary ideals; she claims that "Al fin cumplí mi sueño de hacer la revolución en América del Sur" (164), as if she was checking off something of a bucket list. During her stay abroad, she becomes "una campesina" (164) who is accepted by the "guerrilleros locales" (164), who treat her as one of their own. Claire is blinded by her revolutionary fervour, the same way Quevedo is blinded by his love for her. In search of Claire, Quevedo travels to

Cuba, where he is first greeted by the Director of the *Casa de las Américas*, the national publishing house, with whom he discusses the role of a revolutionary. He listens attentively to the claims that "No basta con adherirse verbalmente a la revolución para ser un intelectual revolucionario; ni siquiera basta con las acciones propias de un revolucionario ... Ese intelectual está también obligado a asumir una posición intelectual revolucionaria" (195), but Quevedo is not convinced by such a speech, although he feigns interest for his personal gain. Indeed, by agreeing with the Director, he is offered a place on the jury of the *Premio Casa de las Américas*, one of the most prestigious literary prizes in Latin America. He takes his task very seriously: "Más que discernir un premio, nos aprestábamos a definir el futuro de la humanidad" (198), for whatever book is awarded the prize will receive a lot of attention, and have a great impact on the way the Cuban Revolution is perceived by the world. His trip to Cuba also serves as a pretext to try to cure Fidel Castro of insomnia, to no avail. His meetings with Castro also highlight the role of literature in Cuba, or in any authoritarian regime: writers are "arribistas sin compromiso ... ratas" (212), and words, useless, except if they serve to promote the revolution. Again, Quevedo, although at ease in these intellectual circles, is not convinced. "La autocrítica de Padilla [le hace] repensar por completo [sus] convicciones revolucionarias" (223) and he realizes that "siempre que alcanzaba el poder, la revolución se pervertía... Cuba no era un lugar para nosotros" (224), thoughts that spur his expulsion from the island for being anti-revolutionary and rejecting the influence of power figures such as Castro.

Moreover, while a major part of the narrative takes place in Paris, the ideal city for any revolutionary endeavour in 1968, characters ironize this fact and comment on the literary process:

> —El gran problema de este libro es que la mayor parte de las acciones se desarrollan en París –me sanciona Josefa–. ¿Sabes cuántas novelas latinoamericanas se sitúan en esta ciudad? Centenares, Aníbal, centenares…

> —¿Y qué quieres que haga, Josefa? ¿Que me vaya a vivir a Varsovia o a Bogotá para no incomodar a los críticos? ¿No te parece una concesión suficiente el que yo sea mexicano? (305)

Once again, a Frenchified Quevedo reclaims his Mexican identity. He is aware that he fits into the stereotype of the Latin American writer in Paris. Although he openly judges Josefa for her Mexicanness, she remains indispensable in his life. In fact, it is with Josefa that Quevedo wants to return to Mexico after seventeen years in France.

Eventually, Quevedo, now certain of his potential as an intellectual leader, travels back to Mexico: in a letter, Claire comments that "después de estos años de aprendizaje en Francia, llegó el momento de completar tu camino. Como cualquier héroe, debías regresar a Ítaca para poner en práctica tus conocimientos, tu saber" (320). Having acquired all the knowledge in the metropolis, he can now go back to the periphery and mimic behaviours acquired abroad. He seems so accustomed to his life in France that his return to Mexico is very surprising for Claire. She is shocked that he left Europe, but also by the fact that he has truly remained in his native land, which seems unreal for someone like Quevedo, who had thus far been ambivalent in most aspects of his life:

> Me cuesta trabajo imaginarte allá, tan cerca de tu infancia y tan lejos de ti mismo (del hombre que eres hoy), extraviado en una ciudad que, como dices, ya no puede ser tuya. México: qué significante más extraño, tan árido y al mismo tiempo tan solemne. Un lugar de cuyo nombre no querías acordarte... Cuando te marchaste pensé que no resistirías y que terminarías por regresar a Europa. (320)

However, Quevedo does not have to be in Europe, for he brings his European experience and intellectual history to Mexico. While much of the ensuing story takes place in Latin America, the physical setting is not equivalent to the intellectual space. The intellectual mindset in which

Quevedo evolves is still European, so that, once established in Mexico, he continues to reproduce the cultural and intellectual models that he has assimilated. When his daughter, whom he has not seen in years, goes to a book signing to meet him, she is privy to the extent to which he has assimilated foreign models and is disconnected from Mexico: indeed, she says "sentí como si mi padre estuviese dormido... Y no tuve el valor de despertarlo" (336).

Despite the fact that he creates successful magazines such as *Tal Cual*, an imitation of the French magazine of literary theory and criticism *Tel Quel*, and has a certain prestige in Mexican intellectual circles, he is met with only modest results: a series of "peor libro del año" by some literary critic, who rejects him both as a writer and an intellectual; research on murder in Chiapas – copied on Foucault's *Surveiller et punir* – that does not reach any concrete conclusions; rumours of corruption by the government after psychoanalysis sessions with president Salinas de Gortari, which brings Quevedo to conclude that it is impossible to be an *intellectuel engagé* in Mexico:

> ¿Es posible ser un intelectual comprometido en México? Esta cuestión me atormenta desde mi regreso. ... Hasta los pensadores más críticos necesitan del poder para subsistir. Basta repasar la triste historia de la mayor parte de los escritores mexicanos de este siglo para desanimarse por completo. Al parecer, sólo existen dos opciones: mantener una posición independiente hasta las últimas consecuencias, y entonces sufrir la persecución o el silencio – acaso la peor de las condenas –, o bien plegarse a los caprichos de la clase política y guardar una obligada discreción ante los excesos del PRI y del gobierno. (322)

"Demolido" (13) by the corruption rumours emanating from the *salinista* administration, and since Claire cannot be convinced of his intellectual integrity, Quevedo commits suicide while the Berlin Wall falls, embodying "el fracaso de [las] ilusiones" (12) of the revolutionary left and the

end of utopias.[144] The government of Salinas de Gortari wins over the intellectual figure Quevedo, eliminates dissent and reiterates the victory of neo-liberalism as a system. His death on November 9, 1989, at the very moment where "Tras más de setenta años de locura, el mundo se apresta a volver a la razón" (472), confirms that he represents the end of that long trajectory.

The last part of the novel, "El diario inédito de Christopher Domínguez," echoes this finality:

> La historia de este siglo es la historia de una gigantesca decepción. Su ruina representa el ansiado fin de la locura. Después de incontables esfuerzos, se ha podido comprobar que, como muchos de nosotros habíamos advertido, la revolución fue un fiasco. Detrás de sus buenos deseos, su ansia de mejorar el mundo y su pasión por la utopía, siempre se ocultó una tentación totalitaria. (448-49)

In the end, Quevedo's fight was pointless. The end of madness spells the end of Quevedo's understanding of the world as he knew it, and his own demise, for he cannot go on living now that he sees the futility of revolution.[145] The fall of the Berlin Wall is but a symbol of Quevedo's own fall from grace. As the Wall and the ideological struggle it represents come to an end, Quevedo suddenly *recobra la cordura* and in a last attempt at justifying himself, turns towards Claire. He questions everything he had taken for granted until then: their shared interests, protests, even their complicated love affair. His own demise is a metaphor for that of the revolutionary movements, something with which he has come to terms. In his suicide letter, addressed to Claire, he asks: "¿De qué te sirvió contemplar el fin de la revolución, el penoso

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[144] The ending of the novel does not make clear if Quevedo was actually corrupted by power – embodied by President Salinas de Gortari – or if he fell victim to a conspiracy led by those in power.

[145] Volpi already alluded to this state of affairs in the "Manifiesto Crack", "parafraseando a Nietzsche, el fin de los tiempos no ocurre fuera del mundo, sino dentro del corazón. Más que una superstición decimal o una necesidad del mercado, el fin del mundo supone un particular estado del espíritu, lo que menos importa es la destrucción externa, comparada con el derrumbamiento interior, con ese estado de zozobra que precede a nuestro íntimo Juicio Final" (9).

trayecto de este siglo, el sanguinario envejecimiento de nuestra causa? Si algo aprendimos en esta era de dictadores y profetas, de carniceros y mesías, es que la verdad no existe: fue aniquilada en medio de promesas y palabras" (12). Revolutions, after all, were based on words and very little actions, fuelled by utopias but not grounded in reality. Whereas Claire thrives on utopias – "Yo soy la desquiciada, la violenta, la rebelde, ¿lo recuerdas? Oigo voces. Siempre me mantengo en pie de guerra. Y nunca transijo. Lo siento, Aníbal: a diferencia de ti, yo no pienso renunciar a la locura. (462) – Quevedo realizes that the revolutionary calls for action were but a farce. He criticizes Claire harshly:

> Me equivoqué doblemente: primero, al creer que era posible armonizar la independencia y el compromiso y, luego, al asumir que antepondrías nuestro pasado común a tus ideales. O quizás sería mejor decir que ambos erramos o nos confundimos en esta época dominada por la falta de certezas. ... Nuestro caso resulta tan trágico e ilusorio, banal y esperpéntico como el propio siglo XX. ... ¿Entonces por qué asumes que eres mejor que yo? Tú me convenciste de sumarme a ese gigantesco espejismo que fue la izquierda revolucionaria y ahora te arrogas una integridad que, siento decirlo, no posees. ¿Qué buscas? ¿Comprobar que soy un traidor o un embustero? ¿Denunciar mis tratos con el poder? ¿Revelar mi debilidad, mi incongruencia, mi avaricia? Tal vez ha llegado el momento de volver a la cordura. ¿Y si en nuestros días fuese imposible luchar sin transigir? ¿No esconderá tu ansia de pureza una ambición aún mayor que la mía? Dime: ¿quién es el mentiroso: yo, eternamente afligido por mis dudas, o tú, que nunca dudaste de tu fe? (12-13)

He paints Claire as a fanatic who never doubted her revolutionary commitment, blinded by faith, and who believes that staying true to her ideals makes her better than Quevedo, who was never able to commit fully to revolution. Claire's *locura*, then, makes her superior to Quevedo, whose newfound *cordura* turns him into a traitor to their cause. Quevedo also admits his own

shortcomings, namely the fact that he believed he could find a middle ground between logic and pragmatism, and revolution. He realizes, albeit a little late, that a compromise is impossible to find in such extreme circumstances, with such extreme interlocutors.

This discourse about *locura* and *cordura* echoes fictional Michel Foucault's words about the role of madness in human life. The character states that it is a role play: "Por el juego del espejo y por el silencio, la locura está llamada sin descanso a juzgarse a sí misma. Además, es juzgada a cada instante desde el exterior; juzgada no por una conciencia moral o científica, sino por una especie de tribunal que constantemente está en audiencia" (143). Claire embodies both *locura* and *tribunal*, a character who can judge others according to her fervour.

The topic of the relationship between intellectual figures and power – or, to be more precise, the criticism of this relationship between intellectuals and power – stands out in Volpi's works, whether in his essays or his novels. In his article "El fin de la conjura," he argues that although the tight-knit relationship between intellectuals and the State goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century, "el poderoso y el intelectual en México siguen unidos por la costumbre y un preocupante desconocimiento mutuo." In Volpi's view, this is a relationship based on a dichotomy:

> Dominado por un impulso irracional, el poderoso escucha las opiniones de los intelectuales con la convicción de que poseen una influencia – una sabiduría – peligrosa. A partir de ahí, no se le ocurre más que clasificarlos en dos categorías: si las ideas que expresa el intelectual en turno son favorables a sus políticas, se trata sin excepción de un *lamesuelas*, una especie de empleado oficioso al cual debe pagar sus servicios por medio de prebendas, honores o dinero (o las tres cosas); si, en cambio, cuestionan, invalidan o de plano se oponen a sus actos, el poderoso no tarda en reconocer en él a un *conjurado*, un

> delincuente en potencia que a "oscuros intereses", al cual debe intimidar, cortejar, perseguir, o, en un caso extremo, eliminar (lo que resulta más barato).

