

CULTURA, LENGUAJE Y REPRESENTACIÓN

Revista de Estudios Culturales
de la Universitat Jaume I
Volumen 8 - Mayo 2010

CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION

Cultural Studies Journal
of Universitat Jaume I
Volume 8 - May 2010

**Cultura
popular, medios
y globalización**

**The Popular,
Media and
Globalization**



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© De la present edició: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, 2010

Edita: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I. Servei de Comunicació i Publicacions

Campus del Riu Sec. Edifici Rectorat i Serveis Centrals. 12071 Castelló de la Plana

Fax: 964 72 88 32

<http://www.tenda.uji.es>

e-mail: publicacions@uji.es

ISSN: 1697-7750

Dipòsit legal: CS-34-2004

Imprimeix:



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Presentación

El volumen 8 aborda las relaciones entre el género popular y los medios en el contexto de una sociedad globalizada que se articula como un fenómeno contradictorio de fuerzas centrífugas tendentes a la homogeneización y fuerzas centrípetas de disgregación. La cultura popular comparte tal naturaleza contradictoria por su capacidad para reflejar y sancionar los discursos ideológicos que circulan en la sociedad, así como por su potencial subversor de los mismos. De este modo, la cultura popular deviene en un tropo esencial, debido a esa complementariedad, que facilita la explicación y comprensión mutua de tales manifestaciones culturales.

Esas cuestiones se exploran en diversos artículos centrados en: la capacidad de desestabilización de la realidad en el cine de ficción y el documental; la dualidad de la programación televisiva británica desde una perspectiva histórico-cultural; los conceptos de participación e interacción en la red como parte de la construcción de la audiencia; las narrativas híbridas y la identidad en la cultura latina estadounidense; y un enfoque sociolingüístico sobre los usos bilingües en una comunidad local fronteriza de la Comunidad Valenciana.

Editorial

Volume 8 focuses on the relation between the popular and the media in the context of a global society which is articulated in terms of centrifugal homogenising forces, and centripetal disseminating ones. Popular culture shares a similar contradictory nature due to its capability to reflect and sanction ideological discourses circulating in society, as well as to potentially subvert them. Thus, the popular becomes an important trope to explain and understand the former cultural phenomena.

Such issues are explored in a number of articles tackling: the ability of fiction and documentary film to destabilise the status of reality; the struggle of British television broadcasting to achieve a balance of forces from a cultural historical perspective; interaction and participation on the web as part of a process of audience construction and identity modelling; hybrid narratives and identity in Latino culture in the USA; and a sociolinguistic approach to bilingual usage in a local speech community in a border area from the Valencia region, Spain.

Artículos / *Articles*

Cultural Studies y narrativas *Latinas* en Estados Unidos: Discursividad diaspórica y producción de identidades desde la hibridez

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ABSTRACT: The narrative hybridity created by Cristina García in her novel, *Dreaming in Cuban*, presents an ontological parallelism with Latina women's imagined identity production. Starting from a spatial displacement illustrated through a three-face journey from Cuba to New York, and accomplished by three generations of women from the same family, *Dreaming in Cuban* problematizes the subjectivity fragmentation implicit to a space of perpetual *borderland*, and explores the contingency of belonging to a space *other*. These aspects are portrayed in the linguistic use of English and Spanish as vehicles of identity performance.

Keywords: latina, identity, space, postmodernism, subjectivity

RESUMEN: La hibridez narrativa creada por Cristina García en su obra *Dreaming in Cuban* plantea un paralelismo ontológico con la producción identitaria imaginada de las mujeres latinas en Estados Unidos. A partir de un desplazamiento espacial ilustrado en el viaje escalonado desde Cuba hacia Nueva York, y realizado por las componentes de tres generaciones de una misma familia, *Dreaming in Cuban* problematiza la fragmentación de subjetividades implícita en un espacio de perpetuidad fronteriza, y explora la contingencia de la pertenencia a un espacio *otro*. Estos aspectos se reflejan en el uso lingüístico del inglés y el español como vehículos de *performance* identitaria.

Palabras clave: escritoras latinas, identidad, espacio, postmodernismo, subjetividad

The fact that I am writing to you in English already
falsifies what I wanted to tell you. My subject: how to
explain to you that I don't belong to English though I
belong nowhere else, if not here in English

PÉREZ FIRMAT, "Dedication"

Nomadism and migration have become central
experiences of millennial postmodernity. As our (cultural)
continents collide and overlap in the rapid process of
'globalization,' the ongoing migration of South to North and
East to West redefines not only geopolitical borders, but also
language, identity, activism, art and popular culture.

GÓMEZ-PEÑA, *Dangerous Border Crossers*

Una primera (y tal vez, inocente) aproximación a la *lectura inmediata* que ofrece la novela *Dreaming in Cuban*, de Cristina García (1992), se podría trazar desde los postulados estructuralistas –incluso semióticos– propios de las corrientes teóricas de la primera mitad del siglo xx. Con claras –e implícitas– referencias intertextuales a las narrativas fragmentarias con las que Virginia Woolf o William Faulkner trazaban secuencias de imágenes de una *misma* realidad en perpetua variación con respecto al punto de vista de quien ejercía un papel actancial y diegético, Cristina García reproduce en esta obra una estructura similar que utiliza como punto de apoyo para *descontextualizar*¹ una identidad diaspórica y aporética presente en la movilidad de espacialidades propia del cambio de siglo, para alcanzar así un posicionamiento paródico que deconstruye desde la posmodernidad la formulación enraizante y arbórea de los modelos tradicionales de construcción de la identidad.

En este estudio se intenta hacer entrar en diálogo a la polifónica voz identitaria de la *espacialidad de frontera* propia del ocaso posmoderno del siglo xx con la teoría especulativa de una semiótica de la cultura subyacente, en la que las *semiosferas* constitutivas (Lotman, 1996) entran en conflicto ontológico arrastrando en sus líneas de fuga a agentes de naturaleza lingüística, cultural y epistemológica. A partir de estrategias dialógicas, el sujeto deconstruido en la novela de García se postula como emisario performativo generador de subje-

1. Utilizo aquí este término siguiendo el estudio sobre la parodia realizado por Linda Hutcheon (1985).

tividades *otras* que reconfiguran las espacialidades de frontera propias de una globalización paradigmática en el cambio de episteme.

A través de unos personajes protagonistas inmersos en *multiplicidad* (Deleuze y Guattari, 2004), *Dreaming in Cuban* presenta ante sus lectores imágenes de una permeabilidad identitaria que se manifiesta a partir de subjetividades inertes en continua expansión descentralizadora; son imágenes que remiten a una actitud evasiva –aunque paralizante– contra las estructuras jerarquizantes epistemológicas del espacio deconstruido, conducentes a una desterritorialización geopolítica interpretada sin embargo por la subjetividad de sus protagonistas como reterritorialización ontológica. Este proceso de desterritorialización y reterritorialización se fusiona en una suerte de síntesis –con pretensiones de ser objetiva– que narra la historia de una familia como alegoría de la historia reciente de una comunidad: la de Latinos en Estados Unidos. Se trata de una suma tangencial de visiones de hechos aislados que buscan configurar una deconstrucción de su misma trama vivida, una nueva «muerte del autor» como forma de representación que es sustituida por una autoría compartida y multidireccional en la forma de un discurso heteroglósico y *heterotópico* (Foucault, 1986).

Sin embargo, cuando en la conclusión de la novela el lector se da cuenta de que el peso de la narración recae sobre uno de los personajes de la propia ficción, la trama discursiva adquiere una nueva dimensión que refleja de manera implícita el que es uno de los temas principales de la representación ficcional. La fragmentación nacional y generacional en la historia de la familia de Pilar Puente (narradora omnisciente y narradora subjetivo) encuentra un punto en común que le hace ser negación de sí misma: Cuba y Estados Unidos como componentes de una espacialidad *otra*, que se define a sí misma como fronteriza, como soporte de una identidad *postnacional* y deslizante, en la que se produce una *deferencia* entre el significante identitario nacional y el significado ontológico de la frontera.

En el plano temático de la obra de Cristina García existen diversas circunstancias socioculturales que implican problemas en la justificación de la enunciación citada anteriormente con respecto a la negación de la fragmentación subjetiva. La novela narra las vivencias de tres mujeres que se corresponden con tres generaciones distintas de una familia: la mayor de ellas (Celia) en Cuba; la hija de ésta (Lourdes) como modelo migratorio hacia Estados Unidos; y la nieta de aquélla (Pilar) como sujeto diaspórico híbrido, con situación geográfica en Nueva York. La condición identitaria inherente a cada uno de los tres personajes principales de la obra funciona como aglutinante de posibles vestigios de desintegración del sujeto, condicionado siempre por la significación subalterna de las tres protagonistas causada por su identificación como mujeres que se va desarrollando de forma aporética hasta alcanzar un estatus de oxímoron cultural al adherir en Nueva York circunstancias constructivas de género con condicio-

nantes destructivos de nación. Pilar representa el modelo de una cultura minoritaria en un país que no se corresponde con el de su tradición cultural. Aunque se trata de un personaje cuya condición está definida por su complejidad y su heterogeneidad, la narrativa de García lo expone públicamente tal y como lo define desde el exterior una red colectiva fundamentada en la estereotipada imagen de la Latina en Estados Unidos. La actancialidad del personaje sucumbe *performativamente* (Schechner, 2003) a la representación otorgada por la mirada taxonómica de la sociedad, produciendo en su identidad una oscilación fundamental entre su cuerpo como discurso y su subjetividad como palimpsesto. En este sentido, la entidad externa de narración que interfiere insoslayablemente en la construcción de su identidad, entendería a Pilar de forma reificada y la sometería a un proceso de silenciamiento o invisibilización, mientras que el narrador subjetivo que es Pilar se entendería a sí misma como una nueva ciudadana en una nueva sociedad que se aleja de sus raíces culturales y es incapaz (ni tiene la voluntad de hacerlo) de integrarse en la cultura receptora: “I’m from Brooklyn, man!” Lou [Reed] shouts and the crowd goes wild. I don’t cheer, though. I wouldn’t cheer either if Lou said, “Let’s hear it for Cuba”. Cuba. Planet Cuba. Where the hell is that?” (p. 134). Pilar se entiende a sí misma como perteneciente a un espacio ajeno –y posiblemente hostil– en el que las referencias culturales propias de Nueva York (“I’m from Brooklyn”) y de Cuba (“Let’s hear it for Cuba”) le son distantes y no le producen ningún tipo de sentimiento nacionalista o patriótico; sería probablemente más acertado afirmar lo contrario, que la subjetivización identitaria de Pilar parte de una negación del *otro* dentro de su *mismedad*.

El paso previo a este “status” ontológico híbrido y cercano a una *nothingness* cultural (Heidegger, 1962) lo representa Lourdes, madre de Pilar, funcionando como arquetipo de la mujer exiliada resultante del proceso de diáspora cubana hacia Estados Unidos a partir del año 1959. Con ella –y en ella– la narrativa de García reformula de modo traumático la realidad histórica del emigrante caribeño de las décadas de los años 50 y 60 hacia el país norteamericano. La condición de nómada geográfica de Lourdes se ve dilapidada por una losa de estaticidad e inmutabilidad existencial que la sepulta y la define. Cuestionando la plasmación física de la movilidad en una transformación epistemológica del conocimiento humano, Lourdes se embarca en un viaje hacia *su* norte cultural, que repercute de forma paralizante en su enraizamiento sociológico, resultando de tal estado identitario una forma de deslizamiento subjetivo continuo y representativo de la condición de hibridez de las espacialidades fronterizas de los cuerpos migratorios. Desde una tangencialidad espacial y geopolítica, una de las componentes del grupo artístico chicano de performance “ASCO” resumía, en inglés y en una conversación informal, este sentimiento de manera muy convincente: “*I do not exist nowhere*”, para referirse al posicionamiento de vacío de los sujetos cultural y espacialmente híbridos, cuya identidad se define por un hueco existencial.

En *Dreaming in Cuban* los personajes que adquieren mayor protagonismo son a primera vista estas dos mujeres en tránsito identitario, pero antes de entrar en profundidad con el análisis de cada uno de estos personajes -y con lo que éstos representan desde el punto de vista narratológico- es necesario detenerse en la deconstrucción inversa de la espacialidad física frente a la psicológica que se presenta en la obra a modo de contrapunto. Esto se lleva a cabo en la novela mediante la representante en el ámbito ficcional de la generación cubana que *optó* por no desplazarse físicamente de su lugar de nacimiento y vida después del acontecimiento político y social que tuvo lugar en la crucial fecha de 1959 en Cuba. Se trata de Celia, madre de Lourdes y abuela de Pilar. Siendo el más versátil y más complejo de los personajes presentes en la narrativa de García, Celia experimenta un desplazamiento interior, un distanciamiento de su subjetividad nacional (probablemente no lo suficientemente marcado como para poder considerarlo como “exilio interior”), que tiene por causa primera el distanciamiento físico -e insalvable- de sus seres queridos, depositarios de una cultura palmaria, tangible, que se diluye al someterse a un proceso de transformación acelerada al entrar masivamente en contacto con otra cultura, en este caso, hegemónica. La suya es una dislocación interior causada por la separación física tanto de su familia, que se ha ido a Estados Unidos, como de su amante, que ha regresado a España. Son éstos los fantasmas de su pasado, que se presentan narrativamente ante el lector con una falta absoluta de presencia física, con una estrategia fantasmagórica de “fuera de plano” que persigue infligir a los parámetros anticipadores de la lectura implícita un recurso lúdico que implicar una manipulación ficcional. Tal manipulación hermenéutica se plantea desde la mente de la Celia en estado climático sensorial, que dibuja la imagen de su marido amalgamada con la del Sol que embaraza el horizonte marítimo, a la mente del lector que, envuelto en rupturas continuas del pacto de ficcionalidad, duda en el momento de procesar mentalmente la existencia de los personajes que sobrevuelan a Celia. Los conectores con las realidades expuestas en la obra que el lector sostiene se ven desestabilizados, produciendo un deslizamiento significativo que servirá como alegoría *ad hoc* para referirse a la suspensión de las subjetividades emigradas ante su proceso centrífugo de dispersión identitaria en busca de multiplicidad, de la misma manera que le sucederá al lector cuando se encuentre a sí mismo leyendo con absoluta certeza de realidad las conversaciones mantenidas entre Lourdes y su padre fallecido por las calles de Brooklyn. Tal y como expone Felicia, la hermana de Lourdes: “Imagination, like memory, can transform lies to truths” (p. 88).

Celia mantiene un lugar privilegiado en la estructura rizomática propuesta por la autora, ya que siendo la mayor de las protagonistas y habiendo decidido postrarse en una mecedora en el porche de su casa, se convierte con el transcurso de la narración en el personaje más híbrido en su construcción identitaria, ya que aunque presencia y resiste el intento de invasión de Playa Girón, sus marcado-

res culturales se han problematizado con la disgregación *espacial* realizada por su entorno, construyendo en ella una subjetividad próxima a la del Realismo Mágico, en la que su condición corpórea trasciende los límites cognitivos de la razón. Un posicionamiento narrativo clave como éste funciona en el texto como referente cíclico, aunque expansivo y descentralizado, para poner en diálogo la formación de identidad Latina en la diáspora con una formulación heterotópica de *melancolías* de subjetividad cultural (Žižek , 2000).

Se pueden observar, por lo tanto, tres generaciones de la misma familia, cuyo devenir axiológico aparece epitomizado por el entorno espacial que constriñe a cada una de ellas. Ese es su rasgo común; su punto de inflexión; su grado de ebullición. Un rasgo diferenciador que atañe a la concepción interior de la realidad, y que adquiere la forma de la presencia de Cuba en todas ellas, independientemente de si su persona física se halla allí, en Miami o en Nueva York. La intención fronteriza que envuelve a la narrativa de la propuesta discursiva de Cristina García –quien pertenece a su vez al modelo cultural representado por Pilar, y por lo que esta obra es considerada como la cumbre de las autobiografías ficcionales de la Literatura Latina, junto a la de Torres y Medina, según apunta Álvarez-Borland (1994: 89)–, se ilustra en la doble negatividad de Cuba como personaje definitorio de las acciones y actitudes de cada uno de los personajes.

En el caso de Celia, y de su manera de comprender la diáspora, que fue crucial en su vida, Cuba se entiende a través de un sentimiento de unión y compromiso a medio camino entre social y existencial, pero también a través de una óptica de resentimiento melancólico por ser la isla partícipe en el alejamiento de los seres que conformaban su identidad pretérita. La alienación nacional que causa en Celia tal circunstancia convive en una relación paradójica con su bagaje cultural y político, ya que Celia reescribe Cuba como una suerte de sinécdoque de su propia persona, entendiendo sus relaciones con España y con Estados Unidos como causantes de la depresión identitaria a la que se ha visto sometida. Indudablemente, este sentimiento de rechazo hacia sí misma y hacia la isla que configura su identidad nacional es cualitativamente recíproco y refractario del sentimiento de unión e identificación con su nación, de una forma similar a lo que le sucede a Pilar en la distancia, el personaje que durante buena parte de la obra está en comunicación directa con Celia a través de procedimientos telepáticos.

Pilar *actúa* su identidad desde una representación del modelo de joven insatisfecha, de agente subalterno no identificado con nada más que con lo desconocido, que se expone a una colisión de subjetividades para construir la suya propia, más allá de genéticas culturales y herencias tardías. Paralelamente a su crecimiento, se desarrolla la configuración de una *subcultura* del margen en una sociedad cada vez más compuesta por márgenes y dirigida a una espacialidad rizomática como es la estadounidense. Pilar no solo *des-conoce*, sino que también

re-conoce a través de experiencias cognitivas no identificables con una realidad que se antoja imposible en el discurso de la narración. Pilar no solo necesita reconocerse a sí misma como parte integrante de la multiplicidad neoyorquina; Pilar necesita *re-conocer* Cuba y necesita *re-conocer* a su abuela, lo que intenta siguiendo un proceso mental de negación, un viaje hacia el *nothingness* por medio de un lenguaje vehicular y de un conocimiento imaginario traducido en actuaciones de realidades subjetivizadas. Lo que la lleva a esa búsqueda obsesiva de su yo concretizado en un lugar físico no es tanto la atracción hacia un espacio geográfico concreto o hacia una *encarnación* concreta como el rechazo contradictorio de su propia condición alienada, tanto geográfica como personalmente. No obstante, esta búsqueda guarda una condición inefable y heterotópica con la que la identidad aparece marcada a través del propio proceso de búsqueda, nunca en el objeto que se busca. Es por lo tanto una exploración progresiva, dinámica y recíproca en hallarse entre un lugar y otro, y en esa movilidad paralizante es donde reside la identidad bidireccional e híbrida de varias culturas colindantes y beligerantes de los *órganos sin cuerpo* (Žižek, 2004), de las *subjetividades sin sujeto* (Oliver, 1998) que es Pilar.

Las tres mujeres protagonistas comparten una espacialidad hueca con la que definen su estado ontológico. Tras ver cómo Celia y Pilar (abuela y nieta) plasman sus contradicciones identitarias en un espacio físico único, Lourdes, por su parte, se distancia en su aproximación espacial de los otros dos personajes femeninos que están siendo discutidos en este estudio: “Lourdes, as a representative of the exile generation [...] is ridiculed in the text. The language she speaks cannot be understood by the Cubans in Cuba” (Álvarez-Borland, 1994: 139). Si en los otros dos personajes era más visible la identificación con una Cuba real e imaginada, construida a partir de discursos ideológicamente cargados, en el caso de Lourdes, la relación que ésta ha construido con su nación de origen se fundamenta en una alternancia de *desterritorialización* y *reterritorialización* que desemboca en un estado de *transterritorialidad* (Deleuze y Guattari, 2004) para cuestionar la validez en la actualidad de las concepciones espaciales pre-posmodernas. Citando a Gonzalo Abril, Gerard Imbert (2008: 81) explica las formas de actuación de estos procesos de “dislocación” territorial: “La *desterritorialización* actúa de modos múltiples; por ejemplo desenlazando en la circulación semiótica generalizada y transnacional las identidades, los espacios simbólicos, los sistemas de normas territoriales”. Siguiendo este patrón, Lourdes representa el epítome de esta desterritorialidad, ya que es la figura que de forma más explícita vive conjuntamente los dos epistemes presentes en la novela, debatiéndose entre una pasividad reduccionista y una actitud performativa de reconfiguración identitaria.