In the article, Volpi explains that there are four generations of intellectuals in Mexico: the so-called "generación del 1915," whose members created the first parties opposed to the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI); the generation of 1929, that includes figures such as Octavio Paz; the "generación de Medio Siglo," defined by the Cuban Revolution (1959) and the Cold War, and that numbers figures such as Gabriel Zaid, and authors such as Elena Poniatowska and Carlos Fuentes; and finally, the generation of 1968, whose most famous members are Enrique Krauze and Héctor Aguilar Camín. Volpi's objective in reexamining the various generations is to propose a new way for twenty-first century intellectuals:

> En primer lugar, habría que reconocer su verdadera dimensión en una sociedad democrática. A partir de ahora los intelectuales ya no debieran ser vistos por el poder como esos admirados enemigos de antes. ... El intelectual, así, debe ser visto como lo que es: un profesional independiente, como cualquier otro, cuya misión es opinar sobre los asuntos de interés público para ayudar a modelar la opinión general sobre temas de importancia.

He also maintains that the role of intellectuals must evolve over time, and that they cannot expect to be recognized by authority figures, which is the mistake Quevedo makes, for he wants to be acknowledged at all costs. Volpi concludes with the idea that "la transparencia debe ser la nota dominante en las relaciones entre el poder y los intelectuales"; such *transparencia* is absent from Quevedo's relationships, who, aware that associating with power is dangerous for one's reputation, does so in a hidden fashion.

El fin de la locura is a global novel about intellectual and philosophical history, and its central figures, of whom Volpi is quite critical. The writer Ignacio Padilla has stated that Volpi's

views were but a roadmap for their own role as Mexican intellectuals in the twentieth century (218-19), which would make the novel about current issues, where the articulation of a global consciousness by intellectual figures ought to transcend borders.

El fin de la locura is also a political novel, a subgenre of the historical novel, by the fact that the issues at hand are eminently political. It raises the idea of the end of the leading role of intellectuals in general, of the end of the Latin American intellectual forged by his European passage, and of the end of revolutionary intellectual ideas. This idea of *the end*, ironically qualified as dementia from the title itself, evokes other discourses about the end of history. Francis Fukuyama, in "The End of History" in 1989, hypothesized that world had reached the end of history. In this article, and then in the book of the same title, the American political scientist formulated the notion that humanity had reached the end of history as understood as a clash between competing ideologies about the economic and political organization of the world.[146] Fukuyama argued that the failure of communism had allowed liberalism to become the universal form, and most importantly, the uncontested form of human organization. Therefore, the end of history had happened with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the symbol of the end of ideology. In *El fin de la locura*, Quevedo also represents the end of the intellectual and the guiding ideas of past decades. The novel is framed in discussions about the end of an era, and proposes to evaluate critically the role of intellectuals, and both Latin American and global intellectual history.

As with other discourses on temporal change, the novel has a personal dimension. This echoes comments made by Noé Jitrik in *Historia e imaginación literaria*, where he argues that the historical novel he calls *cathartic* allows authors to address recent problems in their

[146] Fukuyama claimed that "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (1).

relationship with a past they experienced themselves. These novels tend to seek "una definición de la identidad que, a causa de ciertos acontecimientos políticos, est[á] fuertemente cuestionada" (17). Volpi offers a critical view of intellectuals, of the Mexican and Latin American intellectual history, and ironically advocates in favour of the emancipation from European codes of his own precursors. His view aligns with that of Edward Said, who, in *Representations of the Intellectual*, claimed that "one task of the intellectual is the effort to break down the stereotypes and reductive category that are so limiting to human thought" (xi). Quevedo is a caricature of Latin American intellectuals of the past. His representation serves as a counter-example to what an intellectual in Mexico should be, namely someone who rejects the old conceptualization core/periphery, and can have a true worldly standing. This is how Volpi himself conceptualizes his own role as an intellectual.

According to González Echeverría, "La 'locura' que Volpi exorciza y ayuda a los intelectuales latinoamericanos a exorcizar es la imitación servil del pensamiento y estética europeos" (147). In Volpi's understanding of literature, national traditions are not limits to creation: not his own, not foreign traditions. A well-rounded intellectual should be open to the whole of the world's intellectual tradition, for it can help in shaping one's critical thinking. This is one of Quevedo's mistakes: not only does he assimilate another intellectual model, but he only abides by this one. He dismisses other traditions, which could complement his philosophical positions. Consequently, Quevedo's goals cannot be construed in cosmopolitan terms. From the beginning of his journey to France, Quevedo betrays not only the cosmopolitan impulse, in that he solely focuses on the world, but also the commitment necessary for the articulation of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, he only concentrates on what the world can bring him, and not on what he can bring to the world. Quevedo is not committed to changing the world or tackling universal issues; he merely wants to acquire the philosophical standing necessary to be recognized as a

great intellectual figure. This is contradictory to what Said argues; indeed, "the purpose of intellectual activity is to advance human freedom and knowledge" (17). By replicating French philosophers' works, Quevedo does not advance either human freedom or knowledge: he is not free to think by himself, does not come up with new ideas, and his bringing back French philosophical articulations to Mexico does not free the Mexican people, for they remain subordinated to the metropolis. Moreover, Quevedo's rejection of those closest to him is twofold. First, he rejects the life he had built in Mexico, abandoning his wife and daughter. Even when he returns, he does not seek to rekindle his relationship with them. Second, he dismisses the whole of Mexican culture: intellectually, he does not identify with it, rejecting it as a defining characteristic when in France, and never reclaiming it once back on Mexican soil.

In every aspect of his life, then, he betrays the precepts of both cosmopolitanism and intellectualism. He cannot articulate a true global consciousness, for he denies one aspect of globality – home. This failure in the incarnation of cosmopolitan tenets also highlights his failure as an intellectual. Indeed, in Said's interpretation, the intellectual must be truly universal, and embody "the interaction between universality and the local" (xiii), as well as question all aspects of society. Quevedo does not embody the interaction between universal and local, but the relationship between the periphery and the core, a situation he does not question. He lacks the critical distance and ethical commitment necessary to put his own situation into perspective. Quevedo is blinded by his desire to learn from his masters. Said also states that "the role of intellectuals is supposed to be that of helping a national community feel more a sense of common identity, and a very elevated one at that" (29), another task at which Quevedo does not thrive. Indeed, he only succeeds in uniting people together against him, in their common repudiation of him as a Mexican intellectual.

Often, historical novels fictionalize the past that its authors believe their nation to have overcome, only to criticize it and make it theirs (Pons 62). By placing Latin American history in a global context, the novel *El fin de la locura*, a hybrid novel, shares aspects of the historical novel and the global novel, and is a striking example of a metafictional work that uses literature as weapon to reflect on and criticize the Latin American intellectual past in a global setting. On numerous occasions, Quevedo filters his understanding of global events through a national lens, which is also problematic. He is unable to universalize a Mexican's situation, and to truly commit to global changes. For instance, he fails both as a revolutionary and as an intellectual during the May 1968 protests in France, and cannot conceive of the October 1968 massacre in Mexico City as part of a global event. He does not "tak[e] a risk in order to go beyond the easy certainties provided by [his] background, language, nationality," which shield him "from the reality of others" (Said xiv). Not only does Volpi criticize the *Latin American intellectual* as a global category, he also criticizes the *Mexican intellectual* in relation to both Tlatelolco and the Salinas de Gortari government. Indeed, "in dark times an intellectual is often looked to by members of his ... nationality to represent, speak out for, and testify to the sufferings of that nationality" (43). Quevedo, by not taking a stand – worse, by feeling nothing after the massacre of October 1968 – tacitly sides with the Díaz Ordaz government (1964-70).[147] Later, in 1988-89, by helping the Salinas de Gortari administration, he does not voice the public's concerns about the neo-liberal policies implemented by the government. By not acting, Quevedo becomes an accomplice, who fails in his commitment, both as an intellectual and a cosmopolitan.

[147] Contrary to great intellectual figures, such as Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, and José Revueltas, who openly criticized the government: Fuentes never stopped writing in various *revistas*, both in Mexico and abroad, to denounce the massacre; Paz renounced diplomatic service in solidarity with the protesters; and Revueltas was jailed after being accused of being the brains behind the protest.

Nevertheless, even with novels that engage the Latin America setting obliquely, Volpi still proposes a reflection that is relevant to his continent of birth. As he has said in an interview, "se necesita ser muy poco avezado en prácticas literarias como para no darse cuenta que en cualquier caso, un mexicano escribiendo sobre Alemania o sobre Rusia o lo que sea, incluso no metafóricamente, hay una correspondencia con lo que estás viviendo" (qtd. in Areco 300). This *correspondencia* to which Volpi refers has to do with the events on which his novels concentrate, global events that had an impact on both a global and a national scale. The novel is written from the perspective of rooted cosmopolitanism, and presents models that are problematic and need correcting, precisely for the lack of articulation of an ethical local and global consciousness. Quevedo is anything but an exemplary personification of a rooted cosmopolitan: he does not commit to those close to him, nor to the world. His various travels only serve to enrich him. Lessons drawn from his behaviour can be applied to Mexico, Latin America, or the world – it has global implications about universal commitment. As a global novel, *El fin de la locura* not only articulates both the world and Latin America as its chambers of resonance, but also proposes the articulation of a cosmopolitan consciousness through counter-examples of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

***No será la Tierra* – The Fate of Cosmopolitanism in the Neo-liberal World Order**

Jorge Volpi has said of *No será la Tierra* that it is "the most pessimistic novel [he] has written" (qtd. in Corral et al 103). It is also, incidentally, his most global novel, in terms of territory covered, so far. *No será la Tierra* is a prime example of a global novel, in which events are given more importance than characters. I contend that the novel is about the fanaticism of characters who emerge from a world of extremes, to use Eric Hobsbawm' description of the century, and who, doubtful in a world that they identify correctly as totalitarian, have oscillated to

embrace opposite – yet as extreme – ideologies.[148] My analysis aims to show that *No será la Tierra* is a criticism of nationalism and of the extremes that arise from such a political position, as well as a pessimistic view of cosmopolitanism in contemporary times, in which one relates to people from another continent but forgets one's family. The novel also showcases how globality can be synonymous with uprootedness and disengagement. I concentrate on two characters, Russian Arkadi Granin and American Allison Moore, as well as on their families, to explore the representation of the failures of both the nationalist and the cosmopolitan position, and show that political polarities destroy as much as the nuclear weapons against which these characters fight. While they both try to reconcile their family life with their universal concerns, both fail in their attempts at having a balanced approach in their projects. They feel propelled by their ideals to engage primarily the universal, which leads them to disengagement from the local; they both thus betray the precepts of rooted cosmopolitanism, which reconciles love and responsibilities for one's nation with a universal commitment towards others. In fact, inasmuch as they deny to varying degrees their cultural roots, their cosmopolitan engagements do not promote dialogue among cultures, which is a basic tenet for the articulation of a universal community in my proposed conceptualization. Rooted cosmopolitanism, after all, is universalism plus difference (Appiah, "Cosmopolitan reading" 202). Their disengagement from their own cultural milieu makes their project flawed from the onset.

According to Volpi, the narrative is structured like an opera[149]: a prelude recounts the events of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986 – and sets the tone for a novel about human

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[148] Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Extremes* (1994) focuses on the years 1914-1991, or "the short twentieth century," as the British historian alternatively refers to the period, and highlights the failures of capitalism, socialism, and nationalism.

[149] In an interview entitled "Jorge Volpi: Quiero dedicarme a la música," the author explained that "No será la tierra ... empieza como una ópera, tiene una obertura en donde se presentan los temas que se van a desarrollar, y luego son tres actos. Los personajes se desarrollan de una manera operística" (34). In the same interview, Volpi also describes the novel as a "novela rusa" (34).

hubris and the end of ideologies –, and is then divided into three *actos*: the first act, "Tiempo de guerra (1929-1985)," starts with the 1929 Black Friday and concludes with Ronald Reagan's 1985 Star Wars military project; the second, "Mutaciones (1985-1991)," spans the years leading to the fall of the Soviet Union; and the third, "La esencia de lo humano (1991-2000)," concentrates on the aftermath of the liberalization of markets in Russia. The novel covers, in great details, the global events that shaped the years 1929-2000, on every continent – from the Americas to Oceania to Africa.

The narrative intertwines the lives of eight major characters, as well as that of their respective relatives, reinforcing my reading that the novel is more about global events than it is about characters.[150] The events are recalled by journalist Yuri Mijáilovich Chernishevski from his prison cell after being convicted of murder. Chernishevski is the narrator of what appear to be, at first sight, three disparate subplots, which converge towards the end of the novel. The three main protagonists are "tres mujeres," as is reflected in the title of a subsection of the novel: Jennifer Moore, Irina Gránina and Éva Halász. Their relatives and acquaintances, though less fleshed out, are as, if not more, important in the plot development. Indeed, is is through the interaction of members of their respective families that the three women eventually meet.

Jennifer Moore is the eldest daughter of a member of the US Senate. She is a very sensible and determined person. After graduating college with honours, she sets her mind on becoming one of Canadian-born American economist and diplomat John Kenneth Gilbraith's students, and her unwavering ambition and dedication leads her to success. She eventually secures an important position at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in charge of key

[150] The novel is unique in terms of characters, who are, like in some operas, classified in very strict categories according to occupations ("Los científicos," "Los economistas," "Los ecologistas," "Los poetas"), countries ("En Hungría," "En Afganistán"), cities ("Chernóbil," "San Francisco"), nationalities ("Los soviéticos," "Los estadounidenses"), and the projects to which they belong ("Iniciativa de defensa estratégica," "El genoma") (517-523).

projects. Jennifer is married to Jack Wells, a failed entrepreneur who cheats on her regularly during their marriage. Blinded by capitalism, Wells likes to pursue dangerous trading ventures. Jennifer is unable to have children; she gets to experience motherhood thanks to her younger sister, Allison, the black sheep of the family. Allison resents the fact that their father has always shown a clear preference for Jennifer, and during her teenaged years, Allison does everything in her power to cause trouble. As a young adult, she distances herself from her family, and becomes involved in various anti-globalization movements. Her son Jacob becomes the object of Jennifer's motherly love. Allison meets with the narrator, Chernishevski, during a protest in Seattle.

Irina Gránina is a Soviet scientist who has little interest in human relationships; she, however, has a keen interest in the bacteria she studies in her laboratory. She believes that the whole world can be understood through science, and that it is more stable than human interactions. She does not question the Soviet regime nor does she take an active part in it. Her only desire is to dedicate herself to science. Her life changes when she meets fellow scientist Arkadi Granin; they soon marry and have a daughter, Oksana. Arkadi is the incarnation of the perfect Soviet citizen, until a bacteriological incident, for which he feels responsible, results in him being sent to a gulag. His imprisonment, unsurprisingly, embitters him and makes him disenchanted with communism. When he is freed years later, Oksana does not recognize her father. A troubled child under Irina's care, she becomes an ever more disturbed teenager. She resents her father and the work he does, turning to poetry to exorcise the pain she feels for not having a defined national identity. She expresses her condition eloquently: "Desde hoy me considero apátrida. Nací en una nación muerta, en un territorio que perderá su nombre, en un tiempo vacío que el mundo se obstina en olvidar. Me considero ciudadana de la Nada, ostento un pasaporte de Ninguna parte, tal vez yo ya tampoco existo, soy una ilusión o un error de cálculo,

un daño colateral – así los llaman – una ruina" (Volpi, *No será la Tierra* 362). She even claims to be "un *anacronismo*" (362, italics in the original). She eventually escapes her parents's care and resurfaces in Vladivostok, where she becomes a prostitute, and is killed by a man known as "el coreano," the Korean. Whereas Irina is crushed by the death of her daughter, Arkadi does not feel anything. Out of spite and grief, Irina shares Oksana's writings (diaries and poems) and her life story with Chernishevski.

The last female protagonist is Éva Halász, a gifted scientist. Born in Hungary, she is raised in the United States, where she attends prestigious universities. A depressed figure, she only cares about artificial intelligence; she insists that the reproduction of human intelligence is science's final frontier. Throughout the novel, she repeats that humans are not as evolved as machines, and that feelings are bad. This is exemplified by the fact that Éva has many lovers – Jack Wells, husband of Jennifer Moore, and the narrator Chernishevski, among others – none of whom stay in her life for very long. Like Irina, her sole interest is science. However, whereas Irina works on concrete projects within the borders of her nation, Eva has but one goal in mind, to map the human genome, and her research takes her around the globe. For instance, she spends some years in Berlin, where she witnesses the fall of the Wall. Much like Oksana, Éva does not feel she has a stable national identity – "Éva no poseía un hogar, era húngara y estadounidense y alemana (o más bien berlinesa), y no era nada de eso" (360) – her identity is solely tied to her profession as scientist. Éva represents the most extreme incarnation of globality – neither territory nor human beings are important to her, she only thrives through science. She eventually dies at the hands of the narrator, Chernishevski, which spurs the writing of the novel.

Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities* (1983), describes nationalism as "the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as neurosis in the individual, ... and

largely incurable" (5).[151] This definition is consistent with the vision of the communist bloc put forward by the narrator Chernishevski. He explains that after the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union developed a political program focused on the creation of the *homo sovieticus*, "un nuevo tipo de ser humano, alejado de los yerros, la torpeza, la avaricia, y la mezquindad propia de nuestra especie" (Volpi, *No será la Tierra* 54), and, finally on the spread of nationalism at all costs. Although they were aware of their shortcomings and mistakes, as in the Chernobyl tragedy, a symbol of communist decadence, it was unpatriotic to admit it. Chernishevski goes even further than comparing USSR to a lie: "Chernóbil desveló el secreto: la Unión Soviética era una ficción" (221), an imagined country.

The character of Arkadi Granin fits into this narrative plot created by the state. Granin, a Russian scientist specializing in bacteriological warfare, begins his life as a perfect student, aware of the role he has to play to satisfy both his family's and the State's expectations, conflated in the mind of the character, for the State makes clear that everything must be done for the greater good of the motherland. From an early age, he is also aware that his life is relatively easy when compared to that of the average Soviet, for "a diferencia de la mayor parte de los internos, él se había beneficiado de los privilegios de la élite, había disfrutado de una vida llena de comodidades y ni siquiera había sufrido las penurias del estalinismo" (149). The easy life that he has led, by not being aware of the shortcomings of the USSR, conditions him to believe in the utopian project that is communism/socialism, since he has never seen how terribly it affected large groups of people. Consequently, at 19 years of age, he is quite different from his classmates,

[151] Nationalism is a topic with which the narrator is well acquainted. Before moving to Moscow, he lives in Baku (now the capital of Azerbaijan), where he gets to experience it for himself. In 1988, "el pasado se volvió presente y dio inicio a la guerra" (Volpi, *No será la Tierra* 263). Consequences of *glasnost* and *perestroika* are "la exacerbación de las disputas y rencillas nacionales, aplacadas por la fuerza durante más de siete décadas" (263). People are killed in various skirmishes, which only exacerbates the tensions. In his diary, he notes that "Los fantasmas pretéritos reaparecen, otra vez se instala aquí la muerte, otra vez entramos en la Historia" (265). He speaks of the "virus nacionalista" (266) that has contaminated his wife and his family.

who, for the most part, have more reasonable dreams and expectations. When his best friend asks him why he chose medicine, Arkadi confesses to dreams bigger than himself:

> ¿y por qué no? Ésa no es una respuesta, Arkadi Ivánovitch. Entonces porque sí. *Reductio ad absurdum.* A los 19 años cualquier discusión se volvía trascendental: para salvar a la humanidad, concluyó Arkadi. ... Una frase típica de Arkadi que reflejaba la diferencia entre ambos: él quería estudiar medicina para ayudar a unos pocos individuos de carne y hueso, mientras que Arkadi sólo podía soñar con el género humano. (57)

Arkadi expresses strong cosmopolitan concerns. He wants to *salvar a la humanidad*, a dream that does not seem beyond reach when construed in soviet terms. Indeed, Arkadi is blinded by the State's discourse that posits communism as the best ideological stance. *Salvar a la humanidad* is then twofold: first, it can be accomplished through medicine and the development of strong medical practices and scientific discoveries, which are permitted thanks to the superiority of the USSR, and second, through the spread of communism, once other nations recognize the superiority of the system. Arkadi's interest for a humanity that is not confined to the borders of the Soviet Union seems suspicious to the administration of the Central University of Moscow and to some sections of the Communist Party. It is said that Arkadi "No tiene raíces. Flirtea con el Occidente. Es un traidor." (63) and that "tiene que reparar en sus inclinaciones cosmopolitas" (63) if he wants to thrive in the USSR. For a time, his dream of becoming a doctor is stronger than his humanist ambitions. Although at first the thought of having to distance himself from his best friend, Vsevolod Birsten, when he is accused of being a "perro judío" (62), is unbearable, he eventually does so when he in turn is accused of being a "cosmopolita como Vsevolod: sólo los traidores eran amigos de los traidores" (63). Being cosmopolitan can mean being sent to the gulag, which everyone dreads. Arkadi rationalizes his decision as such: "Si pretendía continuar su ascenso, no le quedaba más que renegar de su amistad" (63); what does it matter if you sacrifice

one person if you are to save millions? Right from the beginning, then, Arkadi's cosmopolitan pretensions are flawed. He refuses to ground them in reality – standing by a friend. He prefers the abstraction of utopia – the possibility to save millions. He denies the importance of those of kith and kind in the name of his cosmopolitan project, which makes it flawed from the outset.

Arkadi lets himself be convinced by the State, "seguro de ser un elegido de los dioses" (68), and as a young adult, is the perfect embodiment of the *homo sovieticus* who thrives within the system. Supported by his wife, Irina, also a scientist, he rises to an important position in a state company and is very successful, until a serious accident occurs with anthrax bacillus, causing the death of a hundred innocent people. This event is the turning point in the evolution of his character. His faith in the party starts to falter, never to return. Indeed, instead of acknowledging the tragic accident, the party finds scapegoats who are later sent to the gulag or before a firing squad. At all times, the narrative set up by the State must hold, and the death of a handful of citizens is no reason to challenge the established order. Arkadi is disgusted by such an attitude, for he became a scientist to save lives, not to see them destroyed by a State in which he believes. He needs that his "trabajo sea útil, salvar vidas, no acabar con ellas" (141). While his wife Irina cannot conceive that the world is different outside the borders of the country, does not believe "en la propaganda oficial que insist[e] en la amistad entre los pueblos" (48) and gladly admits that "el mundo exterior sólo le provo[ca] indiferencia" (48), Arkadi returns to the humanist ambitions of his 19-year-old self and wants to get away from the *nomenklatura*, which creates frictions in the marriage. Irina, without being a fervent communist, does not share the universalist ideals of her husband and only lends importance to applied science, not to human beings. Moreover, she fears, rightfully so, that Arkadi's newfound rebellion will affect those closest to him – his wife and daughter. Once again, Arkadi shows that he thrives in the abstraction but is not grounded in reality, which has dire consequences, both for him and his

family. The party disapproves of the change in Arkadi's political position, and exiles him while also tormenting Irina and Oksana. In jail, Arkadi has all the time that he needs to reflect on communism, and develop pure hatred towards the system he once admired.