Lourdes alberga rasgos característicos de un ser completamente funcional y pragmático, y su sentimiento de aversión hacia Cuba se incrementa a medida que su situación en el país de acogida mejora. A pesar de demostrar una progresión en

su intento de *escribir* Cuba en términos favorables, de entender a Pilar de forma positiva, y de entender su propia espacialidad como elemento de superación personal, Lourdes demuestra en cada entrada del diario que escribe Pilar que, a diferencia de los otros dos personajes, el suyo no ha sido un desarrollo de aceptación de –y en– las dos culturas a las que está expuesta. Simplemente ha optado por rechazar una de ellas e integrarse de forma unívoca en la otra, independientemente de si en esa otra sociedad que ella está creando se le acepta o no como miembro de pleno derecho. Las fronteras que en Celia y Pilar se han diluido, se han hecho insalvables para Lourdes. En referencia a la vuelta de Lourdes y Pilar a Cuba, Cristina García escribe:

Look how they laugh, Pilar! Like idiots! They can't understand a word I'm saying! Their heads are filled with too much compañero this and compañera that! They are brainwashed, that's what they are! I pull my mother from the growing crowd. The language she speaks is lost to them. It's another idiom entirely (p. 221).

Ya en la isla, Lourdes intenta infructuosamente hacer ver al pueblo cubano las posibilidades de progreso ofrecidas por el capitalismo, pero su discurso, su textualidad, su lenguaje, no son transmitidos satisfactoriamente a los oídos de los habitantes de La Habana. El mensaje de Cristina García al exponer esta situación no solo hace referencia al hecho de que los habitantes cubanos no puedan entender una lengua explícita; también hace referencia al desfase que se ha creado en Lourdes en torno al propio lenguaje. Antonio Vera-León (2001) afirma con respecto a las complicaciones lingüísticas del sujeto híbrido en el entorno Latino que se produce una “tensión irresuelta entre la escritura y la voz”, de manera que el discurso oral adquiere connotaciones actanciales dentro de su desfavorecida condición frente al discurso escrito en el ámbito Latino en Estados Unidos, simbolizando así la circunstancia particular como agente generador de identidades *otras* del sujeto Latino. La frustración del intento de Lourdes por ejercer esa misma función performativa del lenguaje al volver a Cuba se hace patente en la escena descrita, y conlleva que los personajes de esta obra no consigan ajustar su relación con la *otredad* (la que en el pasado había sido su *mismedad*) de una forma satisfactoria. La distancia que se ha producido entre su actual identidad de frontera y su anterior identidad nacional se hace irreconciliable, y se manifiesta predominantemente a partir del discurso oral, que es el único vehículo válido para una lengua (y una identidad) en construcción y alejada de los parámetros fijos y fundamentales de las identidades nacionales tradicionales. Siguiendo el ejemplo expuesto, Lourdes no ha sido capaz, a diferencia de Pilar, de trascender las lenguas y reinventar su propio lenguaje sintetizador, una manera de comunicarse que no cierre puertas a su pasado y que se haga oír en Miami, centro neurálgico

del nuevo tipo de identidad que este personaje encarna. Tal y como lo expresa García Canclini (1990: 17) en su problematización de la hibridez cultural:

Los estudios sobre narrativas identitarias hechos desde enfoques teóricos que toman en cuenta los procesos de hibridación muestran que no es posible hablar de las identidades como si sólo se tratara de un conjunto de rasgos físicos, ni afirmarlas como la esencia de una etnia o una nación. La historia de los movimientos identitarios revela una serie de operaciones de selección de elementos de épocas distintas, articuladas por los grupos hegemónicos en un relato que les da coherencia, dramaticidad y elocuencia.

Los conflictos existentes en una identidad que ha estado expuesta significativamente a dos epistemologías distintas cicatrizan en forma de trauma, a diferencia de la repercusión que esa exposición —llevada a un grado implícito— tiene en la identidad de Pilar, que ya ha crecido (y por lo tanto conocido exclusivamente) en un entorno híbrido, en la confluencia identitaria de un mestizaje cultural y que se conoce, por ello, ajena a identificaciones nacionales explícitas.

Para ello, Cristina García acude al lenguaje como forma de identificar —y de actuar— la fragmentación y la multiplicidad que afectan conjuntamente a los personajes que ejercen las identidades híbridas en esta obra. Por una parte, se puede observar en el personaje de Lourdes la ruptura ideológica con lo que la concepción de pluralismo puede connotar. Su realidad inminente —determinada por su movilidad física— se basa en el sistema binario de lo uno o lo otro. No concibe siquiera la posibilidad de una cultura en relación recíproca con otra, ni la posibilidad de una intersección digna. Cree en el abandono absoluto de una cultura como medio para integrarse (¿asimilarse?) en otra.

Todo lo contrario hace su hija Pilar, que es el perfecto ejemplo del resultado de esa conjunción que su madre rechaza. En un momento de la narrativa Pilar comienza una aventura amorosa con un joven de identidad Latina. La reacción de su madre es la de intentar alejarla de ese chico y de lo que representa, ya que un vínculo de ese tipo representaría un serio revés en su tan ansiada *norteamericanización*. La realidad social de Pilar con respecto a su relación sentimental difiere de forma significativa de la de su madre. Su lengua habitual es el inglés, y sin embargo afirma que “...we speak in Spanish when we make love. English seems an impossible language for intimacy” (p. 180). La naturalización de la hibridez cultural se hace evidente en la postura ideológica de Pilar, que se manifiesta a sí misma como resultado de un proceso cultural lógico en el que el lenguaje adquiere una magnitud funcional, un uso no diglósico; un uso instrumental.

La estructura narratológica, como ya se ha anticipado, se problematiza al final del discurso narrativo cuando el lector percibe que tanto las cartas escritas por Celia como el resto de la narración que conforma el diario de Pilar tienen

como ente dominante, como narrador “omnisciente”, a la voz de la propia Pilar. Ya que en diferentes momentos de la obra la narradora cede su voz a diversos personajes, sus intervenciones en forma de estilo indirecto libre apoyan a partir de la estructura diegética un cuestionamiento de la propia identidad de estos personajes.

La postura narratológica de Pilar choca con su propia condición ontológica en un momento clave: se trata del momento en el que Pilar decide incorporar a la narrativa las cartas no enviadas con las que Celia obsequia a Pilar, acción que busca una aproximación discursiva a las estructuras epistemológicas previas a la exposición identitaria a la hibridez manifiesta de la subjetividad de frontera. En estas cartas se puede observar una utilización lingüística que sigue las prerrogativas impuestas por el propio lenguaje utilizado por Pilar. La condición subjetivizadora de su discurso adquiere dimensiones deconstructivas, ya que si Pilar ha utilizado un filtro lingüístico para transcribir las cartas de su abuela (ha escrito una traducción al inglés pero ha dejado determinadas palabras en español), es inevitable que haya utilizado también un filtro conceptual o epistemológico; las palabras que Pilar ha dejado sin traducir en esas cartas son las que responden a sus necesidades subjetivas de marcar ideológicamente su condición híbrida: “Mi amor”, “querido”, “Mi Gustavo”, “tu Celia”. No hay más. Las que restan en español se han mantenido por su condición de *intraducibles*: “guayabita del pinar”, “santería”, etc. conformando así el corpus lingüístico de inserción idiomática e identitaria en inglés. Todas estas palabras que se han mantenido en las cartas traducidas (asumiendo que estas cartas sean una traducción hecha por Pilar, ya que parece poco probable que Celia le escribiese a su amante español en inglés) están relacionadas, de una manera u otra, con el amor; de la misma manera que Pilar había dicho a través de su propia voz que el lenguaje amoroso era mucho más preciso en español que en inglés, su intervención lingüística en la subjetividad de Celia marca ideológicamente el discurso de ésta, generándole una identidad –imaginada– que responde a la realidad cultural híbrida de la propia Pilar. La “conexión telepática” que unía a estas dos personas se entiende, por lo tanto, como un diálogo abierto entre las culturas que componen la identidad híbrida de Pilar, en una suerte de esquizofrenia actuada generadora de discursos de latinidad. Resulta evidente el proceso dialógico resultante en un palimpsesto (textual, discursivo e identitario) a través del cual Pilar aplica en la transcripción de las cartas de su abuela rasgos de cómo a ella le habría gustado que Celia hubiese sido, que responden a su propio deseo de escritura identitaria con respecto a cómo ella *re-escribe* a su abuela Celia: “...so tell me how you want to be remembered...I can paint you anyway you like” (p. 232). El posicionamiento de Pilar como agente de la acción de pintar –re-escribir– a Celia, y de ésta como representación pasiva de un deseo (“I can paint **you**”) responde a las necesidades ontológicas de una Pilar que desea definirse como sujeto híbrido. Este rasgo

tiene una gran utilidad para explicar la manera en la que el lenguaje, a través de la narración de la historia, es utilizado para llevar al lector al entendimiento de la necesidad de un aglutinamiento cultural en la vida del “sujeto étnico”. Se muestra cómo la presencia de ambas culturas en el mismo discurso (textual, corpóreo, identitario) se hace patente para que la personalidad del individuo (y a raíz de esto, del grupo) pueda *completarse en su condición “incompleta”*. Con esta conjunción de las dos formas narrativas que provienen de la misma voz, pero desde diferentes niveles, se crea una doble identidad en proceso de formación, en la que el narrador extradiegético se ausenta de la interpretación narrativa de la entidad intradieгética, cediéndole completamente el poder discursivo. Como Álvarez-Borland (1994: 91) sugiere: “the double consciousness of being both narrator of and participant in her own story has enabled her to find that part of her own identity she knew was missing”.

Como puede inferirse de lo escrito hasta ahora, la problemática que se plantea en la novela de Cristina García problematiza desde la posmodernidad el discurso –de poder– racionalista imperante para expresar la responsabilidad ontológica que se le ha atribuido al discurso cultural híbrido de los Latinos en el proceso de reconfiguración epistemológica propuesta por el cambio de paradigma posmoderno. Busca esta novela describir, así, el entorno social de una producción identitaria diferente que se enfrenta a una metanarrativa social hegemónica –y agresiva, por lo tanto–, ante formas subalternas de representación y de performance identitaria, con el fin de deconstruir la vía racional de asumir la escritura de estas identidades otras.

Se podría concluir, pues, afirmando que la hibridez narratológica creada por Cristina García en su obra *Dreaming in Cuban* funciona tanto como representación a nivel formal como actuación identitaria de la misma hibridez, entendida como heterogeneidad o transculturación, para tratar de explicar a través de su personaje Pilar la construcción imaginaria de una identidad real en el ámbito Latino en Estados Unidos. Tal y como lo expresa la propia Pilar: “I am still waiting for my life to begin” (p. 179).

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The Social Construction of the Arab Online Media Audience: Paradoxical Issues in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT: The online media services are substantially changing the landscape of audience consumption. Indeed, there is a need to know why some of the Arab audience members use online media, and how they interact with it. The core of this article tackles some contradictory issues resulting from using online media among a sample of the Arab audience. Issues of fragmentation, diversity of content, the virtual public sphere, or convergence are inherent to the current study. A conceptual framework has been developed, based on the “uses and gratifications” theory, under which two major hypotheses have been put to the test: there is a causal relationship of co-dependency between the audience of online media and the mainstream media content; and there is a reciprocal relationship between the richness and quality of online media content and its primacy and relevance among the online media audience.

Keywords: social reality, pluralism, public sphere, networking

RESUMEN: Los medios en red están cambiando sustancialmente el panorama de las preferencias de las audiencias. De hecho, existe una demanda para conocer los motivos por los que algunos consumidores árabes utilizan tales medios en red y cómo interactúan con los mismos. Este artículo aborda aspectos contradictorios que emergen del uso de estos medios entre una muestra de usuarios árabes. Se utilizan los conceptos de fragmentación, diversidad de contenido, la esfera pública virtual o la convergencia, de manera inherente al análisis. La metodología de trabajo es la teoría de “usos y gratificaciones” bajo la que se han formulado dos hipótesis: existe una relación causal de codependencia entre los usuarios de medios en red y los contenidos multimedia tradicionales; existe una reciprocidad entre la riqueza y calidad de los contenidos en red y su primacía y relevancia entre los usuarios en red.

Palabras clave: realidad social, pluralismo, esfera pública, redes electrónicas

1. Introduction

Despite the fact that the audience of traditional media has decreased, many new applications of online media have attracted large numbers of audiences like web-based newspapers, digital broadcasting, podcasting, etc. Coincidentally, many issues have been brought up due to the diffusion of these new uses.

One crucial point is that online media audiences maintain freedom of choice and diversity of content. To this effect, they tailor the content according to their preferences. Indeed, there are many overlapping audiences because there are many types of meaningful digital content. Remarkably, this kind of media transformation from traditional to digital already revealed the role of the audience as participating in shaping the new media landscape. Critically, online media organizations seek for the production of content that sweeps new platforms and lures new audiences. In doing so, they aim to maintain profitability. In turn, this would raise two paradoxical issues: diversity of content vs. the existence of an ethical value system among the online media audience. The core of this article is to tackle some contradictory issues resulting from using online media among a sample of the Arab audience.

2. Theoretical Background

Communication scholars maintain that the Internet is reputed to be global. Globalism is partly manifested in different walks of life like economy, politics, culture, and communication technology. In light of this, the global society at large has been confronted with the explosion in interactive media forms. This is undoubtedly the result of the expansive use and diffusion of information and communication technology (ICT). The landscape of media studies over the last two decades witnessed an overflow of research articles focusing on the impact of global digital media effects. However, the substantial question that may arise would be concerned with the audience share of this effect as content producer in the digital era.

Young Min Baek (2007) examined the causal relationship between communication technology and society. He came up with two ideal types of empirical causality: the technological and social approaches. He conceived technological diffusion as inducing social change, while pointing out that Giddens maintained that the diffusion of innovation led to the social shaping of technology. This argument seems important because it helps in dealing with the idea of social construction which is the main topic of the study.

Baran and Davis (2006) treated the issue of media construction by tackling the roles of media in everyday life. They wanted to check if the increasing

availability of new media enabled the audience to make some changes. To this effect, they presumed that new media could bring about widespread changes in what people do with the media. In turn, these changes can have a powerful impact on the media industries.

Joshua Atkinson (2008: 230) addressed the importance of audience interactivity by presenting a multilevel analytical system to explore interactivity in alternative media production networks. He described the role of interactivity in the media production and the creation of social networks as composed of four aspects: the organizational scope of the media, the content, the audience, and the feedback. Furthermore, three types of interactivity have been outlined including the user-to-system, user-to-user, and the user-to-document. Basically, these categories and classifications seem important in studying the reality of online audiences. Clearly, the mentioned categories and classifications sketch out the major characteristics of an online audience, which may in turn allow communication scholars to study analytically the concepts of social networking, public sphere, fragmentation, pluralism and diversity.

According to Stanley Barran & Dennis Davis (2006: 249) the social construction of reality implies an active audience who process information and reshape it to serve definite cultural ends. It is then assumed that the online audience seem to be socially active to the extent of reproducing information or content in a new shape. Critically, I assume that the issue of interactivity can also be interpreted and elaborated within the paradigms of “symbolic interaction theory”. Due to the interactive relationship between the audience and the media, two systems may exist including the system of meanings and symbols, on the one hand, and the system of induced behaviour, on the other hand. Again, this kind of interpretation leads also to the idea of construction that I conceive of as affecting the medium itself irrespective of its type and the audience alike.

Mark Poster (1998) contended that the diffusion of the Internet led to the creation of the “networked society”. I think this would bring new social realities and induce new communication imperatives that shape the types of relationships among online users. This kind of judgment may be built on the tenets of the duality in both the uses and gratifications and the symbolic interaction approaches.

Sally McMillan (2002) found that interactivity is the major characteristic of social networking. The author maintained that interactivity already became a recurring concept in communication research related to the new media, leading communication scholars to introduce new approaches and paradigms to answer many of the questions revolving around the social construction of the online audience. In turn, Shah, Mcleod and Yoon (2001) found that online social networking negatively affects the matrix of social relationships among individuals due to the amount of uncertainty regarding the real identity of users.

In addition, Loges and Jung (2001) studied the power of social relationships resulting from using the Internet. To do so, they focused on examining the context, the type of online relationships, and the process of interactivity. In terms of methodology, Stempel et al. (2000) found in their study a relationship between the use of the Internet and the demographic variables.

I think that the issue of using the Internet poses two core questions. The first one is related to the development of the process of Internet use itself, and how it takes several shapes and patterns, as will be explained in the current study. Meanwhile, the second one deals with the audience's gratifications by these types of uses. Basically, the online media content is not only produced by media organizations but also by the wide scale of audience members, such as a wide amount of the content available via the You-Tube, for instance. And, Thomas McPhail (2006: 53) maintained that new media affect both the ideological and value systems, the social organization, the matrices of power and social interaction. He added that empirical precision requires an added method or technique to handle these types of effects.

Sandra Ball Rokeach (1998) maintained that the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* grew out of social psychological traditions of research on perception. The essence of this theory is that individuals' selection and perception of the media content are the outcome of their needs and interests. To this effect, a major proposition of this theory indicates that media messages are perceived differently among the individuals due to their different background and recognition. Actually, this theory would suit the purpose of this study because it shows what the online audience would do with the media, being the core issue of the current study the social construction of the online audience. To this effect, the construction of reality requires the existence of meaning which in turn depends on the audience members who use the media.

It seems also convenient to incorporate some interpretations of the "symbolic interaction theory" in the current study. Social interaction can simply be defined as a social perspective that interprets the actions of people in society based on their coinage of the meaning resulting from their interaction. That is why I presume that the construction of reality and social interaction merge to build the system of meaning.

Crowley and Mitchell (1994: 7) indicate that interactionists become always attentive to the way in which communication technologies provide opportunities for the construction of social worlds. Certain variables become determining ones in utilizing the "symbolic interaction theory" in new media studies. They include the individual user, the social context, the systems of meanings and symbols and the surrounding environment. Many communication scholars paid tribute to George H. Mead for coining this theory in the 1930s, which was later developed

in the 1970s and the 1980s to offer scholars a new spectrum in terms of analysis and interpretation regarding the relationship between people and the media.

Specifically, this theory maintains that communication as a process is a core factor in identifying peoples' perception and interpretation of the media; the use of communication generates systems of meanings, expectations, and understandings; and the interactive communication process implies various patterns of reciprocal relationships, mutual meanings and causal actions.

Van Dijck (2009) expanded the scope of the term "user-generated content" by examining the emergence of user-generated platforms and naming those people involved in the creation of online media content "*producers*". He came up with a theoretical construct called "user agency" that reflects the cultural role of the users of new media. In light of this, he called for a multidisciplinary approach to understand the socio-economic and technological transformations that affect the triangle, organization, user, content, taking You-Tube as a case study. Additionally, Milliken, Gibson and O'Donnell (2008) found that the concept of "user-generated" can provide new insightful explanations regarding the concept of online public sphere.

Postmes, Spears, and Lea (1998) evaluated a series of studies that examined computer-mediated communication's effects on social influences in groups, and concluded that it was necessary to discuss the boundaries imposed on people's social contacts and social identity models. In all, the diffusion of new media confronts media scholars with the need for more theorization regarding the possible societal effects.

3. Methodology

The current study utilizes the mass media research survey method. It was carried out on a purposive sample of online media users (n. 200) who were selected on the basis of their usage of online media such as web-based newspapers, blogs, You-Tube. In light of the *uses and gratifications theory*, three major hypotheses have been developed to be tested:

Hypothesis 1: there is a causal relationship of co-dependency between the audience of online media and the mainstream media content.

Hypothesis 2: there is a reciprocal relationship between the richness and quality of online media content and its primacy and relevance among the online media audience.

Hypothesis 3: there is a relationship between gender and the type of content exchanged via the social networking groups.

In addition to using the quantitative method, a qualitative method has been deployed due to the nature of the topic. Graham and Whalen (2008) conducted this sort of study to explore the relationships between genre theory and new media, in an ethnographic-style case study exploring the practice of a professional new-media designer. Results suggested that current genre and new-media theories underestimate the complexity of the relationships between mode, medium, genre, and rhetorical exigencies, which may point towards thoroughly considering the use of qualitative methods in studying new media.

Equally, a *socio-metric analysis* has been utilized in the current study by adopting the *socio-gram* as a research tool, so as to measure up the social choices of the audience members that lead them to set up social networks via the Internet. The socio-gram allows us to map the social relationships of the users.

Research questions

- 1- What is the Arab online profile of new media users?
- 2- What are the types of Arab social networks existing on the web?
- 3- In what way the Arab online audience members conceive of the media content?
- 4- How did the online users interact with new platforms like You-Tube?
- 5- What are the preferences of the Arab online users?
- 6- What are the major issues of social networking?

4. Findings

Table 1. (Gender)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Male	87	43.5	43.7	43.7
Female	112	56.0	56.3	100
Total	119	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 2. (Age)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
<20Y	29	14.5	14.6	14.6
20Yr+	170	85	85.4	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 3. (Internet density of Use)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
1 Hr.	52	26	26.1	26.1
2-3Hrs.	88	44	44.2	70.4
>3Hrs.	59	29.5	29.6	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200			

Table 4. (Internet Uses)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
1	38	19	19.3	19.3
2	19	9.5	9.6	28.9
3	64	32	32.5	61.4
4	55	27.5	27.9	89.3
13	6	3	3	92.4
14	8	4	4.1	96.4
24	1	0.5	0.5	97
34	6	3	3	100
Total	197	98.5	100	
Missing system	3	1.5		
Total	200	100		

1: Reading web-based newspapers and magazines, 2: Viewing online channels, 3: Logging in You-Tube, 4: Others.

Table 5. (Interactive Media are more appealing than traditional)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	101	50.5	50.8	50.8
No	41	20.5	20.6	71.4
Undecided	57	28.5	28.6	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 6. (Interactive media gratify your needs)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
0	1	0.5	0.5	0.5
Yes	161	80.5	80.9	81.4
No	7	3.5	3.5	84.9
Undecided	30	15	15.1	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 7. (Preferences of the Type of Content)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
1	37	18.5	18.7	18.7
2	17	8.5	8.6	27.3
3	126	63	63.6	90.9
4	14	7	7.1	98
12	1	0.5	0.5	98.5
23	1	0.5	0.5	99
34	1	0.5	0.5	99.5
123	1	0.5	0.5	100
Total	198	99	100	
Missing system	2	1		
Total	200	100		

1: Online newspapers, 2: Blogs, 3: News (streaming videos), 4: Others.

Table 8. (You-Tube Use)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Always	60	30	30.2	30.2
Sometimes	101	50.5	50.8	80.9
Rarely	38	19	19.1	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 9. (Patterns of exposure to You-Tube Content Type)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
1	7	3.5	3.6	3.6
2	20	10	10.2	13.8
3	125	62.5	63.8	77.6
4	33	16.5	16.8	94.4
13	2	1	1	95.4
23	4	2	2	97.4
34	4	2	2	99.5
123	1	0.5	0.5	100
Total	196	98	100	
Missing system	4	2		
Total	200	100		

1: Music, 2: News, 3: Entertainment, 4: Other

Table 10. (Do you add to You-Tube Content?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	16	8	8	8
No	183	91.5	92	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200			

Table 11. (Internet is a free sphere for exchanging media content)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	146	73	73.4	73.4
No	13	6.5	6.5	79.9
Don't know	40	20	20.1	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 12. (Interactive Participation)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	58	29	29.1	29.1
No	141	70.5	70.9	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

Table 13. (Online Debate at TV websites)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	45	22.5	22.7	22.7
No	153	76.5	77.3	100
Total	198	99	100	
Missing system	2	1		
Total	200	100		

Table 14. (Social Networking Membership)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Facebook	86	43	50.6	50.6
My space	14	7	8.2	58.6
Both	25	12.5	14.7	73.5
No	45	22.5	26.5	100
Total	170	85	100	
Missing system	30	15		
Total	200			

Table 15. (Patterns of Interactive Modes)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
1	118	59	60.5	60.5
2	24	12	12.3	72.8
3	6	3	3.1	75.9
4	6	3	3.1	79
5	14	7	7.2	86.2
12	11	5.5	5.6	91.8
13	2	1	1	92.8
14	2	1	1	93.8
15	1	0.5	0.5	94.4
23	2	1	1	95.4
24	1	0.5	0.5	95.9
34	1	0.5	0.5	96.4
45	1	0.5	0.5	96.9
123	1	0.5	0.5	97.4
134	1	0.5	0.5	97.9
135	1	0.5	0.5	98.5
1234	3	1.5	1.5	100
Total	195	97.5	100	
Missing system	5	2.5		
Total	200	100		

1: Forums, 2: Chat Rooms, 3: Blogs, 4: News Production, 5: Others.

Table 16. (Online media content has a possible Negative Impact)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	136	68	68.7	68.7
No	62	31	31.3	100
Total	198	99	100	
Missing system	2	1		
Total	200	100		

Table 17. (Code of Ethics sounds viable action)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	104	52	67.5	67.5
No	15	7.5	9.7	77.3
In between	35	17.5	22.7	100
Total	154	77	100	
Missing system	46	23		
Total	200	100		

Table 18. (Online news optimum Source of Information)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	92	46	46.5	46.5
No	46	23	32.2	69.7
Undecided	60	30	30.3	100
Total	198	99	100	
Missing system	2	1		
Total	200	100		

Table 19. (Content Exchange via Networking)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent %	Cumulative percent
Valid				
Yes	77	38.5	38.7	38.7
No	121	60.5	60.8	99.5
Neutral	1	0.5	0.5	100
Total	199	99.5	100	
Missing system	1	0.5		
Total	200	100		

5. Discussion

In trying to map the emerging practices in new media, many sound trends are to be considered, reflecting the common phenomenon of the convergence of the cultures of media production and consumption on the part of the audience and the content. This supports Deuze's (2007) call for studying the potential impact of the nature of the media work.

The research findings reflect the answers to many of the core issues raised in the current study. At the beginning, a questionnaire was developed and refereed. The target sample was purposively selected on the basis of using the new media platforms. The items of the questionnaire included 19 closed questions and the last one was an open-ended question.

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the demographic variables and the technical features of the online audience. The indicative result revealed that the number of female users (112) surpasses its male counterparts (87) as shown in table (1). In addition, the majority of the users are in the age category of 20 years and above.

Regarding the socio-technical features of the uses of the sample, it was evident that the audience members are exposed to many Internet media content including the social networking websites You-Tube, My Space, and Facebook. Audience members expressed their interests in the media content offered via the Internet, with 81.4% of the sample units affirming it. However, only 50.8% of the sample agreed on the likelihood of the Internet as a substitute for other traditional media. Another important result was the inclination of the sample towards viewing the online news especially those produced as "streaming

videos”. Up to 63.6% answered that they accessed the news via the Internet, following that the expansive use of new media reflects a new culture in terms of content consumption on the part of the audience. Indeed, the selection of the sample units was carried out on those users who actively participate in the daily use of new media platforms. Most of them were selected from university undergraduate students.

A complete portion of the questionnaire was spared to discuss patterns of social networking which are commonly sweeping the online audience. It was found that approximately half of the sample units (50.8%) use You-Tube mainly to get entertainment materials reaching a percent of 63.8. However, it was found that a small number of users ($n.16 = 8\%$) add media content to the You-Tube platform. Notably, 73.4% of the sample believed that the Internet represents a free sphere for them to exchange their ideas and access wide arrays of information available over the net. Even though the sample believed in Internet freedom, they abstained from the vivid and live online participation which is available on the web-based newspapers sites. In this regard, only 29.1% participate, in comparison to 70.9% who do not. Also, the sample units expressed their dissatisfaction with participating in any debates that are conducted on the sites of the satellite TV channels available on the Internet. This was represented by those who participate (22.7%) in return for those who do not (77.3%).

A complete section of variables was designed to tackle the issue of social networking. The theoretical approaches of “uses and gratifications” were applied to test users’ interests and satisfactions of such a type of networking. It was found that 50.6% use Facebook in return for 8.2% who use My Space. Meanwhile, 26.5% do not use any of them. A striking number of the sample uses predominantly the Internet to participate in online forums, reaching about 60.5%.

Regarding the perception of the online audience about the media content, 68.7% perceive media content as negatively affecting them, whereas 31.3% denied this. That is why only 52% asked for setting up an Internet code of ethics. On the contrary, 7.5% refused this and 17.5% were undecided about the formulation of this code. 23% did not answer this question.

Finally, two variables were tested to examine the relationship between the social networks of users and their sources of information and news. It was found that 46% regarded online media content as their major source of news and information. On the other hand, 23% did not regard it the prime source of information, and 30% were undecided. Furthermore, 38.5% said that they delved into social networking to get and exchange news and information in return for 60.8% who did not.

5.1. Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: there is a causal relationship of co-dependency between the audience of online media and the mainstream media content. The calculation of Chi Square revealed that it is 15.45, where the P Value is less than (0.01). This means that hypothesis 1 is highly significant. It also means that it was proved.

Hypothesis 2: there is a reciprocal relationship between the richness and quality of online media content and its primacy and relevance among the online media audience. The calculation of Chi Square revealed that it is 9.48, where the P Value is less than (0.01). This means that hypothesis 2 is highly significant. It also means that it was proved.

Hypothesis 3: there is a relationship between gender and the type of content exchanged via the social networking groups. The calculation of Chi Square revealed that it is 4.75, where the P Value is more than (0.05). This means that hypothesis 3 is not significant. It was not proved.

The Qualitative answers revealed two sets of contradictory views regarding the use by online audiences of the new online platforms. Respondents agreed on the fact that online networking enables a wide range of users to access news sources that offer a plethora of information. In addition, the new platforms of online networking like You-Tube, for instance, and the web-based newspapers introduced the audience to new patterns of news production like the use of “streaming videos”. The new modalities of the media content led to the selectivity of content on the part of the audience, which matches with the underpinnings of the “uses and gratifications theory”.

The socio-gram of the on-line group shows a reflecting picture, with a division into two groups. The first one is composed of 27 individuals who were classified according to their collective answers into three subdivisions (A, B, C). The second group was composed of 42 persons who believed that the social construction of online media intermingles with a “pros and cons” paradigm, as will be shown.

*Patterns of users' conception of the social construction
of online media (Group I)*

Subdivison (A)	Subdivision (B)	Subdivision (C)
Socially Networking	Gaining Information	Could be Ethically coded
Informative	Diversity of Content	Credibility-Driven
Diverse Content	Pluralistic	Regulatory
Entertaining	Diffusion of Ideas	Feeding Data
Productive Content	Productive Content	
Free Sphere	Intrusion of Privacy	
Accessing Information	Informative	
Subject to Regulation		

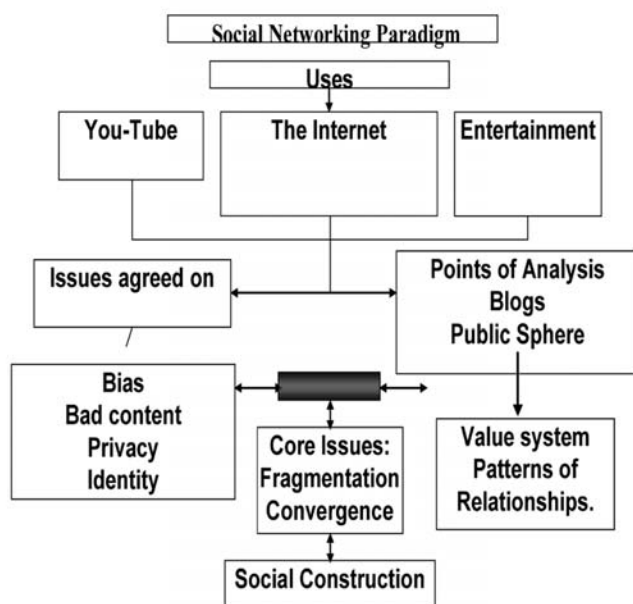
Bermejo (2009) believes that there is a need for studying the manufacture and analysis of the online audience in response to the evolution of the audience. To this effect, MacGregor (2007) found in his study that communication scholars need to get data about users of the online media to determine the types of values of their media content. Furthermore, he found that the social and the organizational contexts, rather than the technological ones, shape the way online professionals react to their new tool. Hence, it appears substantial to thoroughly consider the social aspects of the use of new online media platforms like YouTube. Chung and Yoo (2006) identified three different forms of interactivity: information seeking, socialization, and entertainment, sustained also with what the researcher found in the current study.

Cheshire and Antin (2008) maintained that social psychological effects play a major role in studying online media field experiments. The outcome seems pivotal and worthy of consideration in conducting qualitative methods in new media studies. The socio-gram analysis that the researcher used in the current study revealed the importance of examining the systems of values, relationships, and conducts of the online users.

Bañuelos (2008) contended that the practices of new media users can be conceived of two systems of cultural consumption and social interaction. In light of this, he developed a semiotic study of the textual construction and the reception categories resulting from the social interaction processes.

Sundar (2004) argued that there is a need for developing theories tackling the effects of interactivity. Based on this, he categorized three classes of interactivity: behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive. The importance of these three items reveals the power of interactivity and social interaction in initiating actions, changing the attitudes and altering the consumption of media content and information processing.

Thus, the previous qualitative discussion is aimed at giving a critical idea about the construction of the online audience. The researcher came up with the following model that may explain what the current study arrived at. The items included in this model are cited and based on the qualitative findings.



The Qualitative Model of Social Networking

In terms of the research implications, Fuery (2009) maintained that the culture of new media revolves around four key conceptual moments:

1. How we locate the endless attributes of the new media.
2. What is the impact of new media on the formation of identity?
3. How can new media be conceived of in terms of relations?

The previous questions pave the way for communication scholars to explore new horizons in the genre of new media. To this effect, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006: 27) stress that the nature of the relationship is more central to the analysis of new media and their social consequences. Hollingshead and Contractor (2006: 123) believed that technology could be thought of as a set of social practices that emerge and evolve over time. Finally, Slack and Wise (2006: 141) advanced the need for a cultural approach to study the current effects of new media, based on the radical contextuality of the phenomena under study.

6. Conclusion

It was found in the current study that new media platforms are substantially changing the landscape of audience consumption. There was a need for knowing why some of the Arab audience members use online media, and how they interact with it. The article tackled some contradictory issues resulting from using online media among a sample of the Arab audience. Issues of selectivity, diversity of content, the virtual public sphere, social networking were explored in this study. A conceptual framework has been developed based on the “uses and gratifications” theory. Two important hypotheses have been examined and proved, whereas a third hypothesis was tested but not proved. It was found that there is a causal relationship of co-dependency between the audience of online media and the mainstream media content. In addition, there is a reciprocal relationship between the richness and quality of online media content and its primacy and relevance among the online media audience. The issues of social networking and social construction need some more future studies to assess the extent to which the audience is socially constructed.

In terms of theoretical impact, it can be said that the researcher found a dire need for coining new theories and approaches to study the new media genre. This coincided with what Rohle (2005) asked for: a model that provides an effective tool to map the intricate relations of power and knowledge around the internet, as well as the possibility to analyze how processes of subjectification are fostered or circumscribed in specific settings.

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Aliens, Predators and Global Issues: The Evolution of a Narrative Formula

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ABSTRACT: The article tackles the genre of science fiction in film by focusing on the *Alien* and *Predator* series and their crossover. By resorting to “the fictional worlds” theory (Dolezel, 1998), the relationship between the fictional and the real is examined so as to show how these films refract political issues in various symbolic ways, with special reference to the ideological construct of “global threat”.

Keywords: film, science fiction, narrative, allegory, otherness, fictional worlds.

RESUMEN: en este artículo se aborda el género de la ciencia ficción en el cine mediante el análisis de las películas de la serie *Alien* y *Predator* y su combinación. Utilizando la teoría de “los mundos ficcionales” (Dolezel, 1999), se examina la relación entre los planos ficcional y real para mostrar cómo estas películas reflejan cuestiones políticas de diversas formas simbólicas, con especial referencia a la construcción ideológica de la “amenaza global”.

Palabras clave: film, ciencia ficción, narrativa, alegoría, alteridad, mundos ficcionales

In 2004 20th Century Fox released *Alien vs. Predator*, directed by Paul Anderson and starring Sanaa Latham, Lance Henriksen, Raoul Bova and Ewen Bremner. The film combined and continued two highly successful film series: those of the 1979 *Alien* and its three successors *Aliens* (1986), *Alien 3* (1992) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997), and of the two *Predator* movies, from 1987 and 1990 respectively. *Alien vs. Predator* never achieved the critical and commercial success of its predecessors. Nevertheless three years later the brothers Colin and Greg Strause came out with yet another sequel/crossover, *Aliens vs. Predator*:

Requiem, which was slashed by the critics and even nominated for the *Golden Raspberry* award. Artistically and commercially, these two last productions may not have made much of a mark. Yet their bringing together in a deathly combat two memorable alien monsters is indicative of more than a desire to capitalize on the earlier box-office hits.

Clearly falling into the genre of the popular cinema, *Alien vs. Predator* and *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* open themselves to critical interpretation as works which refract issues extending beyond those related to their genre and artistic medium. In what follows, I will examine this relationship between the fictional and the real in the two crossovers and their predecessors from the perspective of the fictional worlds theory. This is an angle that allows a deeper look into the composition and the dynamics of their fictional universes, as well as into the way they engage with the current political problematic, more specifically the issue of global threat. The premise on which my analysis is built is that although the movies' formulaic character seems to reduce the power of their referentiality outside their own genre, their worlds inevitably rely on the structural principles of the real world. In the words of philosopher Nelson Goodman (1978: 6), "worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking". The potential for change and for the production of conflict, I contend, lies not only in the generic requirements of the formula that they follow but also in the way they respond to the idea of global threat.

That global threat has become an intrinsic aspect of the whole notion of globalization hardly needs defending. *Alien vs. Predator* and *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* came out at a time when globalization had ceased to be just a term bandied among a select group of scholars and economists. Some years before, R. Robertson (1992: 8) in his now classic study *Globalization* had defined it as "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole". Issues of market economics, trade and politics may have trivialized the metaphor and turned the debate away from the process of conceptual change it implies. The events from 9/11, however, together with daily reports on successful and barely averted terrorist attacks, environmental issues such as global warming, the spreading of diseases originating in one part of the earth to geographically distant places and, at present, the ever widening grip of the financial crisis – all these have activated the awareness of the oneness of the individual and the world, the sense that the world is truly small enough to be contained in the individual consciousness. The instantaneous access to information from every corner of the earth builds up a narrative of globalization that brings into this consciousness not only the freedom of being able to move within a world without borders but also the opposite process of the convergence of the world with all its invisible borders within the self. As a result, the very notion of personality becomes dependent on a string of related questions. Is a global solution to the global threats outlined

above at all possible? If yes, is it contingent, while a local one permanent, and *vice versa*? Should local threats be dealt with locally or should they always be treated as potentially global? And finally, is there such a thing as a global hero? Because of their pertinence and importance on an institutional and a personal level, these questions have shaped public discourse and have found a way into the arts, including the popular ones. This has resulted in a corresponding change in the semantic content of the worlds of their fictions, which have become more centred on the actuality of the present than on the escapism of an impossible, wholly invented past or future.