When Arkadi returns five years later, he is a changed man. He has become anti-national to the extreme, and has assimilated the universalist doctrine and the cosmopolitan view of the globalization/capitalist discourse. He only thinks "en el modo de salvar a su patria" (239) from communism. *Salvar* is then a leitmotiv in his life, notwithstanding the ideology by which he is blinded. He cannot stand the idea that communism and its misleading ideals are still thriving in the Soviet Union, and is adamant that "él, y sólo él, tenía una misión que cumplir" (239). He feels invested with a mission, and becomes driven by a messianic spirit, the same spirit that made him choose medicine at 19 years of age. He calls for open markets during the period of *perestroika* (restructuring) led by Russian leaders Mikhail Gorbachev and later on with Boris Yeltsin. Irina disapproves of this position, and agrees with many members of their group who "deploraban de su radicalismo" (255). He has gone from the extreme of communism to that of capitalism, each time blindly believing its gospel. Although Irina is glad of the fall of communism, she notes that new dogmas – Western capitalism and the Orthodox Church – appeared, and these are as extreme as the old ones:

> La Unión soviética había sido una pesadilla, una fuente de opresión y de tortura, pero a Irina le resultaba imposible imaginarse en el desierto, no toleraba la ciega voluntad de borrar el pasado que animaba a los reformistas. ... Otorgarle poder a esos ancianos incultos y anacrónicos le parecía un síntoma inequívoco de la demagogia imperante; se llenaba el vacío ideológico dejado por el comunismo con otra fe absurda: antes Lenin, ahora Cristo. (332)

History repeats itself, as one ideology has been replaced by another. Arkadi, meanwhile, calls for the democratization of the country and internalizes Western influence without realizing that he shifts from one extreme to another, from communist nationalism to American capitalism; "se había convertido en un liberal tan autoritario como sus enemigos" (334) and "Su odio al comunismo lo había convertido en un fanático del mercado" (429). He has converted to a new faith, and is aware of major changes in his personality, but does not resent them: "Arkadi Ivánovich no podía ni quería contenerse, ya no podía volver atrás, la revolución de su mente y de su cuerpo era irrefrenable. Sí, ahora era violento; sí, ahora era intransigente; sí, ahora era brutal. Era el precio que había pagado, y no se conformaba con las mijagas de libertad que le concedía Gorbachov, pastor de hombres" (276). The flow of consciousness makes the reader privy to Arkadi's most intimate thoughts. He longs for complete individual liberty, and his disgust for communism makes him profess his faith to a new god, America, which he associates with freedom and democracy. However, he has an idealist view of America. Once there, he cannot believe the capitalism displayed in New York is the right one. He is disappointed with the concrete incarnation of his dream: "El capitalismo no era aquella obscena proliferación de productos, marcos, colores y sabores, sino algo superior, casi metafísico: una forma de vida abstracta, una metáfora de la libertad que apenas se correspondía con su encarnación real" (410). Once again, reality disappoints him, much like the concrete praxis of communism led him to rebel against it. The abstraction about which he dreams is not what he finds in the United States, nor what his business associate Jack Wells is promoting. He associates with Wells, who "había nacido para conquistar el mundo" (80), but who is eventually accused of fraud. Arkadi cannot find the middle ground between these two irreconcilable positions. However, he does not see that this new position is as destructive as the former, for anything seems to be better than communism.

Irina is not surprised by her husband's demise. In fact, the reader is privy to her thoughts, which she shared with the narrator in an interview mentioned in the third part of the novel. Although at first, when Arkadi refuses to keep working for a system that uses scapegoats, Irina "no ponía en duda la repentina toma de conciencia de su marido," she doubts the purity of his intentions: "creía que su frustración profesional también había resultado determinante. Para Arkadi el anonimato era la peor de las condenas" (146). Communism tried to annihilate individual identity; much like the extreme articulation of globality does with local cultures. Irina even believes that somehow being jailed and exiled was his end game, for his only desire was to be "el centro del mundo" (147), which he effectively becomes once the government tries to rid itself of their once best example of *homo sovieticus*.

Like Arkadi, Allison Moore is another major character. She too goes to the extremes of her ideologies, and she also does it for what she deems to be the greater good. She is the black sheep of a prominent American family, grows up in an environment protected by her father's money, and knows only the best society has to offer. Expected to act as a daughter of a good family would (103-4), she rebels during her adolescence, during which "no busc[a] divertirse sino cambiar el mundo" (91), only to become what her family, conservative and republican, hates. She is expelled from her private high school, attends university sporadically, preferring to become involved in the protests against the Vietnam War, and in the Flower Power movement. Allison has a chaotic relationship with her older sister, Jennifer, who is her polar opposite. While Jennifer "odi[a] o más bien despreci[a] a los liberales como su hermana por su doble moral" (173), Allison cannot stand her sister talking about her "irritante[s] experiencia[s] [por el mundo] trufada[s] con estereotipos y quejas" (232), and seeing the IMF, for which Jennifer works, as the only way to save the Third World. Allison believes that Western organizations are but meddlers that try to impose a way of life instead of trying to understand the cultural framework of the

countries they arguably fail to help. She is angered when Jennifer claims that "el único modo de ayudar a 'esa gente' (la del Tercer Mundo, por supuesto) era obligándola a acatar las disposiciones del Fondo" (232), and swears that her sister is wrong, for she embodies – through the IMF – the very neo-liberal policies against which she fights. Jennifer has the very same opinion of her sister as Allison has of her. Jennifer sees Allison as an idealist with no understanding – on a socio-political level – of the countries she wants to help. Jennifer is irritated by the fact that the groups to which Allison belongs present themselves as "defensores de los débiles y los desheredados," but who are "incapaces de buscar soluciones reales a sus problemas. Ella, republicana orgullosa – *conservadora compasiva*, se definía – no se creía mejor que nadie, no pensaba en guiar a los pobres, los enfermos o los lisiados, pero hacía más por ellos que todos esos progresistas de salón..." (173, italics in the original). Ironically, the two sisters have the same objective – to improve the living conditions of the less fortunate, albeit through different means.

Allison's humanitarian concerns begin early on, and never waver: she is "decidida a consagrarse a lo único que le importaba: los otros" (200). She even puts her own needs – for love, stability and security – behind that of the rest of the world. However, like Arkadi Granin, she cannot reconcile her universalist concerns with her own family, which eventually disintegrates. While her sister Jennifer travels a lot for work, Allison gets involved with different organizations and lives all over the planet: San Francisco, Auckland, Palestine. Although both are committed to helping their fellow human beings, they could not do it in more different ways. Jennifer wants to help the developing countries – Zaire, Mexico, Russia – to improve their economies, but she

comes with an American imperialistic mentality.[152] Instead of trying to understand the rules governing the system of another country, she just imposes hers. She travels to Africa, the "corazón de las tinieblas" (157), a continent where "se concentran todas las taras de la colonización y barbarie" (162) to "civilizar a esos salvajes" (156). She is so extreme in her approach that she drives her team of analysts, and herself, to the verge of exhaustion. She considers it her duty to help them surmount the economic slump in which they live, and experiences the IMF failures to redress their economy as personal failures. Like her sister, she is a utopian, in that she really believes she can have an impact wherever she goes. She sees herself as "la punta de lanza de ese cambio" (161), and sincerely embodies the ideals of the IMF and the powers the institution grants her. Like Arkadi, she is also extremely self-centred and wants to be acknowledged for the work she does:

> Ella podría bien estar en América, paseando por Central Park o comprando vestidos de piel en Saks, alimentando su colección de joyas y abrigos de piel, despreocupada de la misera, y en cambio prefería el calor, la inseguridad y los mosquitos de Kinshasa, con el único objetivo de ayudar a sus roñosos habitantes. Lo menos que esperaba de ellos era que se mostrasen comprensivos con sus cambios de humor. (164)

She feels "the white man's burden," and has a dire need to be acknowledged for her efforts, be they in helping foreign countries or trying to have a functional life back in the United States.

Allison, however, cannot divide her attention as well as her sister does. Idealistic, she gives herself body and soul to a cause, whether it is with Greenpeace or Earth First, and she is not sure how to reconcile her universal concerns with their family life. During her period with Earth First, with whom she feels she has finally "encontrado su lugar" (242) after years of soul

[152] Mexico is not very present in the novel. Jennifers travels to Mexico City with the IMF in 1986. She claims it is not Zaire, "pero se le parecía" (221), and that is "un país tan hospitalario como opaco" (212). The Mexican public servants she meets are not very helpful, nor dedicated to redressing the economic situation of the country.

searching, she falls in love with a fellow protester, Zak, whom she calls her "pequeño paraíso" (273). Zak turns out to be an undercover FBI agent, sent to thwart the organization's plans. On May 31, 1989, members of Allison's cell are arrested and jailed. She later realizes that she is pregnant with Zak's child (294), something that Jennifer takes as a personal affront (296). Much like Irina, who sees Arkadi's need to be the centre of the world as egotism, Jennifer hurls abuse at her sister, and calls her decision to keep the child "a puro gesto de egoísmo" (297), for she doubts Allison will set aside her various projects to raise a child. Unsurprisingly, Allison eventually has Jennifer take care of her son, Jacob, while trying to save the lives of other children in Palestine, something Jennifer resents deeply. During one of their numerous fights, Jennifer tells Allison that she should rather "Deja[r] de salvar al mundo y ocupa[rs]e de la única persona que de verdad te necesita" (341); her son, something she never does. Allison knows that Jennifer is better at raising Jacob than she would be.

Allison dies defending others, without worrying much about her own life (508). Ironically, while Allison has a truly universalist premise to help others, as opposed to the Eurocentric perspective of her sister, Jennifer is the one having relative success balancing her commitment to all aspects of her life. However, at the end of her life, Allison has partially come to terms with her role in the world, and is aware that she can only do so much:

> Allison tomó al pequeño en sus brazos y lo cubrió de besos. ¿Qué importaba lo que sucediese con el resto de la humanidad? Ella sola jamás lograría eliminar la brecha entre ricos y pobres, entre poderosos y desheredados, pero al menos podía ocuparse de que cinco o diez personas, acaso veinte o treinta, tomasen conciencia de su situación y aprendiesen a sobrevivir por sí mismas. (447)

She reframes her commitment to others, and her universalist pretensions. It is still global, in the sense that she is far from home, but she narrows down her field of action. She has, in Said's

words, "creat[ed] an environment in which [she] feel[s] that [she] belong[s]" (*The World, The Text, and The Critic* 14), having replaced filiation, the natural bonds of family, with affiliation, the bonds of "culture and society" (20). She has made the "transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation" – her strained relationship with her father, and her confrontational rapport with Jennifer – to what the scholar calls a "compensatory order ... that provides men and women with a new form of relationship", namely affiliation (19). Although she dies and cannot expand on that understanding of her place in the world, she has acknowledged that she could only act on a smaller scale. Ironically, even if she dies, she is the character who finds the greatest closure.

No será la Tierra is fundamentally a novel about death, strictly and metaphorically speaking. First, in the narrative world, the narrator is writing the novel as he sits in jail after his conviction for the murder of Éva Halász. Second, the death of a loved one is the starting point and the ending of every subplot. At the beginning of the novel, Jennifer learns of Allison's death, Irina of Oksana's, and Eva's death prompts the very writing of the novel. At the end of the novel, Jennifer must tell Jacob that his mother passed away – Jennifer comments that Jacob "está a punto de perder la inocencia" (508) – and Irina and Arkadi struggle to come to terms with their daughter's death, which marks the metaphoric death of their marriage. Third, the novel is about human hubris, and if not its death, at least its consequences. The novel begins with the Chernobyl tragedy, the beginning of the end for the USSR, and ends on the eve of the new millenium, as it is apparent that Russia has failed in its attempts at liberalization. The novel also emphasizes quite eloquently how the capitalist system is broken, through the character of Wells, his association with Granin, and Oksana's exploitation and murder in Vladivostok.