By “fictional worlds” here I mean aesthetic constructs constituting state of affairs whose “truth” is intentionally validated – that is, the truth of its propositions can be verified only within the system of the fictional world itself. Fictional worlds do not really “exist” in the ordinary sense of the word and cannot be accessed directly but only through semiotic channels (Dolezel, 1998: 20). For the reader of literature or the film audience, reaching and understanding a fictional world depends on the extent to which its elements coincide with or depart from those in the real world. At work in this operation is what Ryan calls “the principle of minimal departure” – “we reconstrue the world of a fiction as being the closest possible to the A[ctual] W[orld], given the information provided by the text” (Ryan, 1991: 558). In science fiction proper, as she points out, identity and compatibility of properties and of members may be absent: quite often, imagined new technological advances lead to a new inventory of human and non-human elements such as extraterrestrial beings, planets with strange life-forms and even different physical laws (Ryan, 1991: 563). Still, unlike absurdist literature, the world of science fiction preserves the logical and linguistic laws that humanity on Earth is familiar with, so that the audience do not experience any difficulty establishing and putting together its facts, however imaginary or “other-wordly” they may be. Another important aspect of fictional worlds is that they constitute not a single entity but a unity, a universe of subworlds, each of which is created by the knowledge, desires and the intentions of the fictional characters and the constraints imposed upon them by others. Plot is the result of this modal differentiation – that is, of the conflict between individual worlds. Consequently, resolution is the minimization and possibly the elimination of difference between intention, hope and desire and their fulfilment, which happens as the outcome of the interaction between the different characters’ individual subworlds (Ryan, 1985: 735-7; Dolezel, 1998: 113).

The two film series I am considering here require a minimum of effort in accessing their worlds, for they make use only of certain elements of science fiction. Their action takes place in spaces that closely resemble or are identical to those of the real world – rooms in spaceships filled with familiar objects, the jungle of Guatemala, the ice and snow of Antarctica, the streets and buildings of

Los Angeles, and finally Gunnison, Colorado. Moreover, looking at the changing locale of the *Alien* and *Predator* series chronologically, we can observe an increase in the degree of the accessibility of their fictional worlds. Each series in fact charts a trajectory that from a geographical point of view eventually brings the action within the confines of the real. The earliest film, *Alien*, and its successor, *Aliens*, are set on the planetoid LV-426 and in spaceships. The action in the third film, *Alien 3*, takes place exclusively within the enclosed spaces of the penal space colony Fiorina 161, which, even by today's standards, is identifiable as an obsolete foundry facility of no obvious use except to keep the violent prisoners busy. The locale of the action in *Alien Resurrection* is still a space research vessel, *USM Auriga*, but the end of the film shows the survivors heading for Earth. Earth is in fact a controlling point in the spatial disposition for the action throughout the series as it is the headquarters of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation which steers the activities of its ships' crews in its criminal interests. With each of the four films, the Corporation's earthly interests acquire a more central position, with the result that the ethical issues that in the first film take quite abstract forms gradually become the concrete motivation for action. Thus, in *Alien* the conflict is born out of a clash between loyalty to the Corporation, on the one hand, and loyalty to the other members of the crew, friendship and trust, the courage of one's convictions, on the other. In *Alien 2* the main character Ripley already acts mostly in defense of the little girl Newt but also of the independence of the individual as inviolable biological territory. In *Alien Resurrection* we are immersed in twenty-first-century ethical debates such as those around cloning and the privatization of biological and medical innovation, and on loyalty to the company against that to humanity as a whole.

The two *Predator* films are seemingly more formula-bound and therefore less prone to exploiting the difference between the actual and the fictional world. Even here, however, there is a movement closer and closer to "home" as the wild vegetation of Guatemala in *Predator* gives way to the streets and buildings of Los Angeles in *Predator 2*. In *Alien vs. Predator* and *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* remoteness is again replaced by closeness as the second film takes the action from the Antarctic island, where its predecessor ends, to Gunnison, Colorado. Such geographic relocation makes the fictional world of the second film highly accessible by virtue of the familiarity of the locale and the homely atmosphere around the protagonists – ex-prisoner Dallas Howard and his brother Ricky in their less than modest home, Sheriff Eddie Morales in the main street, army veteran Kelly O'Brien at her own home, the teenagers at the High School swimming pool. There is much less "science" and a great deal more "fiction" in this movie, which continually brings the evocation of horror to the fore of its intentions by setting it forth against the ordinary and the normal – teenage love, marital problems, social inequalities, distrust of governments of any kind.

Certainly, as Carroll (1990: 13) and Neale (2000: 51) point out, the genres of science fiction and horror are frequently almost indistinguishable. Moreover, when they are combined with action and adventure, they double and triple their effects of “fictionality” and “horror.” Sequels, however, tend to disappoint by becoming too repetitive. The makers of the *Alien* and *Predator* series sought to eliminate that danger by combining the two sources of horror – the alien and the predator – in a crossover. First created in comic books and then in computer and video games, just as were those of Superman and Batman and of Superman and Spiderman, the crossover was presaged in *Predator 2*. Its director Stephen Hopkins prepared for a future box-office hit by placing among the predator’s trophies the skull of an alien from the other series. Hollywood’s typical foresight for commercial success aside, the crossover and Earth as its location would require some narrative justification. Aliens and predators inhabit different fictional universes, and as narrative semantics has it, their coming together involves radical changes in their ontological status (Dolezel, 1998: 17-18). To have them side by side or facing each other needs a change in their ontological identity by making them inhabit a common world where their characteristics may be compatible with the characteristics of this world, but also with those of the Earth to which the action is eventually brought. That is why *Alien vs. Predator* presents a complex, and highly improbable, prehistory to the two series. As the Italian archeologist Sebastian explains, it was predators that actually brought civilization to Earth. Every hundred years they journey here to fight aliens as a rite of passage. For this purpose they themselves breed aliens, using humans as their biological hosts. Aliens and predators therefore fight each other much as toreadors and bulls do, with the difference that the ritualistic nature of the conflict may have a deliberately fatal conclusion. For if the aliens win, the predators destroy the whole area – or the whole civilization that has developed in the area.

As this account shows, there is little justification for a global conflict between aliens and predators, on the one hand, and the Earth’s population on the other, unless the extraterrestrial creatures somehow transcend the boundaries of their fictional worlds, not only in ontological (and geographical) terms but also in terms of their intentions. For as long as they remain bound to their original domains, they will not present any threat outside the local one. Yet, the first three of the *Alien* films show that such limits are untenable – both because of the presence of the Corporation as a composite character with its own intentions (to have the aliens in their laboratories on Earth) and also because of the alien’s biological nature. Aliens, as the films and the trivia around them inform us, are xenomorphs – life forms that have no rational or emotional powers; their only reason for being is biological, that is, they exist only in order to multiply. As philosopher Stephen Mulhall (2002: 19) aptly defines them, they are “Nature

incarnate or sublimed, a nightmare embodiment of the natural realm understood as utterly subordinate to, utterly exhausted by, the twinned Darwinian drives to survive and reproduce". In terms of the theory of fictional worlds, they are almost identical to natural phenomena and so do not create the possibility for a balanced antagonistic relationship between them and humans (Ryan, 1985: 735). The whole burden of the construction of conflict therefore falls on the human characters' private domains – their worlds of knowledge, moral values, obligations, wishes and intentions, in whose differentiation is concentrated the entire dynamic potential of the fictional world. This is done not only on the level of the action but also by using the narrative codes of the cinema to focus attention on the image of the body as a symbolic node of meanings that transcend those evoked by the plot. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that *Alien* (1979) and the next three films in the series have attracted so much scholarly attention. Chiefly discussed from a feminist perspective (Newton, 1990; Creed, 1990; Kavanagh, 1990), the encoded meanings are seen by Stephen Mulhall as a debate on such metaphysical issues as the relation between human identity and embodiment, between subject and subjection. The seriousness with which the *Alien* series has been viewed by scholarly criticism is in large measure due to the masterful way in which its directors – Ridley Scott, James Cameron, David Fincher and Jean-Pierre Jeunet – wield the iconography of the visual medium for an exploration of these issues. But the achievement of these established names in the cinema world can be seen also in terms of the enrichment of the semantic content of the formulae within which they are working. What we find in the *Alien* series is that it has managed to build modal domains within the narrow scope of a narrative world whose characters are by definition highly functional.

Tzvetan Todorov (1981: 50), in his now famous formulation of narrative, specifies its basic structural model as a progressive change from equilibrium or plenitude through the intervention of a disrupting force to a new equilibrium or plenitude. The latter is not the same as the first. But given that within the social world the disrupting forces come through social interaction and are part of human life, conflict cannot disappear completely. As Ryan (1985: 733) points out, this can happen only when the ending is either eschatological or apocalyptic: "all the villains should join the ranks of the good guys, or everyone should die". Yet, it is an obligatory part of the formula of horror fiction that neither of these possible endings should be allowed: at least one of the protagonists should survive and it is the monster that should die or be expelled from the world, albeit temporarily. The paradox of horror fiction, as Noel Carroll indicates throughout his comprehensive study of the aesthetics of the genre, resides in its ability to offer the mutually compensating emotions of disgust and fascination. It does so, according to Carroll (1990), by providing readers or viewers with an ending that asserts their cognitive power, the ability to understand the physical and the

cultural framework within which we, as humans, operate. “The confrontation and defeat of the monster in horror fictions”, he writes, “might be systematically read as a restoration and defense of the established world view found in existing cultural schemas” (Carroll, 1990: 200). Carroll’s approach explains why, even though we may suspect that not all aliens have been destroyed, or may believe that yet another predator will come back to earth for his safari, our pleasure on seeing the plot of each film in the series come to a closure is in fact increased rather than lessened by the knowledge that the familiar order is reinstated, that what we know and who we are is confirmed, rather than rejected by the intrusion of the alien.

But what is this “familiar” order, the model-world, to which, presumably, each of the films I am examining here returns us as we watch, with relief, the alien being left outside the physical borders of the human at the end of each film? It is one which is still regulated, as it is at the outset, by corporate forces whose power knows no borders. In the *Alien* series, it is symbolized by the Corporation which seeks to retrieve alien eggs from the *Sulaco*. Its transnational identity is expressed in its evocative double-barrelled name – Weyland-Yutani. Although its activities are never clearly specified, it is this commercial enterprise that both sets and destroys the distinctions between cognitive and cultural categories. For while the crew, with the exception of Ash, at first believe – and the audience do as well – that they are on a quest to unravel a secret, it turns out that the goal is appropriative rather than merely epistemological. The Weyland-Yutani Corporation ostensibly desires the acquisition and the possession of the alien for scientific purposes, and claims it will keep it within the strictly delimited territory of the laboratory. In fact, the Corporation’s true goal is to use the new life form for military purposes. The company’s intention and the events that it triggers therefore mock the Enlightenment myth of the triumph of reason over matter, of culture over nature. For the alien, which is pure Nature, cannot be contained in the laboratory, which is Culture understood as science and technology. Nor can it be held outside the bodies that symbolize and place limits on Culture – the spaceship’s crew and especially Ripley’s own human frame. Given its generative peculiarities – its ability to reproduce using any human or humanoid host – there are really no barriers to the alien’s propagation. It is an adversary that acts without constraints and this is a fact that disbalances the plot in its favour. As Ash in *Alien* says, “You can’t kill it [...] I admire its purity [...] a survivor [...] unclouded by conscience, remorse or delusions of morality”. Ash’s words equally apply to the Corporation itself, for it is the ultimate survivor. The battle between it and common humanity takes on a symbolic significance by being staged in locales more and more stripped of human content. In the course of the series the spaces in which it is fought become more and more enclosed, until finally they converge into the surrealist locale of a chase along the corridors

of the prison ship in *Aliens 3*. Along with this the illusion that the monster, be it biological or corporate, can be read as a local threat that can be eliminated using local means grows into an ironic comment on the *hubris* of modern humanity and the vacuity of its statements regarding global order. That is why it is only logical that contrary to generic expectations, the ending of *Aliens 3* is eschatological. In spite of her resistance, Ripley is impregnated to give birth to the alien queen. To prevent this happening, she sacrifices herself and in this way eliminates the apocalypse, which offers itself as the only alternative narrative closure. What she does, in fact, is use the only locality that she fully controls – her own body, which has served as the ground and the basis of her self-identification, having progressively lost all others, such as those of a warrant officer, member of a team and comrade, a free person among convicts, and, most importantly, a real and then a surrogate human mother.

In addition to this, as critics Zoe Sofia (1987: 128) and Yvonne Tasker (1993: 49-53) observe, the extraterrestrial monster as a figure in science fiction evokes analogies between the alien, on the one hand, and the racial and cultural “other” as seen by the Western and in particular by the American cultural paradigm, on the other. The association is particularly transparent in the *Predator* series. Predators, according to this fiction, are humanoids from a technologically advanced but culturally primitive civilization, signalled by their dreadlocks and the grafting of advanced weapon power onto spears and knives. They are hunters with a strict code of honour which includes respect and mercy for pregnant women, children and unarmed adults. Defined in this way through their visual image and their actions and especially through the wilful self-destruction which ends their lives in case of failure, they blend a nostalgic backward glance towards the noble savage with the imaginary figure of the technologically endowed superman. However, because they are constructed as a patchwork of features associated in popular imagination with the culturally primitive, the predators’ fictional existence is also grounded in their civilization, which defines for them a narrow but extremely potent narrative universe. Like the aliens in the other series – and like the West’s dangerous Other – they have an intention-world which defies rationality. There is a major difference, though – the predators’ obligation-world, whose semantic content boils down to sticking to their ritualistic culture at all costs, overpowers all other private domains. This specific disbalance is important for the delineation of their scope of action. A specimen of the imagined primitive, the predator can only function locally, that is, within the area he has designated as his hunting ground. Yet, his other side – the possession of advanced technology – is just as salient. The combination of the two prompts fears that he can turn any place in the world into his space of action. Indeed, it seems only logical to see him moving from the jungles of Guatemala – his hunting ground in *Predator* – to the thickly inhabited Los Angeles in *Predator 2*, where he causes destruction

on a massive scale visually reminiscent of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre. The contemporary viewer may well find the associations with this attack difficult to ignore. For, while he is single-mindedly focused on the collection of trophies, the predator is nevertheless equipped with a nuclear device. This is what he triggers when he has no chance of winning, and destroying himself like a suicide bomber, he destroys all others in a vast area. The power of savage tradition, the blind following of ritual, the total disregard for the suffering of his victims – all these qualities that make up his world of moral values create a dynamic of response insisting that humanity has to fight for its survival not only in physical but also in civilization terms.

At any rate, the predator being and the first two films in which it features are also solidly ensconced in the conceptual and narrative space of the masculine, iconographically represented in the visual imagery of the extraterrestrial creature and its action-hero opponents played by Arnold Swarzenegger and Danny Glover in *Predator* and *Predator 2*, created in 1987 and 1990 respectively. Possessed with superior bodily strength, the predator as a generic alien requires that civilization offer a counterpart, a human icon whose supreme masculinity is contained in an equally supreme body. As Tasker (1993: 104) points out, “the cinematic representation of the hero is bedevilled by the need to provide a space in which he can perform”. Arnold Swarzenegger and Danny Glover with their bodybuilder’s frames are well placed to satisfy this requirement. They are modern versions of Odysseus, who can combine muscular power with immense courage and cunning and thus outwit any adversary and eventually kill him. But what helps the arch-heroes most is not just biology and intellect. It is the structure of their own personal universe of worlds, in which the constraints related to ethics and morality endow them with the necessary advantage over the cultural primitive. For the secret of their success is, as with Ripley in *Alien*, the assumption of sovereignty over their bodies in the interest of humanity and even against the power structure that initially directs their actions. So, Dutch in *Predator* deviates from the army regulations when he does not kill his guerrilla hostage Anna and, later, when he saves her at the peril of his own life. The severance of the link between the organization and the hero is even more evident in *Predator 2*, where Harrigan’s worlds of obligation and moral values eventually merge. He acts against orders, defying his superiors from the Police, but never betraying his intention to do the impossible in order to save the city from the menace. The ideological emphasis thus emerging is that the local threat can be eliminated through the unquestionably American version of masculinity. Typically, Dutch and Harrigan are self-reliant but also loyal to the team, able to act on the moment and at the same time possessing enough foresight to predict the enemy’s moves, tough and tender-hearted at the same time – in short, they are the die-hards who will save the world.

This certainty is, however, undermined in the 2004 *Aliens vs. Predator* film. Again, the plot is triggered by the Weyland-Yutani Corporation but the film removes the ideological levers of its predecessors. Mr. Weyland himself now appears on the scene, which is this time an abandoned whaling station on an island off Antarctica, from where a Corporation satellite has received strange signals. Fatally ill, the tycoon wants to make his mark in person and, as a person, bequeath to humanity some kind of legacy in the form of a discovery. A breeding ground for aliens which the expedition unwittingly sets out of control, the subterranean structure built by the predators for their centennial visits, becomes not only the researchers' last destination but also the beginning of humanity's destruction. Like the *Alien* series, this film also features a woman in the central role, yet the beautiful, athletic African American Alexa Woods, played by Sanaa Lathan, presents a singular gesture to political correctness. Unlike Ripley, Dutch and Harrigan, she is not part of any organization – like the other members of the team she is free-lance, hired for this expedition with her own consent. The team itself is international, reversing the negative meaning of the transnational attached to the Weyland-Yutani Corporation in the *Alien* series, but also removing the narrow American dimensions of the two *Predator* films. The combination of new circumstances – the loosened grip of the Corporation / the organization and its head, the earth as the place where evil is literally bred, the genuine quest on which the characters have embarked – all these paradoxically disempower the fighters against the mortal enemy. A truly Arnoldian emanation of the best of civilized humanity separately embodied in each human character, political correctness, intellectual curiosity and moral integrity prove to be helpless before the aliens. Nothing but political maneuvering can stop the latter from starting their infestation of the earth. So, left entirely on her own, Alexa has no choice but to resort to an alliance with the predator. “The enemy of my enemy is my ally”, she says, and teams up with the technological savage who alone can overpower the biological perfection of the alien. The contingency of her tactical move reverberates with echoes from political decisions made by the West through the 1980s and 1990s. Its rationale emerges from the awareness that evil has the power to transcend borders and should be contained by collective, rather than individual effort. There is in this a strand of the optimism characteristic of the post-2001 years when the hope that international threats such as Al Qaeda, or the drug cartels in Latin America, could be quashed, if not eliminated, provided there was concerted international effort. But what the film ultimately shows through its narrative is that the victory achieved in this way is only provisional. For the dangerous Other to civilization has yet another quality not envisaged by its humanistically-minded opponents – it can produce hybrids not only with its superior humans but also with its own enemy. Ash's assertion in *Alien* that pure biology has no limits seems to find its confirmation in this sequel, reverting the

film's narrative back to its earlier ideological underpinnings derived from racial and ethnical issues. In the final account, the alien proves its invulnerability, as it manages to impregnate the predator to produce the most dangerous being on earth – the hybrid Predalien.

Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem, whose protagonist the Predalien is, has been found to be the least successful of the *Alien* and *Predator* series. Yet, in terms of the content and dynamics of its fictional world, it is the richest among them. The latest transformation of the extraterrestrial monster, the supreme form of Freud's uncanny, the Predalien finds itself in small-town America and the beginning of the film is devoted to such occurrences as can be found in the majority of mainstream works about daily life in the USA. Marital problems, social divisions and their impact on the very young, the fate of ex-criminals – all these quickly reel off in the film's opening and leave their stamp on the ensuing horrific events. However, this saturation with realistic detail and mini-narratives hampers rather than propels the main plot, precisely because the particulars are not functional, unlike the everyday objects and the minimalistic setting on the spaceships in the *Alien* films, or the familiar natural and urban jungle in the *Predator* ones. The characters in *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* are so immersed in their everyday problems that none of them can become the kind of hero who has the potential to fight and conquer evil. The only means to deal with it is in the control of the force that supersedes the individual: the government. Its weapon is a nuclear bomb that will bring about the desired end – the Predalien's and the predators' destruction but at the cost of much predictable "collateral damage". Those who escape death do so by sheer force of luck while the ones who die are in no way less deserving to live.

The appearance of the American military as the new and the only successful agent in the battle against the uncontrollable threat seals the narrative line built by the *Alien* and *Predator* series in an unexpected yet logical way. Colonel Stevens directs the offensive against the alien intruders with the nonchalance of a predator. As a character whose actions alone bring the narrative to its closure, he takes up the role of the victor without the required complexity of a private constellation of worlds, and most importantly, without a domain of moral values. His sphere is in fact limited to just one world: that of necessity and possibility. As scholars such as Dolezel (1998: 12-24) and Ronen (1994: 17-34) have pointed out, however, this is a world only in logico-semantic and not in fictional terms. According to philosophical logic, necessity and possibility can form simple counterfactuals, whose exemplification in *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* can be stated as follows: if a threat of that magnitude appears, then the all-destructive military attack is the only option. Such reduction naturally involves cancelling the richness of the fictional world from which it emerges. In other words, the true global hero turns out to be the opposite of the generic stereotype employed

in horror and science fiction. He is ruthless and unimaginative, selfish and unthinking, physically powerful yet prompted to action by automatic responses to the situation. Put otherwise, the new global hero is a human predator and a moral alien.

I will not go so far as to claim that this makes the conclusion to the *Alien* and *Predator* movie series consciously allegorical but I cannot help seeing how close it comes to de Man's view of the prevalence of allegory in modernity as "the unveiling of an authentically temporal destiny. This unveiling takes place in a subject that has sought refuge against the impact of time in a natural world to which, in truth, it bears no resemblance" (de Man, 1983: 206). In cinematic terms, the ever growing reliance on scenes of violence and carnage and the very disappearance of the conventional action hero that mark *Aliens* vs. *Predator: Requiem* seem to me an indication of the powerlessness of the horror genre featuring extraterrestrials to live up to its moralistic underpinnings. Nor is it capable of accommodating the idea of a global order "naturally", enforced by the moral or ethical constraints that formulate the "civilized" human identity. Civilization's Other – primitive, untamable, irrepressible Nature – proves to be the only productive element in the narrative of global struggle against evil. For all its effort to somehow engage in its formula, the belief in rational knowledge, ethical obligation and basic moral values, the film ultimately represents an ironic comment that dismisses their validity. Hardly a single viewer among the millions who have watched the film all over the world will believe the woman who, shortly before Colonel Stevens gives his final order, says, "The government wouldn't do anything to harm its own citizens". I, for one, don't.

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The Popular on British Television: Global Perspectives, National Priorities, Local Preferences

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ABSTRACT: This article explores two related and highly significant aspects of British broadcasting: how the nature and identity of British television have been influenced by the potentially contradictory demands of high and low culture and associated popular and quality programming; and how (far) national broadcasting has been able to face the threat to its existence posed first by internationalisation and now by globalisation. After an initial discussion of the notions of the global and the popular, this study considers how past conceptions of the role of television affected attitudes to programming, before considering the difficulty of determining what is national, popular television in a world where domestic broadcasts and global pastiches are scheduled side by side. The conclusion examines how national and local characteristics have enabled British programmes to maintain popularity in the face of globalisation.

Keywords: Britishness, culture, identity, originality, quality, representation.

RESUMEN: El presente artículo explora dos aspectos relevantes de las retransmisiones británicas: cómo la identidad y naturaleza de la televisión británica se han visto influidas por las exigencias potencialmente contradictorias de la alta cultura, con su programación de calidad, y de la cultura popular, con su búsqueda de audiencia; y si la producción nacional ha resistido la amenaza, primero de la internacionalización y ahora, de la globalización. Tras una discusión inicial sobre las nociones del hecho popular y global, se aborda cómo ciertos conceptos pasados sobre el papel de la televisión han condicionado la programación de contenidos. Seguidamente, se exploran las dificultades para definir qué es una televisión nacional o popular en un mundo en el que productos locales y pastiches globales coexisten en la parrilla. La conclusión avanza que las características locales y nacionales han permitido a los programas británicos mantener su popularidad a pesar de la globalización.

Palabras clave: esencia británica, cultura, identidad, originalidad, calidad, representación.

As an integral facet of the social fabric,
broadcasting has provided access to events, ideas
and experiences ranging widely across cultural
and political life. (O'Malley, 1994: xi)

The case of British television is especially suitable for the exploration of the nuances of the popular and the global, for historical, linguistic and cultural reasons. The UK was the second country in the world to benefit from a television service and the first to establish a national broadcaster. As the United States was the dominant force behind the growth of radio in the 1920s and of television in the 1930s and has been the principal motor of globalisation in the media field, British broadcasting found itself, from the very start, obliged to define and maintain its own identity, for, despite linguistic differences sometimes unsuspected by non-English-speakers, American programmes are generally immediately understood and thus appreciated in Great Britain, not least because of their basis in a common cultural heritage. This study will examine the phenomenon of popular representation on the British screen from the advent of television in the 1950s to the turn of the 21st century. As by now there is no doubt that the audiovisual sphere has to evolve with global perspectives, one may wonder how far there is still the scope or even the need for a national or local cultural identity, and whether Britishness is necessary if television wants to remain popular, i.e. close to its public. After an initial discussion of the phenomena of the global and the popular, three points will be more particularly examined: the weight of past conceptions of television, the coexistence within British television of global pastiches and domestic broadcasts in different popular genres and a discussion of what could be seen as illustrations of pockets of resistance against a devouring global appetite.

1. The Global and the Popular

In these early years of the 21st century, we are constantly bombarded with the notion that globalisation is an irresistible force which is beyond the control of individual nation states and which subjects everyone to commercial decisions taken in distant boardrooms. Broadcasting cannot be immune to this trend, as Chris Barker explained ten years ago while discussing the ideas of Anthony Giddens (1990), for whom globalisation could be grasped not just in terms of the “world capitalist economy” and “the world military order”, but also of the “global information system” (Barker, 1999: 34), the latter necessarily including

the media in general and television in particular. Such views of the effects, or more precisely the dangers, of globalisation are supported by a number of observations. Few would deny that the process is accelerating at a pace unknown in the past, even if some commentators find comfort in the belief that it began as long ago as the 16th century with the expansion of trade and subsequent colonisation. Media globalisation began in the 19th century with the laying of telegraphic cables and the growth of news agencies, and was reinforced by the birth of the Hollywood studios. Nowadays, media ownership worldwide is in the hands of a small number of very large players,¹ who not only produce and screen programmes, but influence attitudes and behaviour, as their domination is not limited to the transmission of news and factual information, but extends to the field of entertainment where the manipulation of opinion, although perhaps more subtle or insidious, is nevertheless omnipresent, for what programmes broadcast globally have in common is their popular appeal. Equally worrying for those who fear globalisation is that the explosion of new technologies will inevitably offer new ways for these companies to impose their shows and series on an even wider public.

On the other hand, not all critics specialising in television and popular culture are prepared to accept Giddens' vision of globalisation as a modernist *juggernaut*, not least because television should be seen not as modernist (i.e. with a single dominating, homogenising impact) but as fragmentary and post-modernist, which allows for active interpretations by the audience which may counter the intentions of broadcasters. Reactions of women viewers in the Netherlands, as recorded by Ien Ang (1985), to the soap opera *Dallas*, widely vilified as an American mass culture vehicle for the glorification of American consumer capitalism, are a case in point. While some disliked and even hated the programme or watched it with what they considered a carefully calculated ironic distance, the many who liked it were somewhat defensive about enjoying something that others regarded as "trash". Their justifications for doing so included the view that the series could be construed as transmitting serious moral messages, such as that money cannot buy happiness, and the populist opinion that they had the right to watch whatever they wanted (see Barker, 1997: 119, 1999: 113; Strinati, 1995: 47). The fact that the *Dallas* model of international domination by a single series has not been enduring may itself be significant for the question of globalisation, for, as Peter Goodwin argued in 1998, there has been no talk of "wall-to-wall Baywatch or wall-to-wall X Files"² and "all

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1. i.e. the three original American networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) plus Turner and the Murdoch's News Corporation, along with Sony and the European giant Bertelsmann.
 2. A comment derived from French Culture Minister Jack Lang's famous reference to the dangers of "wall-to-wall Dallas".

the evidence of the last two decades [the 1980s and 1990s] shows that, at least in Europe, domestic television audiences have retained a stubborn preference for domestically produced programmes” (Goodwin, 1998: 5). This observation still holds good, although it might be prudent to extend it to locally as well as nationally-produced programmes and to emphasise that such programmes display or reflect national cultural preferences or characteristics.

Thus, the globalising of world media sparks different reactions from critics and audiences alike, and the meaning of the term as an economic or institutional phenomenon is generally understood, although within the programming context the designation “international” is often more accurate. The significance of the “popular” is more problematic. Tony Bennett’s (1981: 81-83) broad definition of “popular culture” is a good starting point for any discussion. He sees four possible interpretations: the popular is what many like and do; the popular is that which is outside the sphere of high culture; popular equates with mass, implying manipulation and passive consumption; and the popular might be that which is done by and for those who do it, rooted in the creative impulses of the people. Although Bennett’s remarks cover a broader field than television, they raise many of the key points relevant to British broadcasting. That watching television is a major leisure activity, practised by the majority of the world’s populations, is no longer in doubt, even in the age of the internet and video games. In the British context, viewing became, in the 1950s and 1960s, a new form of consumption of the mass media, replacing older types of activity such as the reading of comics (Hall & Whannel, 1969: 33) or cinema-going. Moreover, the small number of channels available to the British public until the 1980s meant that individual programmes were viewed, simultaneously, by a large slice of the population, although the exact numbers are open to doubt.³

Bennett’s second definition, implicitly contrasting high and popular (or low) culture, takes us into a more contentious field. It can be argued both generally that television is not an elitist but a mass medium in which “high” culture cannot have a regular place, and that in any case the distinction between high and low culture is at best a subjective value judgement, at worst an artificial separation which, in post-modern times, no longer exists. Nevertheless, underlying Bennett’s observation there is one notion which is essential to the debate about globalisation and British television, namely the question of quality, which first surfaced in the mid-1950s with the advent of commercial competition and continued in the arguments surrounding the reforms foreseen by the 1990 Broadcasting Act. Equally significant in the same context is Bennett’s

3. Before the creation of an independent body, the Broadcasters’ Audience Research Board (BARB), in 1981 the competing channels, BBC and ITV, collected and published their own separate and often contradictory data, which took no account of differences between various age and socio-economic groups.

third category. As with the question of quality, there was much debate in the 1950s over the distinctions to be drawn between a native popular culture and a threatening alien mass culture, while the linking of the popular with passivity and manipulation brings us back to the current debates about the dangers of globalisation. With its populist overtones, Bennett's final point takes us to the realm of popular history and traditions, which is easy to understand in the context of a whole culture, but which is mediated by television in quite particular ways. The participation of ordinary people in game shows and the like, as competitors or as members of a live audience, suggests a degree of active participation in the creation of a spectacle. It could moreover be argued that long-running television programmes attract viewers of different generations over substantial periods of time and thus become integrated into popular memory and folk culture.

2. Past and Present Conceptions of Television

Current British attitudes to the nature and role of television, amongst critics, social historians, politicians and the general public, can be traced back to the views which prevailed when radio programmes began after the First World War, and to the creation, in 1927, of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which is still the most significant broadcaster within the UK. The BBC's first Royal Charter gave it the triple mission of informing, educating and entertaining the public and this duty still survives.⁴ It is particularly relevant to any discussion of the popular that entertainment was the third and least important of the terms, for, unlike American radio which had been commercial from the start and had channels competing for audience, the BBC was a monopoly broadcaster, exclusively financed by the licence fee, which was under no obligation to please listeners, even less to pander to popular taste. The first Director-General of the BBC, John Reith, the dour son of a Scottish Presbyterian minister, was keen both to preserve the national character of broadcasting in the face of potential American invasion and to use the precious resource of the airwaves as a means of educating listeners both by improving their minds and by encouraging standards of behaviour, for example by broadcasting serious talks and classical music, or religious services. Such a diet was not to everyone's liking and before Reith left the BBC in 1938, radio companies based outside the UK⁵ had begun to give those in the south of England lucky enough to be within range of their transmitters a

4. These obligations apply to all five of the existing Public Service Broadcasting channels (BBC 1, BBC 2, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5).

5. The best known were Radio Luxembourg and Radio Normandie (or Normandy) which transmitted respectively from the Grand Duchy and the French coast near Fécamp.

taste of what other nations could hear by playing popular (dance) music, often by American artists. Regular television broadcasting began in 1936, showing two daily Mickey Mouse cartoons,⁶ “comedy series, thriller serials, costume drama, quiz games and sporting events” (Currie, 2000: 17), but only to a fortunate elite,⁷ a state of affairs which continued until well into the 1950s.

Post-war television continued in the same vein, as the management of the BBC clung to the view that radio should remain pre-eminent and limited the resources given to the audiovisual medium. The first post-war programmes in June 1946 had a certain international flavour,⁸ symbolically emphasising that Britain still had a role in the world, but there was little of popular appeal beyond cartoons and children’s programmes. Viewing remained a minority pursuit until the televised Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June 1953, which was both an occasion for popular national celebration within the UK, where it was seen as marking the end of post-war austerity and heralding a new “Elizabethan Age”, and an international or even global event which gave BBC television the opportunity to shine on the world stage, broadcasting live to France, Holland and West Germany and making recordings rapidly available in Canada, the United States and Japan.⁹ Domestically, the Coronation was a triumph, bringing the first mass audience. Some 20 million people watched the religious ceremony, most of them in the homes of friends or family, for still little more than 2 million television licences had been issued.¹⁰

The growth in audience inevitably led to the expansion of television, and with it to the creation (in September 1955) of a commercial competitor for the BBC in the form of ITV (Independent Television), funded by advertising revenues. It was also to launch the first real debate about the nature and purpose of television. Public opinion generally welcomed the possibility of more lively broadcasting than the BBC offered, and, as the ITV companies soon realised, the viewing public had changed, to include a much wider spectrum of the population whose expectations were different. After an initial and financially disastrous period in which ITV modelled its programming on the BBC and failed to attract the audience required by advertisers, the decision was made to provide what viewers

6. Such cartoons were already familiar fare in British cinemas.

7. Television sets were expensive and broadcasts could only be received in the London area.

8. Monday 10th June featured Sylvie Saint-Clair, the French singing star and *Transatlantic Quiz*, and Tuesday 11th June screened an adaptation of Vercors’ *Le Silence de la Mer*.

9. The British press was horrified by the breaks made in the transmission of the most solemn moments in the Coronation ceremony and was quick to make unflattering comparisons between British and American broadcasting. An advertisement for a deodorant and an interview with J. Fred Muggs, “the charismatic chimpanzee”, were thought particularly tasteless.

10. By 1955, the number of television licences had more than doubled to 4.5 million. Details of audience figures and Coronation coverage are from Briggs (1979: 241, 460-472).

wanted. Roland Gillett, Controller of Programmes at Associated Rediffusion (the contractor for weekday programmes in the London area) explained the move to popular television¹¹ as follows: “Let’s face it once and for all. The public likes girls, wrestling, quiz shows and real-life drama. We gave them the Halle orchestra, Foreign Press Club, floodlit football and visits to the local fire station. Well, we’ve learned. From now on, what the public wants, it’s going to get” (Sendall, 1982: 328).

The implications of this change were considerable and particularly relevant to the subject of this article. Many of the new programmes shown by ITV, notably the quiz shows mentioned by Gillett, were criticised for their alleged mediocrity or appeal to the basic human instinct of greed. Moreover, as many of them were modified versions of American models, the link between international programmes, popular appeal, alien mass culture and poor quality was easily made. ITV was duly castigated in the report of the Pilkington Committee into broadcasting, published in 1962, both for the lack of quality and variety in its programming, and for its failure to recognise the influence television might have on behaviour; but these judgements did not have the desired effect. It was the elitism of the Committee which was questioned by commentators, who, in keeping with the liberal ethos of the 1960s, emphasised the importance of individual choice and the equal value of different tastes. Furthermore, the BBC itself was faced, for the first time, with the need to take more heed of popular demand in its own programming if it wished to retain the public confidence which justified the continuance of the licence fee. What followed, and has been considered a “Golden Age” of British television, was a period of some twenty years of duopoly during which ITV and the BBC had separate and reliable sources of finance, introduced colour broadcasting and produced programmes which attained high levels of popularity or quality and sometimes both.¹² At the same time, both channels made full prime-time use of American drama series (*Dallas*, *Dynasty*, *Peyton Place* and *The Waltons*, for example), boosting their own viewing figures and contributing to the programmes’ global impact.

Since the 1980s, the pace of change has accelerated. The introduction of 24-hour broadcasting brought the need for new programmes, a demand that was best met by inexpensive direct (usually American) imports or local variations

11. ITV preferred the less pejorative “people’s television”. The name Independent Television itself had been chosen to avoid the negative connotations of “commercial” broadcasting.

12. ITV’s soap operas were unrivalled by the BBC: while it was the Corporation which produced the most enduring of situation comedies, ITV’s costume drama *Upstairs Downstairs* surpassed the BBC’s (black and white) *Forsyte Saga*, both nationally and internationally. The 68 episodes of *Upstairs, Downstairs* attracted total viewing figures of over 300 million against 150 million for the 28 of the *Forsyte Saga*, although the latter did have the unlikely distinction of being sold to the Soviet Union.

of internationally formatted broadcasts.¹³ The fourth British television channel, Channel 4, was intended to break the mould of established broadcasting for it was to recognise the diverse aspirations within British society by providing for minorities and was enabled to do so by being subsidised by the rest of the ITV network. It was also to be a publisher broadcaster, whose output was to be purchased, mostly from independent companies, rather than produced in house, thus starting the trend towards Britain's adoption of a worldwide market for programmes. By the end of the decade, technological advances had made global cable and satellite broadcasting a reality, encouraged the activities of commercial giants able to exploit the new possibilities and led Margaret Thatcher's market-oriented government to plan the deregulation of the audiovisual landscape. The 1990 Broadcasting Act aimed to achieve the difficult, and ultimately impossible, balancing trick of creating competition between ITV broadcasters while improving choice and quality.¹⁴ The success of BSkyB satellite television in the UK, followed by the arrival of other international broadcasters with huge financial clout, along with further technological advances, has brought about an explosion in the number of channels available and consequent fragmentation, with niche broadcasting being available for every taste or special interest group, thus calling into question the notion of national television. Nevertheless, the latest statistics from Ofcom, the government-appointed regulator, remain ambiguous. Almost 90% of homes have multi-channel viewing, and, in 2008, the five public service providers attracted 68% of the audience at peak time, and 61 % overall, figures which have been steadily declining for ten years, but have added audience thanks to their extra free-to-air digital channels (e.g. BBC 3, ITV 2, More 4). The conclusion thus seems to be that domestic broadcasters have managed to survive in the multi-channel world, even though they have lost ground, and that British broadcasting for a British audience still has sufficient popular appeal to ensure its continued existence. In the light of what follows, it is interesting that the most watched programme, at the time of writing (September 2009), was ITV's talent show *The X Factor* with 11.8 million viewers.