Like *El fin de la locura*, the novel is a work of metafiction, although it must be noted, less ironic and parodic in tone. First, the narrator, Chernishevski, acts as the editor of the novel, a key figure for this type of fiction. Second, this narrator is reminiscent of Volpi himself. Indeed, the

journalist has become famous for his novel *En busca de Kaminski*, a political thriller set in the USSR. Chernishevski explained that he enjoyed the writing of this novel very much: "Al principio se trató de un entretenimiento o un juego para olvidar las horas; luego la tarea se volvió tan absorbente que los días se desvanecían mientras trazaba la historia de Jodorkovski que era también la historia del final de la Unión Soviética y la historia del triunfo del capitalismo en Rusia" (434), much like Volpi's *En busca de Klingsor* recounts the end of Nazi Germany, and *No será la Tierra* the end of communism and the – mostly failed – implementation of capitalism in Russia. *En busca de Kaminski* is then a fictional work reminiscent of two of Volpi's novels. Chernishevski also recalls how his "vida se paralizó" (436) after the publication of the novel: "Durante meses mi existencia se redujo a hablar una y mil veces, en distintas ciudades y lenguas – a veces era incapaz de reconocerlas –, del infame Vladímir Kaminski, quien no sólo terminó por carcomer o suplantar a Jodorkovski, sino a mí mismo" (436), much like that of Volpi after the publication of *En busca de Klingsor*, and the polemics that followed. Third, the title of the novel, *No será la Tierra*, is the title of a collection of poems by Oksana. Irina, her mother, discovers the poems after having buried her daughter. Having read them, she shares them with Chernishevski, who then uses the same title for the novel he writes about the events (500, 506). Finally, the narrator uses a variety of apocryphal texts, such as newspapers articles, briefing notes, conversations he had with various characters, and the previously mentioned collections of poems. The novel also has some caracteristics of the new historical novel: real-life figures, such as American president Bill Clinton and USSR leader Joseph Stalin, are turned into characters – though never given a central role; history is circular and repeats itself through various cycles.

No será la Tierra is also universal in scope, although it must be said that some countries and continents only play a minor role in the narrative – which I contend is essentially a comment about globality itself; by covering too much ground, one eventually loses oneself. Jennifer

Moore, for instance, travels to Zaire, Mexico and Russia for the IMF, but never develops a sense of belonging to these countries. By opposition, her sister Allison travels to New Zealand and Palestine, and develops a sense of belonging abroad she never feels at home in the United States. Even if these countries play what appears to be, at first sight, a lesser role – in terms of the space dedicated to the events which take place there, or the time spent by the character in these countries – they are the most important in the development of her global awareness. For instance, the explosion of the Rainbow Warrior in the port of Auckland, and the subsequent death of a colleague, is what cements her revolutionary beliefs, and her time spent in Palestine helping children makes her come to terms with the failure of her universalist dream.

My analysis aimed to show that the novel is about the embrace of opposite – yet equally extreme – ideologies. Through its plotting of characters that fail at reconciling their commitment to their family and the world, *No será la Tierra* is about ideological extremes; neither nationalism nor cosmopolitanism fulfils universal human needs, for they are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Whereas Allison is eventually able to reframe her commitment to others, albeit in global terms that still disaffect those closest to her, Arkadi ultimately alienates everyone in his life. Although he tries to reconcile the plight of those closest to him – family, friends and colleagues – he ends up dedicating all his efforts to humanity. These characters, who embody ideas and intellectual positions, are not rooted cosmopolitans: their universal concerns and attempts at tackling the world's problems are thwarted by their betrayal of the local aspects of their lives. Only Jennifer, through a critical perspective close to rooted cosmopolitanism, partially succeeds.

Conclusion

My investigation of *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra* has been predicated on the following propositions: they are global novels that plot cosmopolitanism proper, and advocate for what I have defined as rooted cosmopolitanism; yet, they do not shy away from arguing in favour

of this position by using counter-examples, which highlight the difficulties of espousing such a position. Indeed, neither Quevedo nor Claire, neither Allison nor Arkadi are rooted cosmopolitans, and not one of them finds full redemption.

Quevedo rejects his Mexican roots to adopt a European intellectual identity that he later brings back to Mexico; he becomes rooted in his milieu – claiming a Mexicanness he rejected some years before – while also remaining foreign to it. Claire's only interests are revolutionary movements, be they in France – her country of origins – or abroad; their physical location matters little, only the praxis of revolution. She is blinded by her belief in the revolutionary gospel and refuses to admit that as the Berlin Wall is falling, so are the revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Neither Quevedo nor Claire is a rooted cosmopolitan; their ideology, be it psychoanalysis or revolution, makes them impervious to a balanced commitment to their immediate surroundings and the world.

Allison is eventually able to come to terms with the fact that her universalist pretensions are setting her up for failure, and reconceptualizes her role in the world; she nevertheless abandons those closest to her, who were never part of her cosmopolitan ideals from the start. Like Claire, the only thing that matters is that some sort of greater good be achieved outside of her national territory. Allison closely compares to Quevedo, for both, towards the end of their lives, grasp and acknowledge some of their shortcomings. However, Allison is allowed a partial atonement by the narrative voice, for she realizes, to a certain extent, the error of her ways. She is judged harshly for abandoning her son, but given credit for being able to reconceptualize her universal concerns on a smaller scale. Contrary to Quevedo, she is not the object of ridicule.

Arkadi dreams of the world, but constantly abandons his friends, family, and colleagues. He too is blinded by his faith in ideology. Arkadi resembles Claire in terms of ideological extremes, but unlike Claire, whose faith never wavers, he moves from communism to capitalism.

Claire and Arkadi remain on the extremes of the ideological spectrum, but Arkadi moves from one extreme to another when he loses faith in the USSR. Arkadi also compares to Quevedo, for they both feel they have a mission to save their country, and to Allison, for they each had a sheltered childhood that allows them to develop universalist ideals.

Only Jennifer Moore can be seen as embodying rooted cosmopolitanism, with some difficulty. Contrary to Allison, who has no roots, Jennifer always returns to her husband in the United States and tries to make her marriage function. Appearances must be maintained, at all cost. Although she does not succeed in every project – her attempts to fix Third World economies are failures, and she has a hard time maintaing close-knit work relationships and friendships – Jennifer is the closest example to a rooted cosmopolitan in the novel. She tries her best in everything she attempts, be it helping the less fortunate or taking care of Allison's son. Her self-centredness and her striking US-centred perspective are two aspects that keep her from fully embodying the ethos of rooted cosmopolitanism.

The global novels studied in this chapter are two of the most explicit articulations of both cosmopolitanism and globality in Volpi's production, for they represent characters compelled to address the world's concerns. Indeed, all characters studied actively take part in trying to change the world. Quevedo and Claire participate in various revolutionary movements that aim at undoing – real or perceived – authoritarianism, both at home and abroad, and try to give a voice to subalterns, be they workers and students during the May 1968 protests, or indigenous populations through Subcomandante Marcos in the Lancadon Jungle. Allison Moore tries to undo the legacy of colonialism and neo-liberalism, and the politics and policies of both ideologies, both at home and abroad; her travels to Palestine and her participation in the 1999 Seattle World Trade Organization Protests are but two examples of her dedication to improving the world. Arkadi Granin fights against communism, turning to capitalism as a way to cure the evils that he

sees as the downfall of the USSR. Jennifer Moore tries her best to tackle the world's problems – the fact that she does it in a problematic manner, and tries to impose a Western vision of the economy on Third World countries, does not take anything away from the fact that she acts. Even Irina Gránina, through her interviews with the narrator, and her handing in of the various writings that are the basis for the novel, can be seen as tackling the world's problems: she wants the story of her family, and Arkadi's ideological conversion, to be exposed, so that the world can learn about not only their shortcomings, but also the State's. She wants to ensure that the same mistakes will not be made again and history, not repeat itself. Even if all characters fail in their Sisyphean task of changing the world order, they do attempt to confront its ills, and thus embody a universal impulse, which the novels critically dissect and condemn for its shortcomings.

As I have demonstrated, Volpi's novels are framed in historicity and pedagogical in nature. The extensive investigation the author undertakes before writing each of his novels indicates a detail-oriented author who seeks to reproduce the historical context of the characters in the most accurate way possible (Lukács), and his protagonists are historical characters who discuss philosophical ideas (Menton). Volpi's novels are global novels, but they could also be read as novelized essays, which is a departure both from Lukács and Menton.[153] According to Chávez Castañeda and Santajuliana in their "Diccionario Volpi," for the Mexican author "la literatura no se cierra en un fin en sí mismo. Narrar le supone un medio de conocimiento ... y esta exploración del mundo siempre queda 'grabada' con mayor o menor sutileza en sus libros, convirtiéndoles en un híbrido entre la novela y el ensayo" (93). These novels "con una pesada carga documental ... viene[n] a ser una enciclopedia de sus pasiones intelectuales" (93). These intellectual passions are respectively, in *El fin de la locura,* French philosophical and political

[153] Rafael Lemus commented as follows about *No será la Tierra*: "el reseñista intenta comprender: ¿por qué esta novela? Porque Volpi cree, acaso válidamente, que la novela es, ante todo, un instrumento al servicio de la inteligencia."

thought, and, in *No será la Tierra,* economics, politics, and science. This hybridity of genre is a departure from the Latin American historical novel, the main characteristics of which are "the cyclical nature of history", "The conscious distortion of history," and "The utilization of famous historical characters as protagonists" (Menton 22-23) Both novels fall well into these characteristics, and Volpi rearticulates them in an ironic manner. History is not only cyclical: the circularity of History allows for the realization that failure is the only logical ending. *El fin de la locura*'s Quevedo participates in various revolutionary movements, only to die when he becomes aware that revolutions are doomed. Moreover, a disilusionned Quevedo comments on the character *esperpéntico* of both his life and the twentieth century. History repeats itself: Quevedo courts Claire and is rejected time and again, until he commits suicide – which could arguably be seen as his biggest failure, and revolutionary movements arise one after the other, in various regions of the world, but consistently fail in living up to their "promesas y palabras" (Volpi, *El fin de la locura* 9). *No será la Tierra*'s Allison Moore is part of various failed social movements, but she keeps trying to bring social change to the less fortunate parts of the world; she dies doing so. Arkadi Granin fights communism, seeing it as the terrible ideology that destroyed his career as a scientist, but fails to see that his blind faith in capitalism destroys his marriage and causes his daughter's death. Through the character of Irina, it is also suggested that capitalism in Russia is a failure, and although it is not explicit, one can see beneath Irina's concerns that she fears that a different type of authoritarianism is looming.

In both novels, history is distorted so as to give more importance to events than to characters. Moreover, the historical characters that are fictionalized in both novels are but empty shells, and eventually become the object of ridicule. They do not take an active role in the narrative, they are but a pretext for the protagonists to face the embodiement of their (bygone) ideals. Quevedo meets with Castro and Allende; both figures and their devotion to their

respective ideology are ridiculed. The same happens in *No será la Tierra*, where Soviet leaders are portrayed at their weakest: Stalin, a shadow of his former self, is about to die, and cannot be associated with the idea of power anymore; and Gorbatchev is mocked for his idealism and incapacity to deliver on his promises to make Russia a better place through *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness).

The two novels, although close to the new historical novel, are a rearticulation of the canonical genre. Both the traditional historical novel, as theorized by Lukács, and the new historical novel, as theorized by Menton, focus on the history of great events. However, as María Cristina Pons notes, "la reciente producción de novelas históricas se caracteriza por la relectura crítica y desmitificadora del pasado" (16) which "marca un cambio radical en el género" (15) since "la novela histórica contemporánea tiende a presentar el lado antiheroico o antiépico de la Historia; muchas veces el pasado histórico que recuperan no es el pasado de los tiempos gloriosos ni de los ganadores de puja histórica, sino el pasado de las derrotas y fracasos" (17). Both *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra* are about failures: the failure of revolutionary movements, and the failure of both communism and social movements in the face of neo-liberalism. Quevedo fails in his pragmatic approach to his role as an intellectual who aims at giving advice to heads of State; Claire – although she never admits it – fails to reap the fruits of her revolutionary labour; Allison fails to be balanced in her approach to cosmopolitan concerns; Jennifer fails to save her sister from herself; Arkadi fails to save his country, replacing one dogma for another; and both Irina and Arkadi fail as parents.

Furthermore, literary form reflects the political vision of the novels in the choice of narrators and implicit authors. Failure is also suggested by the personality of the very narrators, who are problematic narrative voices. *El fin de la locura*'s Aníbal Quevedo is an amnesic liar; and *No será la Tierra*'s Yuri Mijáilovich Chernishevski is writing the novel from his prison cell,

having previously been convicted of murder. Also, the erasure of the identity of the editor of both novels, which is only revealed late in the narrative, is symptomatic of the erasure of identity in an ever more globalized world. In *El fin de la locura*, ideas are more important than people; the characters are puppets to ideas, which is a metaphor for the pervasiveness of ideologies. In *No será la Tierra*, events are more important than people as well; the characters are puppets to global events. Both novels are about ideological extremes; neither nationalism nor cosmopolitanism fulfills universal human needs, only rooted cosmopolitanism – as partially embodied by Jennifer – can. In the end, all the characters fail in their endeavours because they believe in utopias without grounding them in reality, or put differently, their universal impulse divorces them from engagement with those of kith and kind.

Both *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra*, albeit indirectly and in a global manner, engage the Latin American context. To this effect, Palou claimed that

> La mayor parte de las novelas escritas por los firmantes de aquel manifiesto transcurren en México, si bien en todas ellas y para todas ellas hemos reivindicado nuestro derecho a situar nuestras historias en el lugar del mundo o del inframundo donde mejor podamos expresar ese relato concreto, siempre, eso sí, en esa patria nuestra que desde siempre ha sido la lengua española. ("Postmanifiesto del *Crack*" 17)

This is a comment about the place Latin America now occupies on the world stage, and it reflects Volpi's conceptualization of his role as a cosmopolitan Mexican writer and public intellectual, as well as his understanding of Latin America's reality as globalized and decentralized. Both novels are also a comment on Mexico at the turn of the twentieth century, and the role of globalization, understood as a deterritorialized tackling of both national and wordly concerns, which has to this point been a failure. Mexico, part of the concert of nations, does not escape this state of affairs.

In the short essay "Yo soy una novela," Volpi expounds on his vision of literature, which I contend is articulated in cosmopolitan terms – even if the word itself is never mentioned. First, "Los humanos somos rehenes de la ficción," for it is a human characteristic to produce it, a part of being human, which gives it a universal character. Second, even if narratives, by definition, lie, "las vivimos con la misma pasión con la cual nos enfrentamos a lo real. Porque esas mentiras también pertenecen al dominio de lo real." It is then logical that

> la ficción cumple una tarea indispensable para nuestra supervivencia: no sólo nos ayuda a predecir nuestras reacciones en situaciones hipotéticas, sino que nos obliga a representarlas en nuestra mente – a repetirlas y reconstruirlas – y, a partir de allí, a entrever qué sentiríamos si las experimentáramos de verdad. Una vez hecho esto, no tardamos en reconocernos en los demás, porque en alguna medida en ese momento ya somos los demás.

He emphazises that fiction makes human beings *reconocerse en los demás*, which is the very basis of the cosmopolitan reading that I have grounded on Appiah's philosophy. Not only does the reader sees himself *en los demás*, he or she becomes *los demás* – acquiring a sense of universality that only narrative allows. Through synecdoche, human beings are able to universalize their fellow human beings's experience. Fiction helps us to "ensanchar nuestra idea de lo humano. Con ella no sólo conocemos otras voces y otras experiencias, sino que las sentimos tan vivas como si nos pertenecieran." Fictions make one experience the lives of others, but more importantly, develop new values: "Vivir otras vidas no es sólo un juego ... sino una conducta provista con sólidas ganancias evolutivas, capaz de transportar, de una mente a otra, ideas que acentúan la interacción social. La empatía. La solidaridad." Narratives allow for the possibility of becoming better human beings, for they force readers to feel and develop emotions that, I posit in this case, are the very basis of cosmopolitan engagement: empathy and solidarity.

Novels, then, as in the case of the works studied in this chapter, in providing readers with the opportunity both to develop new values and recognize the dangers of ideologies, also serve a social function: "Una novela ... me transmite información social relevante – la literatura es una porción esencial de nuestra memoria compartida. Y se convierte, por tanto, en uno de los medios más contundentes para asentar nuestra idea de humanidad." Narratives, through their universality, also erase identity markers: "Frente a las diferencias que nos separan – del color de la piel al lugar de nacimiento, obsesiones equivalentemente perniciosas –, la literatura siempre anunció una verdad que hace apenas unos años corroboró la secuenciación del genoma humano: todos somos básicamente idénticos. Al menos en teoría, cualquiera podría ponerse en el sitio de cualquiera." Literature is not bound either by nationality or nationalism, which are *obsesiones perniciosas*, for they distort the very idea of literature as universal. If literature is about seeing ourselves in other peoples' lives and experiences so as to universalize their situation, it appears logical that Volpi shies away from dwelling exclusively on national settings and problems, to engage issues and settings in universal terms. In the "Post-*Crack* Manifesto," the authors argue that there is "Nada más pernicioso que el nacionalismo – un adjetivo europeo, por cierto – para la novela. El nacionalismo es una mentira y la novela odia, aborrece la mentira. La novela entraña una búsqueda de la verdad literaria. Dentro de sus páginas, todo lo que ocurre es absolutamente verdadero. El *Crack* es una novela sin adjetivos y sin nación" (18). This affirmation reinforces my contention that the novels are about a universalizing position.

In conclusion, I have shown that Volpi's novels posit rooted cosmopolitanism as the most adequate way through which to engage humanity and tackle the world's issues, and that it is reflected precisely in the fact that his narrative worlds dissect the difficulties of this position. His rearticulation of the historical novel allows him to discuss cosmopolitanism, ideologies, intellectual and political engagement, globalization and its shortcomings. Under the guise of

historical metafiction, the readers can learn from the characters's behaviours, for they are harshly criticized and presented as counter examples to a rooted cosmopolitan ethos for the global era. Ultimately, both *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra*, through their complex articulation of globality, are global novels that, in line with the prerogatives of this literary genre, articulate a global consciousness.

Conclusion

This investigation examined the place of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literature, as well as writers' efforts to represent ever-changing cultural and political conditions in the period encompassing the hegemony of the nation-state to its diminishing role in the global era. The novels I studied closely mirror the opening of Spanish America towards cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century, and exemplify the conceptual shift that took place in Spanish American literature, from aesthetic cosmopolitanism and the rejection of political cosmopolitanism in favour of other concepts, to its acceptance, affirmation, and promotion in the global era. Previous studies, which focused on earlier periods of Spanish American literary production, concluded that cosmopolitanism had always been a part of the continent's artistic production, and that it was, on the one hand, the object of much critical debate that always led to its displacement, and, on the other, the expression of a "deseo de mundo". Rosenberg held that cosmopolitanism had always been a lingering presence across the continent, yet replaced by various concepts – *antropofagia*, *mestizaje*, and *transculturación* – in Latin American discourses, for they were better suited to assess and promote cultural and political identities in the context of nation-building. Siskind, for his part, argued that cosmopolitan authors had a "deseo de mundo," a desire to integrate the Western world, and that cosmopolitanism – especially aesthetic cosmopolitanism – was a strategy for them to do so. I have established the existence of a shift, a transformation in the literary treatment of cosmopolitanism from its displacement to a new articulation; and from the "deseo de mundo," expressed in aesthetic terms, to engagement with the world through rooted cosmopolitanism. I have explained this radical change with current articulations of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, while traditional conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism usually pitted it against nationalism – its supposed ideological counterpart –, I have argued for the

deconstruction of this dichotomy, and advocated for an understanding of the concept that reconciles the opposite ends of the spectrum in a transcending cosmopolitan ethos.

The study of five novels published between 1988 and 2010, namely Elena Poniatowska's *La "Flor de Lis"* (1988), Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) and *El sueño del celta* (2010), and Jorge Volpi's *El fin de la locura* (2003) and *No será la Tierra* (2006), has enabled me to show that the representation of cosmopolitanism is intimately tied to the intricate and ever-evolving circumstances that bind the nation to the world, local politics and geopolitics. Indeed, my analysis reveals that discourses of and about cosmopolitanism serve as a counterpoint to political discourses understood as opposite at different historical moments: in Poniatowska, Eurocentric cosmopolitanism is pitted against nationalism, and both are rejected in favour of a middle ground found in the transcultural identity of Mexico; in Vargas Llosa and Volpi, cosmopolitanism is not only pitted against nationalism, but it also serves as a counterpoint to globalization and neo-liberalism, respectively. Whereas Poniatowska's novel is a celebration of transculturation, Vargas Llosa's and Volpi's novels propose rooted cosmopolitanism as the best way to espouse cosmopolitan ideals contemporarily, thus participating in the undoing of the traditional dichotomy that pitted the nation against the world. Analyzing these novels allowed me to identify a shift in the treatment of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literature: from the rejection of cosmopolitanism, understood as intertwined with an imperialist worldview in Poniatowska, to its acceptance and promotion, understood as a philosophy reconcilable with an individual's national identity in Vargas Llosa and Volpi. This shift is explicitly political.

In Chapter 1, I developed a methodological framework that I called cosmopolitan reading. This approach was predicated on an exploration of the ways the novels plot human experience across cultures, and on an evaluation of the specific Latin American cultural and historical concerns in which these texts are grounded. My cosmopolitan reading was also premised on the

universality of narrative. Indeed, of all literary genres, the novel is the genre most aptly suited for a cosmopolitan reading, for its complex worlds serve to reveal our common humanity across space and time. As readers, we can associate with characters, and develop empathy and solidarity with them. As the reader in charge of concretely turning narratives into spaces of universality, I read at a smaller scale, with the intent of illuminating the texts' political intention in a different way. I detected what I called the plotting of cosmopolitanism in the novels; identifying travel, residence in multiple localities, and the experience of global events pointed to the articulation of a cosmopolitan proposition at work in the texts. The very act of travelling, of moving across spaces and cultures, creates a textual field so potent that a cosmopolitan reading becomes inevitable. The five novels studied plot travel as the impulse that brings the characters to adopt a different perspective, which leads them to committing to their localities and the world, a departure from the previous Latin American production, where cosmopolitanism was mostly an aesthetic proposition. Indeed, in Chapter 2 my examination of literary history brought me to conclude that whereas the novels produced during *Modernismo*, the *Vanguardias*, and the *Boom* were in search of a universal language and sought to integrate the Western canon – they had a "deseo de mundo" –, the novels that form my corpus have overcome this desire, and plot cosmopolitanism proper, an impulse that, in my view, reveals a feeling of integration as well as engagement with the world. Such a shift, then, is not only aesthetic but also explicitly political, and reflects the increased globalization and porousness of nation-states' borders since the 1970s.