3. Popular Genres: Global Pastiche and Domestic Originality

The high ratings enjoyed by *The X Factor* are not conclusive for defining what is, and what is not, national popular television, because of the nature of the

13. A format is a licence to produce a national version of a copyrighted foreign television programme and to use (the whole or part of) its name.

14. Traditionalists condemned the government's ideologically dogmatic approach, claiming, not without reason, that the quality of programmes would suffer and that "dumbing down" would become the order of the day.

programme, as we shall see below, and because BARB's data do not include details of the origins of broadcasts. It is nevertheless clear that, if directly retransmitted global series and British-made programmes which retain or recreate a certain national cultural identity are high on the list of viewers' preferences, so too are pastiches¹⁵ of international programmes more or less visibly adapted to national sensitivities. In fact, all three can be "popular", either in so far as they attract large audiences or are in some way close to viewers and their concerns and experiences, and all three can achieve high standards of quality.

This section will discuss these categories with particular reference to popular genres which are most revealing in the global / national debate – soap opera and talent or reality shows – but, first, a few words on other genres may be helpful. At the two extremes of the scale from global to national lie dramas and situation comedies. In the first case, imported series are screened in their original form and complement rather than compete with domestic programmes. Police or hospital series¹⁶ are a good illustration, for both find their popular appeal in universal values, either in narrative terms with regular peaks of plot intensity to maintain tension, or in human terms with appeals to such basic emotions as sympathy for others, the desire to do good, or a belief in the triumph of right over wrong. Comedy, on the other hand, would seem initially to be least adaptable to global television transmission, for, as stand-up artists have long been aware, humour varies widely and jokes that succeed one day with one audience are equally likely to fail the next in a different context. This has not prevented American series of various vintages, from *I Love Lucy*, *The Addams Family* and *M*A*S*H* to today's *Seinfeld* from making an impact in the UK, because of their novelty value, topical quality or technical perfection. It is true, however, that the particular attraction of British situation comedies for a British audience lies in their variety of subject matter and their ability to offer a distorting or politically incorrect mirror reflecting aspects of viewers' everyday lives.¹⁷ The middle ground is occupied by game and quiz shows, which have been a mainstay of British television schedules since the 1950s and are frequently copycats modified to respect cultural differences, for

games cannot always be imported intact. Many of the original US shows have a tougher competitive and acquisitive tone and have been watered down for the

15. In this context, pastiche may be defined as parody without the ridicule. Copycat is a less elegant, but nevertheless accurate term for programmes imitating or directly inspired by existing models.

16. A third major category is, of course, costume drama, but as this is a field in which British television excels, the global argument hardly applies, except in so far as many British series have been widely exported.

17. A few British sitcoms (e.g. *Absolutely Fabulous*, *Fawlty Towers*, *Men Behaving Badly*, *Mr Bean*, *The Office*) have been successful internationally, in original form, in adaptation or in translation.

British market, a process echoed in title changes. So *Family Feuds* became *Family Fortunes* and *Card Sharks* became *Play Your Cards Right*. Such changes are revealing – not that they reflect directly differences in American and British culture, but that they signify differences in the process of cultural production. (Whannel, 1992: 196)

Many quiz shows (e.g. *Mastermind* or *University Challenge*) add to their entertainment value an educative role which might have pleased John Reith, the more so as most of them seem archetypically British. Judgements about origin may be erroneous, however, for this genre includes the first, classic, example of international formatting, long before the term was invented and its financial benefits were fully appreciated. The most famous of the early panel quiz games, *What's My Line* (1951), had all the trappings of a domestic production (a popular Irish presenter, lady panellists in evening dress and their male counterparts in dinner jackets). Its “naturalised Britishness” was so convincing that few if any viewers suspected that it was an adaptation of an American radio show for which the BBC paid its creators the princely sum of 25 guineas per episode (Moran, 1998: 18, 78).

Soap operas (soaps) have every right to be considered the first truly global popular television genre, but they have, at the same time, strong national identity with almost every country or language producing its own quite distinctive example(s). The genre has been called “a primitive exercise in grand story telling” (Cornell et al., 1996: 18), and shares many of the techniques used by the popular serialised 19th century novel to sustain interest,¹⁸ but adds the premise of a flexible, ongoing and potentially unending series of story lines involving the same characters. The first soaps were cheap and mediocre day-time radio programmes sponsored by American manufacturers of household cleaning products, such as Procter and Gamble, and owed the “opera” in their title to the excessively emotional nature of their content. What transformed the genre was the launch on British television in 1960 of *Coronation Street*, which took its characters seriously, aimed at high standards of acting and scriptwriting, attracted large audiences and inspired American companies to do the same, thus leading indirectly to the global success of *Peyton Place* and *Dallas*. As Barker has observed, the national and international in soap opera are not mutually exclusive:

While we have witnessed the emergence of an international primetime soap opera style, including high production values, pleasing visual appearances and fast paced

18. Such as redundancy, repetition, multiple plots and the suspense of unfinished actions (or “cliffhangers”) to be completed in the following episode.

action-oriented narrative modes, many soaps retain local settings, regional language audiences and slow paced story telling. (Barker, 1999: 55)

The experience of British television fully endorses this view of diversity. The luxurious, or simply different, life styles shown in American and Australian soaps have heightened their appeal in the UK, while domestic series are more down-to-earth and “popular” in their closeness to the viewing audience, for in this case, “soap opera [...] tends to focus not on the elite of society, but on the masses. Soap opera is the people’s theatre” (Cornell et al., 1996: 18). The first British soaps, *Coronation Street* and the rurally set *Emmerdale Farm*, were successful in attracting viewers by deliberately adopting a style of “social realism” which already had a touch of nostalgia. Writing as long ago as 1973, Marxist commentator Raymond Williams (1990 [1973]: 61) called *Coronation Street* “a distanced and simplified evocation and prolongation of a disappearing culture: the northern urban backstreets of the depression and its immediate aftermath”. For British viewers, American soap operas necessarily have a different realism built on narrative technique and audience expectation. As John Fiske and Ien Ang have respectively observed: “Realism is not a matter of fidelity to an empirical reality, but of discursive conventions by and for which a sense of reality is constructed” (Fiske, 1987: 2), “[w]hat is experienced as real indicates above all a certain structure of feeling which is aroused by the programme” (Ang, 1985: 47). What matters, whatever the origin of series, is a serious approach to the genre which is almost a condition for success.¹⁹

Apart from the narrative convention of the “absence of the moment of final closure” (McQueen, 1998: 33), key points in the longevity and popularity of British soaps include scheduling (for the series rarely compete with each other, but may be viewed successively on different channels), appeal to diverse groups within society (over-65s for *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*, late teens for *Hollyoaks*, school-age children for *Grange Hill*) and their capacity for evolution. Most now have far less of the “slow paced story telling” mentioned by Barker, and much more of rapid action and sensationalism not far removed from the pages of the tabloid press. Indeed, storylines are widely discussed in newspapers and magazines, as well as on websites, which tends to obscure the boundary between fact and fiction and strengthens the links between programmes and their audience. The readiness of viewers to identify with characters has offered British soap operas the opportunity for a surprising educative role, in commenting on and influencing social attitudes and behaviour. In 1967, *Coronation Street*

19. British schedules have been littered with mediocre, sometimes expensive, but always short-lived failures.

was encouraged by the Labour government to include a script line where two well-loved characters discussed Supplementary Benefit, a new social security payment available to all. It was, however, the advent of *Brookside* in 1982 which was to make the depiction and discussion of contemporary social or health issues and their resolution a regular feature of soaps, and the same approach was soon adopted by other series, notably the BBC's *EastEnders*, which had made its mark originally by the aggressiveness and violence of many of its characters.²⁰

In contrast to drama and comedy, which are carefully structured and rehearsed genres, talent shows and reality television are, by their very nature, presented as being spontaneous and offering the chance for ordinary people to show their skills or reveal their faults, to the pitiless gaze of other ordinary people present in the studio or safely installed at home in front of their television screens. If talent shows can trace their origins back to popular culture and to a basic human desire to entertain family, friends or others, television has necessarily given a more formal structure to this activity, adding to the fallibility of public performance a competitive edge which appeals to a wider audience. The initial British programme *Opportunity Knocks* and its successor *New Faces* functioned in similar fashion: the acts of a variety of unknown performers were judged by a studio panel of experts who decided who should compete in the grand final and named the eventual winner. Today's versions of the genre (*The X Factor*, which succeeded *Pop Idol* in 2004, and *Britain's Got Talent*) have increased popular participation by allowing viewers to vote by calls to premium-rate telephone lines or by SMS over which candidates should be eliminated each week and even to choose the winner. These shows are of British origin and might therefore be considered examples of domestic inventiveness, but they are formatted worldwide in almost identical versions, have lost virtually all national identity and smack strongly of the homogenising effect of global mass culture. Moreover, they meet the demands of a marketplace dominated by commercial competitiveness: they are extremely lucrative both for creators and broadcasters, for high audience figures are virtually guaranteed, participants other than presenters, judges and the final winner receive no payment and viewers contribute to profits through the telephone voting system. The saving graces of this type of broadcast seem to be the relatively small prizes²¹ and the fact that amidst the many artists who

20. Programme initiatives have been supported by charities working in the fields in question, by voluntary *Helplines* whose mission is to inform and help victims, and in certain cases by government.

21. The winner of *Britain's Got Talent*, for instance, receives £100,000 and the possibility of appearing in front of Her Majesty the Queen in the Royal Variety Performance.

lose what little talent they may have in front of the cameras, some of the acts are of astonishingly high quality.²²

Reality television is another genre which has been boosted by the global need for inexpensive, yet popular programmes. It also has the advantage of taking a wide variety of forms, from lifestyle shows featuring, for instance, cleaning, cooking, decorating or entertaining, to talk shows where an enthusiastic studio audience is invited to hear intimate secrets of people's private lives or bedrooms and encouraged to voice its approval or disgust. These are surpassed, however, by surveillance reality series "the first truly international new TV genre of the 21st century" (Creeber, 2001: 137), a voyeuristic development of older models and a far cry from the benign *Candid Camera* (1960), a copycat version of the American programme of the same name, whose recipe for success was the simple device of filming people without their knowledge and showing them in embarrassing situations or performing ridiculous or demeaning tasks. As with today's *You've Been Framed*, the footage was sometimes visibly staged rather than spontaneous, but the opportunity of laughing at the misfortunes of others seems an irresistible temptation to a substantial audience. Viewers of surveillance or documentary reality shows are no doubt motivated by the hope that, beyond the interest generated by a paradoxical combination of co-operation and competition between participants,²³ the ordinary people filmed might be caught saying or doing something unseemly. With the exception of the episodic *Castaway 2000* and *Castaway 2007*, the shows now on British television are the formatted fruits of the inventiveness of multi-national production companies,²⁴ bear all the trademarks of global culture and leave little scope for national variation. In the case of the best-known programme, *Big Brother*, viewers whose appetites are left unsatisfied by the daily episodes can now follow events on a permanent basis by logging on to the dedicated websites of the series, thus passing from a passive medium to an active one and taking a step towards eliminating the need for television altogether. These programmes may soon have run their course as popular television phenomena, for the announcement has been made that the

22. The 2009 final of *Britain's Got Talent* included middle-aged Scottish spinster Susan Boyle, whose marvellous singing belied her homely appearance. Although she did not win the competition, first place being taken by the equally remarkable dance group *Diversity*, her performance attracted worldwide attention and her career has been firmly launched.

23. In addition to working together in a team or teams, competitors also have to avoid being criticised by their colleagues and eliminated by the votes of the viewing public.

24. Both *Big Brother* and its spin-off *Celebrity Big Brother* were devised by the Dutch company Endemol, while Swedish television invented *Expedition Robinson* which was subsequently developed by CBS as *Survivor*.

current series of *Big Brother* will be the last, but they may well prove to be much more significant for the development of multi-media entertainment.

4. Pockets of Resistance

We have seen then that the popular in television can take a variety of forms and that there are both detected and undetected degrees of global and international broadcasting. In Britain, support for domestic programmes remains relatively buoyant and consequent resistance to obviously “foreign” programmes may be considerable, especially to those made in other languages. The British Film Institute’s list of top 20 imported television programmes (over the past 50 years) includes only two which were not originally in English, the German *Das Boot* (1980) and *Heimat* (1993) both of which were not series but single programmes, to which might be added the children’s series, the *Magic Roundabout*, seamlessly dubbed from the original French *Manège enchanté*. The demands of European legislation have made little difference, as the required quota of programmes of “European origin” is nearly always met by exclusively British programmes or those resulting from joint ventures with other countries. There is little doubt, on the one hand that familiarity (of actors, settings or themes) enhances popular appeal, and, on the other, that the cultural and ethnic diversity of the British population has led to a more fragmented audience more inclined to actively search out those broadcasts which meet their expectations.

Such diversity can sometimes be found in locally-produced programmes, for within the UK and within broadcasting, regional and national preferences remain strong. The creation of the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament, followed by the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland, has given stimulus to initiatives in what broadcasters now call the “nations”. For their part, the English regions have no legal or administrative status, but have strong cultural and media identities and a current subject of discussion amongst broadcasters and politicians is whether part of the BBC’s licence fee should not be ceded to ITV to enable it to maintain its regional news and weather services. ITV’s regional structure was a trump card for the channel in its initial competition with the BBC, for it offered a clear alternative to London bias, as John Corner explains:

However loosely the [ITV] companies chose to interpret their declared commitments to their regions, a stronger sense of different voices, of previously unaccessed experience, came through the filter of their programmes than had hitherto managed to penetrate through the sieve of metropolitan-centredness which habitually, if

unconsciously, was used by the BBC in fashioning its images of the nation. (Corner, 1991: 9)

Companies did so notably by setting their in-house soap operas close to home, in Salford in Greater Manchester for Granada Television's *Coronation Street*, followed by a fictional suburb of Birmingham for ITV's *Crossroads*, and the countryside near Harrogate for Yorkshire Television's *Emmerdale Farm*. Only the last of these situations was "genuine", but the trend has continued with *Brookside*, produced for Channel 4 by Mersey Television, adding authenticity by buying a whole newly-constructed cul-de-sac in the Liverpool area to shoot all scenes, interior and exterior.

Many other genres have used real locations to enhance the popular appeal of programmes, for local scenery or buildings give added value both by their attractiveness or familiarity and by inciting viewer curiosity. The investigations of Inspector Morse (Oxford), Inspector Taggart (Glasgow), Inspector Wycliffe (Cornwall) or Inspector Barnaby (Buckinghamshire) would not be the same in different settings, while the large number of available country houses or family seats has facilitated the task of producers adapting literary classics. In an example of media transfer, popular identification with favourite broadcasts and (in)voluntary confusion over fact and fiction, the settings for all kinds of programmes have become places of pilgrimage for their avid fans, from the studio sets used for *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders* to the Yorkshire Dales in which the veterinary series *All Creatures Great and Small* was shot, the church of St Mary the Virgin (Turville, Buckinghamshire) which doubles as St Barnabas in *The Vicar of Dibley*, and the unassuming village of Avoca, in Ireland, south of Dublin, which was home to the outdoor scenes of *Ballykissangel*.

Integral to the identity of place is accent, for, since the 1960s, it has been acknowledged that local speech has a rich and interesting variety and that phonemes other than those of Home Counties Received Pronunciation or London cockney working class have a rightful place on television. Plausibly authentic local variations enhance both the realism and appeal of programmes, but, as the examples are too numerous to allow of a detailed presentation, one may perhaps serve as illustration. Central Television's 1980s series *Auf Wiedersehen Pet* had contemporary resonance in showing the dramatic and comic (mis) adventures of unemployed British building workers more or less reluctantly taking temporary jobs in Germany. What brought the series closer to home was that it chose to highlight not international (dis)harmony but domestic local difference by using characters from various parts of England, all of whom spoke with the unmistakable or unfamiliar accents of their own areas, the Black Country, Bristol, Liverpool, London and Newcastle-on-Tyne, to the delight of some spectators and the bafflement of others. Language is a complex matter, for

it frequently conveys not only regional or local but also class differences, but one part of the United Kingdom, Wales, is a quite particular case. The Welsh language is spoken or used, according to the latest census figures (2001), by 21% of the population and has long had official recognition. At one time, BBC and ITV regions using transmitters covering parts of Wales as well as parts of England included occasional programmes in Welsh in their schedules, but the creation of Channel 4 in 1982 brought with it a new dedicated service for the Principality, S4C (Sianel Pedwar Cymru), which initially screened Welsh-language broadcasts as well time-lapsed items, in English, from Channel 4. Now, S4C's programmes are exclusively in Welsh and locally produced, and the channel boasts its own soap opera, *Pobol Y Cwm*.

These cases show that there are pockets of resistance to centralised national broadcasting in the UK, while as we have seen elsewhere, national broadcasting is alive and well and can sometimes resist international pressures. The question of globalisation remains complicated, though, for, as defenders of the post-modern theory of broadcasting have maintained, the exchange of programmes is not a one-way process. Indeed, Britain is not only an importer, but also an exporter of programmes, to the English-speaking world, of course, but also worldwide, thanks to the charm of local colour and to technical expertise in particular fields like detective stories, situation comedies and costume drama. How far this amounts to global impact is another question, for few British programmes have made much impression on American prime-time schedules, most having been limited to niche slots on PBS or brief network runs, often in amended form. In fact, the 1960s series *The Avengers*, with its strong echoes of James Bond, was the only British programme regularly scheduled nationally in the USA before the arrival of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, "England's [sic] most successful cultural export in the last 30 years", according to the *New York Times*, on ABC in 1999. Both are rare cases of individual programmes making their mark on the world televisual landscape and both were, originally, 100% British productions, in-house for ITV (*The Avengers*) and for the production company Celador in the case of *Millionaire*, but there the similarity ends, or almost. The outmoded Britishness of *The Avengers* has given it a certain cult appeal and it still finds its way onto schedules at home and abroad. *Millionaire*, on the other hand, is a global format broadcast in copycat form in some 100 countries and its commercial success has made it a hot property, the franchise now being owned by Sony. It is not, however, a typical global programme, because it was not initially aimed at the international market and because its genre has allowed it to retain a certain educative value and preserve elements of national identity. Many of the general knowledge and popular culture questions faced by British competitors are related to the domestic context and can be answered, rightly or wrongly, by viewers in

their own homes. It may thus be argued that *Millionaire* is at once an illustration of globalisation and an example of resistance to it.

In conclusion, it is clear that many of the initial conceptions of television have long since disappeared and that global ownership and the concentration on entertainment have made popular broadcasting more important than ever. In Britain, however, this has not led to the demise of national and local broadcasting, which has adapted to survive in the new conditions precisely by preserving close links with the everyday interests and concerns of viewers that international formats cannot achieve. John Reith has no doubt turned in his grave on many occasions at the thought of what his beloved BBC has done with the cherished medium of broadcasting, and refused to even contemplate the worse offences committed by other operators, but British television has a vitality and variety which, in as far as anything is certain in this rapidly-changing world, should ensure that it will continue to face and overcome new challenges.

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Actitudes lingüísticas en una comunidad rural: Els Ports (Castellón). Datos de un cuestionario sociolingüístico

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyses language attitudes in a rural region as Els Ports (Castellón). By the means of a sociolinguistic questionnaire, we have found that certain indices (such as language loyalty or linguistic pride) illustrate that Valencian and Spanish still live in diglossia. However, if we focus on some social factors (age, gender and social class) we can confirm an important dynamism and more favorable attitudes toward Valencian language in certain subgroups: women, informants from lower classes and, especially, young people, whose attitudes toward Valencian are always more positive.