It is her travel from France to Mexico that leads Mariana, the protagonist of *La "Flor de Lis,"* to cleave a path between different perspectives embodied by the adults in her life in her attempts to define her identity and her place in the world. This first displacement is physical and concrete; she moves from one country to another, and has no say in it. The second displacement she experiences is internal; within the borders of Mexico, she moves from her European-centred

house to spaces where popular culture, identified with indigenous people and miscegenated groups, thrives, such as the Zócalo, the Metropolitan Cathedral, and the *tamaleria* "Flor de lis". Only when she has moved from one space to the other is she able to reconfigure her identity as a middle ground between the two apparent ends of the spectrum. She is not European as her mother would want her to be, nor is she indigenous like Magda; she is Mexican. Reading at a smaller scale allowed for the detection of the newly found Mexicanness of the character, through the depiction of the *tamaleria* "Flor de Lis," and her acceptance of the *tamal* as a defining symbol of her newfound identity. The end of the novel implies that the young Mariana decides to stay in Mexico, and to become a writer, thus engaging artistically, and to a degree politically as well, in her locality. Although Mariana does not experience the global event that was the Mexican Revolution, she does experience its long aftermath, and the ensuing redefinition of the country in cultural and political terms, which is exactly what shapes her identity as a transcultural Mexican.

El Paraíso en la otra esquina's female protagonist Flora Tristán also experiences different types of displacements and travels during her life. When her father dies, she and her mother are expelled from the Paradise that is a life of plenty. She moves from luxury to poverty; then, her marriage to André Chazal does not improve her situation. During her short union with him, not only does she remain poor, but she is also intellectually and physically undermined, which brings about the second major experience of travel in her life. She travels to Peru, in the hope of improving her financial situation; she is rebuffed by her family, but gains a lot in terms of intellectual development. She discovers cosmopolitanism in Spanish America, which strengthens her will to fight for women and the poor. Travels to England and across France cement her commitment to the oppressed. The fact that she stays in Peru and England for extended periods allows her not only to be exposed to the cultural and social diversity of the

countries, but also to experience the precarious social conditions, which sow the seeds of the utopian projects that she proposes to first implement in France, the setting she knows best.

Paul Gauguin, Tristán's narrative counterpoint, also experiences multiple displacements, but his path is the reverse of that of his grandmother. The Paradise out of which he is expelled is Peru. This travel from Peru to France is but the first step in developing his deep dissatisfaction in life. His extensive travel in France allows him to develop his artistic abilities, which further fuels his desire to travel. Contrary to his grandmother, for whom travel translates into an acute awareness of the responsibilities she has towards all human beings, for Gauguin it becomes a means to fulfil his artistic potential, but escape his responsibilities; yet every new locality he encounters disappoints him. His move to French Polynesia is the last step in his development. Ironically, once in Polynesia, he adopts a nationalist Eurocentric perspective; he progressively abandons his artistic project, and becomes politically engaged in his new locality – although regrettably in a despicable manner. Travel and residence abroad do not trigger a broadening of horizons, nor a full commitment to all human beings.

In *El sueño del celta*, travel is the leitmotiv of the protagonist Roger Casement, whose trajectory is also defined by displacements. When his parents die, he must live with his aunt and uncle, where he is further exposed to travel and how it can enrich one's perspective. His readings of travellers' diaries feed his imagination, and as a young adult he travels to Africa. These trips, and eventually living abroad for extended periods of time, are first a way to discover the world. However, they soon turn into a means of discovering his true identity: much like Mariana in *La "Flor de Lis,"* he discovers himself as an other. Casement's otherness is threefold: first, he discovers himself as a homosexual, an identity that is hardly reconcilable with what is considered proper at the turn of the twentieth century in the United Kingdom, especially in an envoy from the Foreign Office who is eventually knighted; second, he discovers himself as an advocate for

human rights in the Belgian Congo and in the Putumayo region, which highlights his otherness when compared to the ethos of the era in which he lives; and third, he discovers himself as an Irishman, an identity he ultimately deems incompatible with his former British identity. Travels and residence in Africa and Latin America are, then, the impulse of every major discovery in Casement's life, and define his life-long cosmopolitan convictions and also his brief and tragic incursion into Irish nationalism.

In *El fin de la locura*, travel is also of the utmost importance in Aníbal Quevedo's life. Indeed, much like Gauguin journeys to Polynesia, Quevedo travels to France to escape his responsibilities. His stay in France leads him to great intellectual discoveries, which he later brings back with him to Mexico. However, this return trip is only physical, for he keeps evolving in a European mindset once there. Claire, for her part, only travels to spread her revolutionary ideals, and does not pay much attention to the countries she visits; they are one and the same in her mind, only their revolutionary potential matters. Travel allows these characters to politically engage their reality; yet they do so from a Western perspective. Quevedo approaches Mexican society through French codes, and Claire, the whole of Latin America in the hopes of spreading revolution based on French precepts. They impose their view, without caring much for people on the receiving end. They experience global events and ideas, but are not rooted cosmopolitans in the tradition of public intellectuals such as Octavio Paz or Alfonso Reyes, rooted in their locality. My interpretation is twofold: on the one hand, it is a comment on the role of intellectuals in general, and their role in global endeavours, but on the other, it is a specific criticism of the Latin American intellectuals of the 1960s and the 1970s, who continued to approach their countries with European blinders.

Finally, in *No será la Tierra*, Allison Moore's and Arkadi Granin's lives are developed through various travels. These are synonymous with great discoveries, but also bring about

disappointment – even hatred and resentment – towards their country of birth, which never fulfils their expectations. Allison travels the world, and lives in many countries; she only returns to the United States to see her son, and to take part in protests. More specifically, participating in demonstrations at home justifies returning to see Jacob. Arkadi first travels to different parts of the USSR, which awakens nationalist feelings in him, only to be disappointed, and he then turns his back on the USSR and socialism. His trip to the United States is similar: he has high hopes, but is disappointed with the capitalism he experiences in New York. Much like in Gauguin's case, travels lead Arkadi to dissatisfaction; neither is happy with what he finds once at a destination. Allison differs from both men in this aspect, for she is very content with what she finds abroad. Indeed, she is more content in Palestine than she ever was anywhere else. Palestine is also, incidentally, where she realizes that her cosmopolitan commitment is flawed, and where she reframes it on a much smaller scale, something neither Arkadi nor Gauguin manages to do. While it is true that Allison's universal pretentions exclude her family and her son, I have argued that, in her case, filiation has been replaced with affiliation. Indeed, the children that she calls family in Palestine are the people to whom she owes a sort of national allegiance, for the country is her new home. Jennifer Moore's path is the reverse of that of her sister and Arkadi, for she is rarely disappointed with her country of birth. Indeed, her love and faith in the United States brings her to develop a feeling of superiority, similar to that developed by Arkadi at the height of his beliefs in the Soviet Union. Jennifer also closely resembles Quevedo and Claire, for the three of them try to impose a philosophy on other cultures. Contrary to Tristán and Casement, who develop their cosmopolitan commitment abroad as they experience other cultures and treacherous living conditions, Jennifer never does, for she is never exposed to the diversity of life in the countries she visits. Finally, all these characters engage their locality and the world in a concrete

political manner: Allison and Arkadi participate in protests in their home country, Allison and Jennifer take action abroad to improve the lives of the less fortunate.

None of the characters studied succeed in being rooted cosmopolitans in the strictest sense of the definition, which further highlights the difficulty of holding such a position in the perilous cultural and political circumstances of the modern and postmodern worlds. Mariana develops a transcultural identity, deeply rooted in Mexico, and Casement develops an Irish identity through his exposure to colonized people. Mariana and Casement develop this identity because they idealize the figure of the mother; indeed, they both espouse a national identity based on that of their mother. Luz rejects Mexico, which brings Mariana to become Mexican, and Casement's mother, an Irish Catholic forced to pretend to be British, brings Casement to live his Irishness out in the open. Flora, Gauguin, Quevedo, Allison, and Arkadi thrive on universalizing projects. This drives them to reject those closest to them, and to abandon or irremediably damage their family. Only Jennifer finds some balance in her commitments, yet does so with an imperial mindset, which makes her stances flawed.

All the characters show, at one moment or another, concerns about being world citizens; yet few succeed. Rooted cosmopolitanism, as embodied by characters such as Flora, Casement, and Jennifer, is a celebration of diversity. By combining universalism and difference, their rooted cosmopolitanism allows for their national culture and the new cultures they encounter to flourish and enrich one another. In spite of their shortcomings, it is precisely because they embrace diversity that Tristán and Casement are redeemed by the narrative voice, that Allison gets closure before her death, and that Jennifer's dream of having a child materializes. They are deeply flawed characters, but through rooted cosmopolitanism are open to the world, and willing to share in the human experience. Characters such as Gauguin, Quevedo, and Irina are not offered redemption, for they never demonstrate any openness to diversity, or try to establish a meaningful connection

with other human beings. It is the treatment of these characters, their ultimate fate, that, among other elements, clearly points to the ways in which the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism permeates the novels.

In three of the novels studied, childhood has a major impact in the development of the characters' cosmopolitan commitment. Indeed, Flora and Paul are expelled from their childhood Paradise; this is portrayed as the basic impulse for their subsequent directions. Throughout the novel, they refer on various occasions to this time in their life. The same can be said of Casement; after his parents die, he only dreams of travelling, which eventually triggers the development of his cosmopolitan conscience, but also of his nationalist sentiment. Both are associated with his childhood, through the figures of his British father and of his Irish mother. It is also the case for Arkadi and Allison, who develop strong ethical commitments to others and a rejection of her country, respectively, in their childhood. While it is a happy childhood that leads Arkadi to wanting to save the world, it is (what she deems) a sad one that leads Allison to reject the United States to embrace the world. Much like Mariana, who rejects the elitism associated with her mother's cosmopolitanism and Eurocenteredness, Allison rejects the vision the United States promotes on the world stage, which she conflates with her father, who, she believes, has not given her enough attention. Childhood, then, appears to be the moment when a global conscience and/or a cosmopolitan commitment to others are born. This is consistent with current theoretical approaches in cosmopolitanism studies. Indeed, scholars such as Martha Nussbaum, in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism,* posit that childhood is the best moment in an individual's life to breed a cosmopolitan sentiment.

By discerning the way cosmopolitanism is plotted in the novels, and by analyzing the new narrative recourses at work, and the inscription of the novels in literary and intellectual history, I

have underscored the political aspects in the representation of cosmopolitanism and compared the propositions advanced in each of the novels.

Poniatowska's novel *La "Flor de Lis"* takes place in the 1950s, at the height of nationalist discourses in Mexico, and at a moment when the Latin-American-coined concept of transculturation gained increased discursive currency. Mariana's mother embodies cosmopolitanism and its imperial connotations. She represents a longing for Europe that is perceived as out of place after the Mexican Revolution, and the very reason that explains the rejection of a cosmopolitan ethos. Cosmopolitanism, as embodied by Luz, is the repudiation of all things Mexican, and especially the rejection of the Mexican identity articulated since the 1920s, after the Mexican Revolution. In this context, being a cosmopolitan means wanting to be European. The novel conceives cosmopolitanism as a tool of cultural imperialism that has the power to undermine the articulation of a liberating cultural identity. In a way, cosmopolitanism is perceived as a setback. Indeed, after having fought for the country's emancipation from European and American investors, and their cultural hegemony, Mexicans cannot conceive of turning back to Europe yet again. In *La "Flor de Lis*,*"* the controversy surrounding cosmopolitanism in Spanish America is represented as a rejection of the complex hybrid culture that emerged out of conquest and colonization. Although cosmopolitans such as Luz have an extensive cultural repertoire, unlike rooted cosmopolitans, they lack the perceptiveness and commitment to frame it in harmony with their national setting.