Keywords: language attitudes, sociolinguistics, diglossia, Catalan-Valencian language, Spanish

RESUMEN: El estudio de las actitudes lingüísticas en la comarca de Els Ports (Castellón) revela que los índices de fidelidad y orgullo lingüístico así como los de presión social subjetiva obtenidos por medio de un cuestionario sociolingüístico, manifiestan que el valenciano² y el español conviven aún hoy en una situación diglósica. Con todo, el análisis de ciertos factores sociales (edad, sexo y estrato social) nos lleva a confirmar un mayor dinamismo respecto a esta situación y unas actitudes más favorables hacia el valenciano en determinados subgrupos de la muestra: entre las mujeres, entre los informantes de estrato bajo y, sobre todo, entre los jóvenes, cuyas actitudes hacia la lengua vernácula son siempre mejores que las de cualquier otro sector de la población.

Palabras clave: actitudes lingüísticas, sociolingüística, diglosia, conflicto lingüístico, catalán-valenciano, español

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1. Juan González Martínez pertenece al Grupo de Investigación *ARGET (Applied Research Group in Education and Technology)*, de la Universitat Rovira i Virgili, cuyo identificador es 2009 SGR 596.
 2. En adelante, utilizaremos la denominación *valenciano* para referirnos a la modalidad catalana diatópica que se utiliza en la comarca de Els Ports.

1. Introducción

Si podemos decir que el dominio lingüístico catalán ha constituido desde siempre materia de estudio predilecta para la sociolingüística peninsular, seguramente también podríamos convenir que esta disciplina ha encontrado en la Comunidad Valenciana uno de sus ámbitos de investigación más prolíficos. No en vano, cualquier territorio en que se dé una situación de contacto de lenguas resulta especialmente interesante desde el punto de vista de las mutuas influencias que se producen entre los sistemas lingüísticos que conviven en él, por un lado, y la función social que esos sistemas desempeñan, por otro.

La comarca castellanense de Els Ports, en el noroeste de la Comunidad Valenciana, no escapa a estas consideraciones generales y, por ello, también resulta capital analizar en ella cuál es la naturaleza del contacto que se establece en este territorio entre las dos lenguas de la comunidad, valenciano y español. En este sentido, como primer paso indispensable para cualquier otra reflexión, un estudio sobre las actitudes lingüísticas de sus hablantes puede arrojar alguna luz sobre la realidad (socio)lingüística de esta pequeña comunidad de habla. Sobre ello, sobre las actitudes lingüísticas hacia el valenciano, en contacto con el español, en Els Ports, versa este estudio.

Situada al noroeste de la provincia de Castellón, la comarca de Els Ports se configura como un verdadero filón para el estudio sociolingüístico: en primer lugar, se trata de una comarca con una población reducida (5.000 habitantes, más de la mitad de los cuales se concentran en su capital, Morella); en segundo lugar, se encuentra en parte aislada geográficamente, entre los puertos de montaña de Querol, que separa la comarca del resto de la provincia de Castellón, y de Torre Miró, que supondría una de las vías naturales de comunicación entre Castellón y Teruel; en tercer lugar, y quizá como marca de una identidad comarcal singular, Els Ports es la perla del antiguo Maestrazgo, con honda raigambre medieval; y de ello da buena muestra su carácter aguerrido, forjado en duros inviernos y prolijos avatares históricos; por último, se trata de una comarca eminentemente rural y a caballo entre la Comunidad Valenciana, Aragón y Cataluña: tierra de paso, pues, con frecuentes contactos con cualquiera de las tres Comunidades. A todo este contexto hay que sumar, quizá por encima de todo, la situación sociolingüística que comparte con el resto de la Comunidad Valenciana –cooficialidad entre el español y el valenciano–, con una manifiesta prevalencia de este último en la comunicación habitual.

2. Objetivos de la investigación

En el contexto inicial ya referido, los objetivos principales de esta investigación son: (1) plantear una primera aproximación a las opiniones y actitudes

lingüísticas de los hablantes de Els Ports (Castellón) sobre la primera lengua de uso habitual en la comunidad de habla, el valenciano, en el contexto de su histórica diglosia con el español; y (2) atender a la posible incidencia de algunos factores sociales en la configuración de estas actitudes, especialmente por lo que respecta a la edad, con el objeto de comprobar en qué medida la situación sociolingüística de la comunidad puede considerarse *diglosia* por su componente estático, o más bien como una manifestación de *conflicto lingüístico*, por su componente dinámico.

3. Marco teórico

El estudio de las actitudes lingüísticas constituye uno de los aspectos más interesantes en los modernos análisis sociolingüísticos. En este sentido, ya Alvar (1975: 93) señalaba que «plantearse qué pueda ser una sociolingüística es, ante todo, enfrentarse con la cuestión del concepto que el hablante tiene de su propio instrumento lingüístico»; y, en definitiva, ello viene a poner el acento en la importancia de las actitudes lingüísticas, que, según Blas Arroyo (1994: 143) «pueden contribuir poderosamente a la difusión de los cambios lingüísticos, a la definición de las comunidades de habla [...] y, en general, a una serie amplia de fenómenos estrechamente relacionados con la variación lingüística en la sociedad».

El estudio de las actitudes lingüísticas ha constituido objeto de constante debate tanto por lo que respecta a los límites epistemológicos que entraña su estudio como por lo que atañe a su propia naturaleza. En cuanto a lo primero, parece comúnmente aceptado que nos situamos más en una perspectiva *macro-sociolingüística*, y no tanto *microsociolingüística*, como ya había advertido Fishman (1972). Aunque, como bien indica López Morales (2004), nunca hay que perder de vista que las imbricaciones entre *macroasuntos* y *microasuntos* son más que evidentes y no siempre fáciles de deslindar; consideración a la que nosotros añadiríamos, por nuestra parte, la existencia de relaciones innegables entre lo (socio)lingüístico en general –*macro* o *micro*–, y otras disciplinas afines como la etnografía de la comunicación.

En cuanto a la naturaleza de las actitudes lingüísticas, Fasold (1984: 176) señala que dentro de esta noción se recogen aspectos como (1) qué opinan los hablantes sobre sus lenguas o sobre las variedades de sus lenguas; (2) qué piensan sobre los hablantes de esas variedades; o (3) cuáles son sus actitudes sobre el futuro de las lenguas. Objeto de debate es también el modo de abordar de forma efectiva el estudio de estas actitudes, distinguiéndose a este respecto entre dos aproximaciones principales, denominadas conductista y mentalista, respectivamente (Blas Arroyo, 2005: 322). En la primera, las actitudes se evalúan a partir

de las opiniones de los individuos acerca de sus lenguas, mientras que el enfoque mentalista las considera como un estado mental interior, de difícil acceso desde un punto de vista empírico, pero valiosísimo por su elevado poder de predictibilidad.

Por último, y aun a riesgo de resumir en exceso, no podemos olvidar que cualquier estudio de actitudes lingüísticas en una comunidad bilingüe supone necesariamente abordar una reflexión sobre la naturaleza de la convivencia de las dos lenguas de esa comunidad, y es entonces cuando valoramos conceptos como los de conciencia lingüística, diglosia, función social de las lenguas, etc. En general, si nos centramos en la realidad (socio)lingüística de la Comunidad Valenciana, podríamos hablar inicialmente de *bilingüismo diglósico* (Blas Arroyo, 2005: 408), por cuanto se ha constatado una situación tradicional de asimetría en las funciones sociales del español y del valenciano: el primero habría desplazado históricamente al segundo de los usos y funciones prestigiados; o, lo que es lo mismo, el español sería la lengua A o prestigiada de un sistema en que el valenciano es la lengua B o no prestigiada (Fishman, 1967). Sin embargo, no todos los autores han utilizado esta denominación; pues, si bien la mayoría coincide con el diagnóstico anterior, muchos prefieren hablar preferentemente de *conflicto lingüístico* (Aracil, 1965; Vallverdú, 1981; Calvet, 1981; Casesnoves y Sankoff, 2003, etc.), pues la diglosia, en su tradicional concepción, suele implicar un componente de estatismo que estos autores no advierten en la realidad (socio)lingüística de la Comunidad Valenciana. Al hablar de *conflicto lingüístico* se incide, pues, en el componente dinámico de la situación –por lo general, traducido en la regresión del valenciano en sus usos formales– y, en definitiva, en un preocupante proceso de minorización, cuya magnitud está todavía por determinar.

4. Cuestiones metodológicas

Nuestra primera aproximación a las actitudes lingüísticas de la comarca de Els Ports se ha llevado a cabo por medio de un cuestionario sociolingüístico contextualizado dentro de una entrevista semidirigida, técnica que, en nuestra opinión, ofrece numerosas ventajas: (1) los cuestionarios permiten un análisis de los datos siempre exhaustivo y revisable; (2) ayudan al establecimiento de indicadores con los que valorar mejor la situación sociolingüística de la comunidad de habla (por ejemplo, los parámetros de fidelidad u orgullo lingüísticos anali-

zados en estas páginas); y (3) facilitan la comparación con otras investigaciones realizadas anteriormente, bien de la misma comunidad, bien de otras cercanas.³

Este cuestionario sociolingüístico se distribuyó durante el último trimestre del año 2007 a 30 informantes de la comarca de Els Ports, en lo que se conoce como *muestra empírica o razonada* (López Morales, 1994: 59). En ella, obtenida por medio de una técnica de *muestreo seleccionado o predeterminado* (Silva-Corvalán, 1989: 18), se establecieron diferentes subgrupos en función de los tres factores sociales que hemos analizado: sexo, edad y estrato social.⁴

Por lo que respecta al sexo (*hombre y mujer*), trataremos de comprobar cómo se traslada a nuestro caso el tradicional apego femenino por las formas y variedades de prestigio (López Morales, 2004: 127). Más importante aún para nuestro objeto de estudio es evaluar la incidencia del factor generacional, que establecemos en nuestra investigación por medio de tres grandes grupos: *1.ª generación* (*jóvenes* entre 17 y 25 años); *2.ª generación* (*adultos*, de 35 a 50 años); y *3.ª generación* (*personas mayores* de 60 años).⁵ Si, en efecto, podemos hablar de dinamismo en la situación (socio)lingüística de la comunidad de habla, este debería apreciarse en la existencia de diferencias significativas entre las opiniones y actitudes de los informantes de distintas generaciones; y especialmente interesante resultará comprobar si, en el presente estadio, asistimos a un proceso de minorización o, por el contrario, de revitalización del valenciano en Els Ports. Por último, analizaremos también la estratificación social, que consideramos también por medio de tres subgrupos (*estratos bajo, medio y alto*), obtenidos por medio de un *índice socioeconómico* (en el que intervienen la profesión, la instrucción y la renta), en lo que se conoce como *evaluación subjetiva del estrato social*⁶ (Silva-Corvalán, 1989: 20).

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3. Como decíamos, este cuestionario sociolingüístico forma parte de una investigación de más alcance en la que, en el contexto de una entrevista sociolingüística semidirigida, se intercalaban técnicas directas (el cuestionario que nos ocupa) e indirectas (un cuestionario *matched-guise* y otro de gramaticalidad/aceptabilidad). Aun conscientes de la prevalencia de las técnicas indirectas para el estudio de las actitudes lingüísticas, hemos considerado oportuno dedicar este espacio a los datos obtenidos mediante el cuestionario sociolingüístico, no solo por el interés intrínseco de estos, sino también porque permiten una aproximación a opiniones y creencias muy reveladora acerca del contexto sociolingüístico en el que se desenvuelve en la actualidad la comarca de Els Ports.
 4. En el presente estudio hemos prescindido del factor *adscripción lingüística*, dado que en la comarca de Els Ports la lengua de uso habitual de una amplísima mayoría de habitantes es el valenciano, hasta el punto de que todos y cada uno de los informantes que componían la muestra tenían esta variedad del catalán como lengua materna y habitual.
 5. Al determinar la utilización de estas tres categorías por lo que respecta al factor de edad, es importante destacar que, en esta investigación, no nos interesa tanto analizar la progresiva modificación de las actitudes lingüísticas en función del *continuum* que constituye el estrato etario, sino más bien ver cuál es la diferencia existente entre las tres generaciones, y de ahí que nos hayamos decidido por establecer tres grandes grupos de informantes en función de la edad que representan, *grosso modo*, las tres generaciones que pueden coexistir en una misma familia: los jóvenes, sus padres y sus abuelos.
 6. En las clasificaciones para determinar el estrato social de los miembros de la muestra, los factores se

De este modo, los 30 informantes que integran la muestra se distribuyen en cuotas idénticas en función del sexo (15 hombres y 15 mujeres) y la edad (10 jóvenes, 10 adultos y 10 mayores). Sin embargo, se concede el doble de informantes a los estratos medio (12) y bajo (12), que a la clase alta (6), con el fin de garantizar una representación más objetiva de la población analizada.

5. Resultados

A lo largo de este epígrafe presentamos de forma sucinta los datos obtenidos en este estudio por lo que respecta a los tres indicadores que después analizaremos de forma más detallada: *fidelidad lingüística*, *orgullo lingüístico* y *presión social subjetiva*.

5.1 Fidelidad lingüística

Si entendemos la fidelidad lingüística como la resistencia de los hablantes a la pérdida de usos sociales de la propia lengua (Weinreich, 1953), esta se puede valorar por medio de una serie de preguntas relacionadas con el uso potencial de esa lengua en dominios sociolingüísticos formales, como la educación. En nuestro caso, este indicador se obtiene, en efecto, a partir de las respuestas a tres preguntas relacionadas con: a) la enseñanza *del* valenciano en los niveles educativos de primaria y secundaria;⁷ b) la enseñanza *en* valenciano en esos niveles, y c) la enseñanza *en* valenciano en la Universidad.

dividen en escalas numéricas que, combinadas y sumadas, arrojan un *índice socioeconómico* (Blas Arroyo 2005: 216) con el que se puede clasificar a cada informante en uno de los tres grupos sociales mencionados. En nuestro caso, hemos dividido las posibilidades laborales, de ingresos, y de formación en siete grupos. A cada uno de los informantes se le ha preguntado por esos tres datos, y se ha sumado el indicador correspondiente. Esta última cifra puede tomar valores comprendidos entre el 1 y el 21. Aquellos informantes cuyo indicador está por debajo del 7 quedan dentro del estrato bajo; entre el 8 y el 14, dentro del estrato medio; y por encima de 15, dentro del estrato alto. Por poner un ejemplo, una persona con ingresos de 15.000 € anuales, formación elemental y obrero no cualificado tiene una puntuación de 5 (2 + 1 + 2).

7. Al abordar estas tres cuestiones sobre fidelidad lingüística, centradas en el contexto escolar, debemos referirnos necesariamente a la existencia de los programas de enseñanza bilingüe actualmente en vigor en la Comunidad Valenciana conocidos bajo las siglas PIL y PEV, que desarrollan la *Llei d'ús i ensenyament del valencià*, y cuya aplicación en los centros públicos viene a traducirse en la existencia de dos líneas educativas. *Grosso modo*, en la *línea valenciana*, los alumnos se escolarizan bajo un modelo de inmersión lingüística en valenciano; mientras que, en la *línea castellana*, se plantea la necesidad de que los alumnos vayan incorporándose progresivamente a la escolarización en valenciano, con un aumento paulatino de las asignaturas en las que la lengua propia es la vehicular (Blas Arroyo, 2002).

Los enunciados de esas tres preguntas eran los siguientes: a) *¿Es importante que se enseñe el valenciano en las escuelas?*; b) *¿Es bueno que se enseñe en valenciano en las escuelas y en los institutos?*; c) *Y en la Universidad, ¿qué le/te parece que se enseñe en valenciano?* Y los datos frecuenciales obtenidos para estas tres preguntas se recogen en la siguiente tabla:

	1 (por supuesto, muy bien)	2 (sí, bien)	3 (ni sí ni no, ni bien ni mal)	4 (no, mal)	5 (en absoluto, muy mal)
¿Es importante que se enseñe el valenciano en las escuelas?	6	37	37	20	0
¿Es bueno que se enseñe en valenciano en las escuelas y en los institutos?	0	13	40	27	20
Y en la Universidad, ¿qué le/te parece que se enseñe en valenciano?	0	7	30	40	23

Tabla 1. Triada de preguntas sobre fidelidad lingüística (%)

Por lo que respecta a la primera pregunta (*¿Es importante que se enseñe el valenciano en las escuelas?*), destacamos que, en general, las respuestas más frecuentes se sitúan en los valores centrales de la tabla (un 37 % para el *sí*, un 37 % para la respuesta neutra y un 20 % para el *no*), lo cual ofrece una imagen muy equilibrada de opiniones. En principio, y como veremos en las siguientes preguntas, podemos decir que se trata de respuestas *poco arriesgadas* (y que nos deben llevar a valorar en qué medida nuestros informantes han sido políticamente correctos o hasta qué punto para ellos esta cuestión no resulta especialmente candente, y de ahí la escasa rotundidad de las respuestas).

La segunda pregunta (*¿Es bueno que se enseñe en valenciano en las escuelas y en los institutos?*) se trata, en parte, de una precisión de la anterior, por cuanto abunda en ella, pero incidiendo en la posibilidad de que el valenciano sea

la lengua vehicular de la educación obligatoria.⁸ Las respuestas en este caso son sustancialmente diferentes a los anteriores: tan solo un 13 % de opiniones claramente positivas (aunque con un significativo 0 % en la respuesta más rotunda, valor 1), y un todavía más revelador 47 % de respuestas negativas (un 20 % de las cuales corresponden al valor 5, “en absoluto”).⁹ Por último, y ahora en consonancia con lo observado en las respuestas a la pregunta anterior, se documenta también un 40 % de opiniones indeterminadas (valor 3). En comparación, pues, con los anteriores, los datos son reveladores: hay muchos menos informantes que desean la escolarización *en* valenciano que la mera enseñanza *del* valenciano en el sistema escolar.

La última de las preguntas del terno de fidelidad lingüística (*Y en la Universidad, ¿qué le/te parece que se enseñe en valenciano?*) supone un nivel más de precisión: el último grado académico de formalidad siempre lo representan los estudios universitarios; y, por tanto, en el fondo estamos pidiendo la opinión de los informantes acerca de las posibilidades del valenciano de erigirse como lengua de instrucción en el ámbito universitario. Como se puede comprobar, el grueso de la muestra se ha decantado esta vez claramente por el *no*, con un 63 % de las respuestas (valores 4 y 5), en oposición al escaso 7 % que ha respondido que *sí* (nótese también que el grado de rotundidad también está a favor de las respuestas negativas, pues el 23 % ha respondido el valor 5, mientras que nadie ha contestado con un *sí* rotundo, valor 1).¹⁰

A partir de los datos de estas tres preguntas, obtenemos el *índice de fidelidad lingüística*, que presentamos en la siguiente tabla:¹¹

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8. En las Comunidades Autónomas con lengua propia prácticamente no se discute que estas –cooficiales con el español– deban formar parte del currículo educativo en los niveles obligatorio y postobligatorio hasta Bachillerato. Lo que sí suele discutirse es hasta qué punto debe llegarse en ese extremo. En algunos casos, como en la Comunidad Valenciana, se da la oportunidad a los estudiantes de elegir en qué idioma se escolarizan mayoritariamente, como hemos señalado más arriba. Sin embargo, en otras Comunidades, como Cataluña, se escolariza a los alumnos masivamente en la lengua propia, al amparo de las políticas llamadas *de inmersión lingüística*.
 9. Es cierto que una respuesta negativa debería recibir numerosas matizaciones: un padre puede no querer que sus hijos se escolaricen mayoritariamente en valenciano, y eso no tiene por qué significar que esté en contra de la escolarización en valenciano como posibilidad (que, en todo caso, él prefiere no escoger). Entendemos, pues, que la pregunta se ha interpretado mayoritariamente como algo concreto, en el sentido de «¿elegiría usted que sus hijos se escolarizaran en valenciano?».
 10. Queremos dejar constancia de que muchos informantes se sintieron ligeramente incómodos ante su propia respuesta negativa, especialmente cuando esta era más rotunda (valor 5), lo cual justifica que esa respuesta en muchos casos se glosara apelando a la mayor utilidad lingüística del español, dada su mayor proyección nacional e internacional. En la mayoría de los casos, la justificación apeló a cuestiones de utilidad lingüística y de proyección del alumno fuera del ámbito regional, con independencia de su edad y estrato social.
 11. Para la obtención del índice de fidelidad lingüística hemos agrupado los valores afirmativos, por un lado; y los negativos, por el otro. Después, hemos promediado las respuestas a las tres preguntas, de tal modo que obtenemos el porcentaje medio de respuestas afirmativas (antiguos valores 1 y 2), el de respuestas neutras (antiguo valor 3), y el de respuestas negativas (antiguos valores 4 y 5). Hemos procedido de este mismo modo en los índices de orgullo lingüístico y presión social subjetiva que veremos más adelante.