Whereas my allegorical reading of Elena Poniatowska's novel shows how cosmopolitanism was displaced in favour of transculturation, and in this view, is very much aligned with the political discourse of mid-century Mexico, Mario Vargas Llosa's and Jorge Volpi's works plot cosmopolitanism proper, advocate for rooted cosmopolitanism, and imagine characters who are active in tackling the world's problems. They engage in discussions about

conceptions of cosmopolitanism and its articulation, as well as the articulation of a global consciousness. Vargas Llosa's and Volpi's novels embrace the contemporary view that aims to deconstruct the dichotomy that pits cosmopolitanism against nationalism. However, while Vargas Llosa is obsessed with plotting the very dichotomy – which reflects the relationship his generation had with it, Volpi, who belongs to a generation that has experienced the increasing porosity of the nation-state and the emergence and consolidation of globalization, has transcended it. Indeed, his plotting of cosmopolitanism goes beyond the traditional binary opposition, and his novels, especially *No será la Tierra*, construct narrative worlds where characters are deeply immersed, as global citizens, in the world.

In Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta*, cosmopolitanism proper is plotted as a means to abolish inequalities, through the representation of Flora Tristán's and Roger Casement's trajectories, two characters who embody the cosmopolitan ethos. The novels conceive cosmopolitanism at the intersection of rooted cosmopolitanism and liberalism. As cosmopolitans, the two activists have a cultural repertoire that allows them to connect to others across cultures. They see a glimpse of success when they find balance in their commitments both to their national setting and to the world, but fail when they choose one extreme – humanity for her, the Irish people for him. The character of Paul Gauguin is also useful to examine Vargas Llosa's take on cosmopolitanism, for he embodies the binary opposition at its fullest, and never finds a middle ground like Tristán or Casement do. He is the counterpoint to rooted cosmopolitanism. It is because he never develops a balanced approach that Gauguin is not redeemed in the end.

Cosmopolitanism is represented as the best way to fight for the improvement of the oppressed – the women and the workers, in Flora's case, and the indigenous populations of Africa and Latin America, as well as the colonized populations, in Casement's case. Moreover,

by setting these novels in the distant past, Vargas Llosa participates in a discussion about nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the contemporary world. In this manner, a cosmopolitan reading reveals the novel as a space of universality that also transcends the past and informs the present. Indeed, not only does the novel highlight the failure of ideologies in the nineteenth and twentieth century respectively, my analysis showed that Vargas Llosa is also commenting on today's society. In numerous instances, the narrative voice comments on the downfalls of nineteenth century globalization, interventions that echo similar indictments of globalization today.

The fact that Tristán and Casement fail in their endeavour underscores the difficulty of finding a balanced approach to cosmopolitanism. The two of them thrive on universal projects, and are not grounded enough in their immediate reality. Flora Tristán is too universal for her own good, and as such not grounded enough in her locality, which ultimately leads to her demise. Roger Casement, on the contrary, ends up – through the false promises of Irish independence – too grounded in his locality, and forgets the cosmopolitan ideals for which he had fought.

Volpi's *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra* plot cosmopolitanism proper as a means to address conflicted identities, and to attempt to overcome the deterritorialization brought about by neo-liberalism in the twentieth century, at especially politically loaded moments. Through the representation of characters such as Quevedo, the Moore sisters, and the Granin family, the two novels articulate cosmopolitanism on a local and on a global scale. In Volpi's works, the cosmopolitan is someone who concretely tackles the world's problems, even if in most instances this tackling is flawed from the onset. All the characters fail in their projects because they cannot embody its precepts. Quevedo is always turned towards Europe, even when he is back in Mexico; Arkadi and Allison thrive on universal projects that leave little space for their local settings, and consequently alienate the people attached to it, their family –, and Irina and Jennifer are too

anchored in their local setting to give enough credit to how the rest of the world could help them shape their outlook on life. No one embodies rooted cosmopolitanism; they all occupy a different place on the spectrum nationalism-cosmopolitanism, some being too nationalist, and others too universalist or disengaged. I have argued that the novels thus reveal a conception of cosmopolitanism as a means to have a concrete impact on other people's lives, in the truest sense of world citizenship.

The only two Mexican characters studied here are similar. Luz and Quevedo represent the idea of the Mexican who rejects the hybridity of his/her identity, and who favours the intellectual outlook developed in the metropolis; more specifically in Paris. Both come back to Mexico after a long stay in France – Luz has to flee the country after the Second World War starts, and Quevedo chooses to return once he feels he has acquired all the knowledge possible –, and keep living in a European mindset once back in Mexico. Luz entertains friendships exclusively among the Europeanized Mexican high society, where the politics of the Mexican Revolution are judged harshly, and she speaks French at home with her mother and daughters. Quevedo, for his part, still evolves in French intellectual circles, and transfers the intellectual and theoretical knowledge acquired in France to the Mexican setting; not once does he mention Mexican scholars who could enrich his perspectives. The two characters rarely acknowledge Mexico's vibrant cultural and intellectual contribution, and when they do, it is to judge it unabashedly, and compare it to that of the metropolis, always believed to be superior.

I have also argued that these novels are a new step in the Spanish American literary tradition. They reflect the contemporary ethos, our relationship with increasing globalization. The plotting of cosmopolitanism led Vargas Llosa and Volpi to develop new narrative recourses, and rewrite and reframe literary genres: while all the novels studied can be considered historical novels, and as such are aligned with the genre's popularity in Spanish American letters, Vargas

Llosa and Volpi rewrite the genre. The news politics of cosmopolitanism in the novels are thus paralleled with aesthetic transformations. In that sense, then, the novels studied are, on the one hand, framed within the Spanish American literary tradition, for they are part of a popular subgenre, but on the other, propose a rearticulation of that tradition. This rearticulation of a popular genre applies to Poniatowska as well. Indeed, *La "Flor de Lis"* is a unique text. While autobiographical fiction is quite common in Spanish America, it has rarely been used to explore the experience of immigrants settling in a new country. Poniatowska, then, uses the traditionnal genre of first person narrative to ponder the experience of a female immigrant.

By reworking the codes of the historical novel, and through his use of documents produced by real-life Flora Tristan and Roger Casement, Vargas Llosa produces novels that are pedagogical in nature. The novels serve to highlight the difficulty of the position held by the characters, but also advocate for the acceptance of this very position. For Vargas Llosa, novels are a means to fight against *las insuficiencias de la vida*; I conclude that his historical novels constitute a concrete stand in this direction. The plotting of historical characters from a distant past, who fight and fail, allows for the discerning of Vargas Llosa's position, and how it might be applied concretely; though the novels do not propose a solution to overcome the possible failures, they are an attempt at exploring the complexities and contradictions of characters with a global consciousness. Historical novels have traditionally served to discuss national identity and fill the void in official histories; Vargas Llosa's rearticulation of the canonical genre expands on the notion of cultural identity and its inscription in institutional discourses of the nation-state, for his novels frame it in global terms.

For his part, Volpi instils his narratives with much research, turning them into *novelas ensayos*, hybrids between the historical novel, historiographic metafiction, and intellectual research. Moreover, while the new Latin American historical novel generally focuses on the

history of a Latin American country, Volpi deliberately moves away from this tradition and incorporates the global setting in the development of the narratives: May 1968 in Paris and the massacre of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico, the fall of the USSR, to name but a few. They are, then, global historical novels, which address global issues – in *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra*, these universal themes are the years 1968 and 1989, revolutions and utopias, then their failure, all issues that transcend borders. Volpi's rearticulation of historiographic metafiction – which generally serves to reassess national history using irony and parody – on a global scale expands on the possibility of reevaluating Latin American history in global terms. The fact that most of his characters are removed from Mexico and Latin America allows for the plotting of global events and issues in which Mexico and Latin America took part, but in which they did not occupy centre stage. Volpi's global novels rearticulate Latin America's relationship with the world: his country, his continent, and the world are transformed into chambers of resonance for the issues they discuss. Contrary to Vargas Llosa's, Volpi's characters are not historical, but truly fictional characters with no corresponding historical referent. Any reader can identify with them, and develop solidarity and empathy, turning their trajectories into universal symbols of the contemporary human experience.

My investigation has underlined as a point of departure the traditional contentious relationship of Latin America and cosmopolitan thought. In literature, from *Modernismo* through the *Boom*, cosmopolitanism was understood as a foreign influence that, through aesthetic means, was diluting the exploration and expression of Latin American culture. With the erosion of the nation-states and the rise of neo-liberal globalization, both beginning in the 1970s, Spanish American authors have been able to reframe their relationship with cosmopolitanism. From a Eurocentred concept that was perceived as a threat to national culture, it has evolved into a commitment both to the nation and the globe. The fact that current articulations of

cosmopolitanism give equal standing to locality and globality in the creation of a cosmopolitan identity have made it not only reconcilable with Latin America, after years of being seen as a menace to national cohesion, but as I have shown, also as a political tool useful to reframe the continent's relationship with the world.

In the case of Vargas Llosa and Volpi, literature is the best medium to describe the contemporary human experience, and, given their worldviews, to promote cosmopolitanism. Literature, because of its universality, is the best space to articulate cosmopolitan practices, promote them actively or discuss their shortcomings. My analysis of Latin American fiction was informed by cosmopolitanism's complex history in the continent.

Rooted cosmopolitanism is clearly the notion at work in the novels of Vargas Llosa and Volpi, and such a position is not surprising given the long history of Latin American cosmopolitan authors, from Reyes and Borges to Paz and Fuentes, among many others, who have always deconstructed the faulty perception of cosmopolitanism as dangerously alienating and foreign. Moreover, ideas about the decolonization of cosmopolitanism are precisely what explain its displacement in Poniatowska; at a time when the imperial undertones of the concept were still present, transculturation was the only concept capable of reconciling the local and global aspects of an identity. In the anti-colonial and nationalist discourses of post-revolutionary Mexico, transculturation held the promise of emancipatory politics through embracing the country's complex history of cultural and racial mixing, while it also served to reject the perceived threat of cosmopolitanism, always associated with those worldly travellers and so-called cosmopolitans who, like the character of Luz, had rejected the hybrid culture of Mexico.

Nevertheless, there are still many readers, scholars, and politicians who criticize Spanish American cosmopolitan authors who choose to set their novels abroad, discuss issues that are deemed not Spanish American enough, and who, in short, do not abide by the dogma that dictates

what and how a Spanish American author ought to write. The argument is invariably the same – these critics associate cosmopolitanism with a lack of commitment to the nation. The *Boom* authors are supposed to have subverted this dogma, but to this day it remains engrained in some intellectual discourses. Although current articulations of cosmopolitanism, and the novels that inscribe themselves within this new thinking, try to undo the dichotomy that pits cosmopolitanism against nationalism, this binary opposition still exists. The *Modernistas*, the *Vanguardistas*, and the authors of the *Boom* were all called cosmopolitans in a reductive and derogatory manner, as are two of the novelists I studied in this investigation. Vargas Llosa and Volpi have been called out and criticized for their supposed lack of allegiance to the nation; Vargas Llosa is despised due to his engagement as a public intellectual defending cosmopolitan ideals and globalization, while Volpi has been criticized because his novels are deterritorialized. Both authors have also been condemned by Peruvian and Mexican nationalist intelligentsia, respectively, because they are often critical of their native countries.

Beyond these perennial debates, I would counter this criticism with the argument that these Spanish American authors are now engaging, as never before, in the global cosmopolitan conversation, and thus expanding the traditional loci of enunciation of the concept, an exercise that, in light of Walter Mignolo's proposal to deconstruct Western cosmopolitanism, can be construed as taking part in a decolonial impulse.

In this context, a promising venue of inquiry is to expand on the study of cosmopolitanism in Latin American literature by investigating not only other contemporary authors, but also by exploring specific cosmopolitan positions, more broadly in Spanish American intellectual and literary history, both critical tasks that, given the scant traditional interest in this increasingly important area of inquiry, are still pending. To this effect, a project I would like to develop is the study of the articulation of cosmopolitanism in José Vasconcelos's

body of works, to which I alluded in Chapter 2. It would be of particular interest to study the evolution of his ideas on cosmopolitanism, and how these ideas intersected with discourses of race and modernity in the context of post-revolutionary Mexico.

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