	Sí	Ind.	No
Fidelidad lingüística	21 %	36 %	43 %

Tabla 2. Índices de fidelidad lingüística (%)

En resumen, un 21 % de los informantes se mostró decididamente partidario de la presencia del valenciano en el sistema educativo, a un 36 % le resultó indiferente, mientras que un mayoritario 43 % no la juzgó importante.

Sin embargo, veremos interesantes diferencias entre los grupos que integran la muestra en función de los factores sociales considerados en el estudio:

Fidelidad lingüística								
	Grupos de edad			Sexo		Grupos sociales		
	J	A	M	H	M	EB	EM	EA
Sí	37	13	13	18	24	39	6	17
Ind.	26	64	17	31	40	44	33	22
No	37	23	70	51	36	17	61	61

Tabla 3. Niveles de fidelidad lingüística por factores sociales (%)

La variable *edad* es la que más información nos ofrece. Así, la situación de diglosia que podríamos concluir a partir de los datos de la Tabla 1 no es estable, sino dinámica, pues se observa una notable diferencia entre la fidelidad lingüística de las generaciones adulta y mayor (con apenas un 13 % de respuestas positivas en ambos casos) y la de la generación joven, aquella que ha sido escolarizada en valenciano (en este caso, el porcentaje asciende a un 37 %). El factor *sexo* muestra también algunas diferencias interesantes, aunque esta vez no tan destacables: las mujeres (24 %) superan a los hombres (18 %) en los índices de fidelidad lingüística. Por último, comprobamos que los hablantes de estrato social más bajo son los más fieles al uso del valenciano en el sistema educativo, con un 39 % de respuestas afirmativas, en oposición al 6 % o al 13 % de los grupos de estratos medio y alto, respectivamente. Es especialmente destacable el valor que se registra para el grupo de estrato social medio (6 %), que pone en evidencia algo que se ha constatado en numerosas investigaciones sociolingüís-

ticas, a saber, que son a menudo las clases medias las más sensibles al prestigio de las variedades lingüísticas (cf. Blas Arroyo, 2005; Moreno Fernández, 2005). En el caso de las actitudes lingüísticas en nuestra comunidad de habla, lo anterior se traduce en que son, precisamente, los informantes de estrato social medio quienes manifiestan un menor índice de fidelidad lingüística.

5.2 Orgullo lingüístico

Por lo que respecta al índice de orgullo lingüístico, entendemos este como el entusiasmo que los hablantes sienten por la propia lengua (Weinreich, 1953), que en el caso de nuestra comunidad de habla escrutamos a través de dos preguntas. La primera versa sobre la obligatoriedad –al menos moral– que los inmigrantes de la comarca deberían tener a la hora de aprender la lengua propia. Por su parte, la segunda cuestión indaga acerca de las opiniones de los informantes sobre el requisito lingüístico (la obligatoriedad existente en las Comunidades Autónomas con lengua propia de conocer dicha lengua y acreditarla documentalmente como condición *sine qua non* para participar en una oposición pública).

Los enunciados de esas dos preguntas eran los siguientes: a) *Los inmigrantes que llegan a la comarca, ¿deben aprender a hablar en valenciano?*; b) *¿Qué le/te parece el requisito lingüístico que se impone a los opositores a funcionarios de la Comunitat [obligación de conocer el valenciano y acreditarlo por medio de un examen o de un título oficial] para poder presentarse a las oposiciones?* Y los porcentajes de respuestas a esas dos preguntas son los siguientes:

	1 (por supuesto, muy bien)	2 (sí, bien)	3 (ni sí ni no, ni bien ni mal)	4 (no, mal)	5 (en absoluto, muy mal)
Los inmigrantes que llegan a la comarca, ¿deben aprender a hablar en valenciano?	0	27	20	40	13
¿Qué le/te parece el requisito lingüístico que se impone a los opositores a funcionarios de la Comunitat [obligación de conocer el valenciano y acreditarlo por medio de un examen o de un título oficial] para poder presentarse a las oposiciones?	7	7	27	33	27

Tabla 4. Preguntas sobre orgullo lingüístico (%)

Como puede observarse en la tabla, la respuesta mayoritaria para la primera de las preguntas (*Los inmigrantes que llegan a la comarca, ¿deben aprender a hablar en valenciano?*) es negativa, con un 53 % de las respuestas totales (valores 4 y 5), en oposición al 27 % de opiniones afirmativas (valor 2). En todo caso, es importante aclarar que no se trata de una negativa al aprendizaje del valenciano por parte de los inmigrantes, sino a la obligación moral de estos de hablarla como un elemento indispensable para su integración.¹²

La segunda pregunta (*¿Qué le/te parece el requisito lingüístico que se impone a los opositores a funcionarios de la Comunitat para poder presentarse a las oposiciones?*) sondea las opiniones acerca de la existencia del requisito lingüístico como condición *sine qua non* para el ingreso en la función pública.¹³ En este caso, los índices se decantan de nuevo mayoritariamente hacia las respuestas negativas: un 60 % de los informantes de Els Ports manifiesta estar en desacuerdo con la existencia de ese requisito (valores 4 y 5), tal como se formula

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12. La pregunta incide en un fenómeno particularmente candente en la comarca de Els Ports, que recibe en los últimos tiempos numerosos inmigrantes no solo de otras zonas de España, sino también de países extranjeros, especialmente de Rumanía. El debate social está más que abierto, y las opiniones que se pueden oír en la calle son de lo más dispar. Muchos piensan que hay que cambiar de lengua ante ellos, por deferencia, y dirigirse a ellos siempre en español. Los inmigrantes rumanos vienen de su país con un nivel ciertamente alto de competencia pasiva en español (según refieren los propios inmigrantes rumanos, la televisión en Rumanía emite telenovelas en español para *facilitar* a sus futuros emigrantes que puedan defenderse una vez llegados aquí), y es ciertamente más fácil y cómodo hacerse entender en español. Muchos de los que adoptan esta actitud, además, consideran que la lengua que deben aprender es el español, pues muchas veces emigran desde la nuestra a otras provincias de España, y allí el valenciano «les va a servir de poco». Como muestra de esta postura, podemos aludir a la política de acogida de alumnos que se dispensa a los inmigrantes recién llegados al IES Els Ports, de Morella: en el caso de que se disponga de horas de refuerzo para la adquisición de lenguas, estas siempre se dedican al aprendizaje del español. Otros, por el contrario, piensan que «el español siempre tienen tiempo de aprenderlo», y que más vale dirigirse a ellos en valenciano, porque es la única forma de que lo asimilen. Con independencia de estas posturas, es justo dejar constancia de que la predisposición de los inmigrantes hacia el aprendizaje del valenciano siempre es recibida con buenos ojos por la comunidad de habla, aunque ello no parezca reflejarse en exceso en las respuestas a esta pregunta.
13. Por *requisito lingüístico* entendemos la obligatoriedad existente en las Comunidades Autónomas con lengua propia de conocer dicha lengua (y poder testimoniarlo mediante un certificado expedido por la autoridad correspondiente con competencias en materias de política lingüística, o bien por medio de una prueba de nivel de competencias orales y escritas) para que sea permitida la participación en cualquier proceso selectivo de acceso a la función pública o para ser contratado por cualquier organismo público. Este requisito lingüístico ha sido objeto de fuertes controversias, no tanto por su concepto cuanto por su aplicación práctica. Unánimemente se reconoce la necesidad de que los trabajadores de la Administración Pública conozcan la lengua propia de las respectivas Comunidades, pero muchos sectores discrepan de que este conocimiento sea requisito para el acceso, y han propuesto alternativas, fundamentalmente basadas en la idea de la moratoria para su aprendizaje una vez superados los procesos de concurso-oposición (esto, por ejemplo, permitiría que cualquier ciudadano del Estado español pudiera acceder a plazas en cualquier Administración en igualdad de condiciones).

en la actualidad, frente a un 14 % que sí está conforme (valores 1 y 2), y un 27 % que se muestra más bien indiferente (valor 3).

Obtenido el *índice de orgullo lingüístico* a partir de estas dos cuestiones (tabla 5), los datos de Els Ports nos indican que un 20 % de los informantes muestra un alto grado de orgullo lingüístico hacia el valenciano, en oposición al 23 % que se manifiesta indiferente, y al 57 % que presenta niveles bajos en este parámetro.

	Sí	Ind.	No
Orgullo lingüístico	20 %	23 %	57 %

Tabla 5. Índices de orgullo lingüístico (%)

Al igual que en los valores de la fidelidad lingüística analizados anteriormente, los factores sociales analizados muestran también algunas diferencias reveladoras entre ciertos grupos.

Orgullo lingüístico								
Grupos de edad				Sexo		Grupos sociales		
J	A	M		H	M	EB	EM	EA
Sí	40	20	0	17	23	50	4	0
Ind.	25	40	5	13	34	17	25	25
No	35	40	95	70	43	33	71	75

Tabla 6. Niveles de orgullo lingüístico por factores sociales (%)

Como puede verse en la Tabla 6, el índice general de orgullo lingüístico de la comarca de Els Ports (20 %) tan solo es superado por grupos sociales bien determinados, y coincidentes con los ya advertidos anteriormente: los jóvenes (40 %), los informantes de estrato bajo (50 %); y, en menor medida, las mujeres (23 %).

Si analizamos con mayor detalle las diferencias en función del factor generacional, el más relevante para nuestro objeto de estudio, vemos que los jóvenes presentan un índice de orgullo lingüístico del 40 %, muy superior al de los mayores, con un revelador 0 % de respuestas positivas. Son realmente llamativas estas cifras en la generación mayor, al menos tal como concebimos el orgullo lingüístico en esta investigación. En definitiva, son datos que nos hablan de nuevo de una generación en la que las actitudes diglósicas parecen ciertamente muy asentadas.

5.2.1 Presión social subjetiva

Relacionado con el orgullo lingüístico, podemos valorar ahora el índice de presión social subjetiva, que concreta ese interés general por la defensa de la propia lengua de la que hablábamos antes en el «entusiasmo que los hablantes manifiestan ante el empleo de la lengua propia [en este caso, el valenciano] en determinados registros oficiales de especial relevancia» (Blas Arroyo, 1994: 147). En nuestro estudio, evaluamos esa presión social subjetiva en la obligación de usar el valenciano en actos oficiales y en los medios de comunicación.

Las preguntas eran las siguientes: a) *¿Considera/s que debe hablarse en valenciano en los actos oficiales?*; b) *¿Considera/s que debe utilizarse el valenciano en los medios de comunicación?*; c) *¿Cree/s que en las televisiones autonómicas como TV3 o Canal 9 solo debe utilizarse la lengua propia?* Los resultados empíricos de esta tríada se sintetizan en la tabla 7.

	1 (por supuesto)	2 (sí)	3 (ni sí ni no)	4 (no)	5 (en absoluto)
¿Considera/s que debe hablarse en valenciano en los actos oficiales?	7	23	47	23	0
¿Considera/s que debe utilizarse el valenciano en los medios de comunicación?	7	10	60	23	0
¿Cree/s que en las televisiones autonómicas como Tv3 o Canal 9 solo debe utilizarse la lengua propia?	0	7	23	43	27

Tabla 7. Tríada de preguntas sobre presión social subjetiva (%)

En la primera de estas preguntas (*¿Considera/s que debe hablarse en valenciano en los actos oficiales?*), las respuestas parecen equilibradas, con un gran peso de la respuesta neutra (47 %); el resto parece decantarse levemente hacia el *sí*, con un 7 % de respuestas afirmativas rotundas y un 23 % de respuestas con el valor 2 (*sí*), en oposición al 23 % que recibe el valor 4 (*no*). No se documentan valores negativos rotundos (valor 5). Al igual que en las valoraciones anteriores sobre parámetros como la fidelidad lingüística, insistimos en el gran peso que tienen los valores centrales del gráfico, y en el escaso margen que dejan a los valores extremos.

La segunda de las preguntas (*¿considera/s que debe utilizarse el valenciano en los medios de comunicación?*) presenta unos resultados parecidos: un alto grado de respuestas neutras (60 %), y prácticamente equilibrio entre las respuestas decididamente afirmativas (17 %) y negativas (23 %); pero en este caso, como se puede comprobar, con una leve preferencia cuantitativa por el *no*.

Por último, la tercera de las cuestiones de este terno actitudinal (*¿Cree/s que en las televisiones autonómicas como TV3 o Canal 9 solo debe utilizarse la lengua propia?*) apunta a un tema más espinoso: la presencia del español en las televisiones autonómicas de Comunidades con lengua propia.¹⁴ Y, en este caso, documentamos un 70 % de respuestas negativas (valores 4 y 5), frente a un escaso 7 % de respuestas positivas (y hay que tener en cuenta también el rotundo 0 % de respuestas correspondientes al valor 1). Estos datos muestran a las claras que el grueso de la muestra aboga por la coexistencia de las dos lenguas oficiales

14. De igual modo a como apuntábamos en el caso del binomio escolarización-bilingüismo, hay diferentes formas de entender la política lingüística de las televisiones autonómicas de Comunidades Autónomas con lengua propia. Por un lado, encontramos el modelo de Cataluña, en el cual la presencia del español está poco menos que vetada (referencia obligada es la polémica generada tiempo atrás acerca de las directrices que recomendaban la no contratación de colaboradores que usaran sistemáticamente el español en los medios de comunicación institucionales, como Televisió de Catalunya –TV3, K3– o Catalunya Ràdio). Por otro, estarían los modelos valenciano o vasco, en los que la cooficialidad de las lenguas se aplica también a la política lingüística de los entes públicos de comunicación: coexisten la programación en español con la programación en la lengua propia. Los primeros se amparan en la existencia generalizada de programación en español en las numerosas cadenas generalistas, institucionales o privadas; los segundos justifican la presencia del español también como lengua vehicular de su programación, como reflejo de la realidad social y de la cooficialidad reconocida. Los primeros tienen a su favor una realidad social a priori diferente: en toda Cataluña se habla y se conoce el catalán. Los segundos, además, justifican su postura en sus respectivas realidades sociales: la falta de competencia lingüística en vasco de gran parte de la población vasca, por un lado; y la existencia de territorios históricamente monolingües en español, en la Comunidad Valenciana. En nuestro caso, dado que en la comarca de Els Ports se reciben las dos emisoras de televisión autonómicas, Canal 9 (Comunidad Valenciana) y TV3 (Cataluña), con modelos de programación lingüística tan diferentes, la pregunta se focaliza en ellas. En TV3 la emisión es exclusivamente en catalán; en el Canal 9 se puede comprobar fácilmente tanto la coaparición de español y de valenciano en un mismo programa, como la alternancia de programas en valenciano con programas en español.

en las cadenas de televisión autonómicas; y, por tanto, rechaza el monopolio de la lengua propia.

A partir de esas tres cuestiones, obtenemos el *índice de presión social subjetiva*, y comprobamos que solo un 18 % de la muestra general presenta un nivel elevado en este parámetro actitudinal, mientras que el resto se decanta entre una cierta neutralidad (43 %) o un bajo entusiasmo (39 %).

	Sí	Ind.	No
Presión social subjetiva	18	43	39

Tabla 8. Índices de presión social subjetiva (%)

Por otro lado, y al igual que vimos en los anteriores indicadores, apreciamos también diferencias interesantes según diversos factores sociales, cuyos datos empíricos son recogidos en la tabla 9.

Presión social subjetiva								
	Grupos de edad			Sexo		Grupos sociales		
	J	A	M	H	M	EB	EM	EA
Sí	37	17	0	4	31	22	6	22
Ind.	46	50	33	49	38	61	22	39
No	17	33	67	47	31	17	72	39

Tabla 9. Presión social subjetiva por factores sociales (%)

Como podemos ver en esa tabla, la presión social subjetiva se muestra permeable a algunos factores sociales, especialmente los de edad y sexo. Los jóvenes defienden el uso social en contextos oficiales o formales en un 37 % y no lo consideran importante en un 17 %, mientras que, en sentido inverso, la generación mayor no lo defiende en ningún caso (0 %), y no lo valora como importante en un 33 %. Por su parte, la generación adulta queda, como otras veces, en una

posición intermedia, con valores extremos del 17% y el 33%, respectivamente. Notable diferencia hay también entre los valores que arrojan hombres y mujeres. Los primeros solo defienden abiertamente el uso social del valenciano en los dominios reseñados en un 4 % (y no lo consideran importante en un 47 %), mientras que las segundas abogan por ello en un 31 % (y no lo consideran esencial en una proporción similar, 31 %). Por último, es interesante destacar que son de nuevo los informantes de estrato social medio los más permeables a las situaciones de diglosia, en consonancia con algunos datos reseñados ya anteriormente (*vid.* § 5.1). En este sentido, podemos ver como los representantes de los dos grupos extremos (alto y bajo) muestran notable coincidencia en sus índices de presión social subjetiva (22 % de respuestas favorables en ambos casos); por el contrario, en el estrato medio el índice de respuestas afirmativas es mucho menor (6 %), y el de respuestas desfavorables, mucho más elevado (72 %). En suma, vemos de nuevo como son los grupos extremos quienes presentan los valores más positivos hacia la lengua propia, mientras que los informantes de estrato medio son los que más acusan la diglosia.

6. Discusión y análisis

A tenor de las entrevistas realizadas, nuestras conclusiones parecen apuntar en dos direcciones claras: la primera, acerca de la todavía hoy situación diglósica que revelan las actitudes de los habitantes de la comarca de Els Ports hacia el valenciano, habida cuenta de que todos los indicadores –fidelidad y orgullo lingüísticos y presión social subjetiva– tienden mayoritariamente hacia el polo negativo, o en el mejor de los casos, hacia el neutro; la segunda, sin embargo, es más esperanzadora y nos pone en la senda de que, con independencia de estas valoraciones generales, en la actualidad es posible constatar un cambio favorable en las actitudes lingüísticas de algunos grupos sociales, en especial de los más jóvenes. Lo anterior requiere, sin embargo, de un análisis más detallado.

Por lo que respecta a la primera de las conclusiones reseñadas, podemos afirmar que, en general, encontramos actitudes lingüísticas poco entusiastas hacia el valenciano en la comunidad estudiada. Que el valenciano se siente como propio es indudable, y así lo demuestran los índices de uso de este en la entrevista (de un 83 %, cuando el uso medio de la Comunidad Valenciana, según el *Llibre Blanc* de la Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua (2004) es de entre el 25 % y el 35 % según las situaciones comunicativas). Sin embargo, ello no va de la mano de unas actitudes lingüísticas especialmente positivas en el conjunto de la comunidad; y más

aún si comparamos estos datos con los obtenidos a propósito de estos mismos parámetros actitudinales en otras comunidades de habla bilingües.¹⁵

Atendiendo en primer lugar al índice de *fidelidad lingüística*, veremos, por ejemplo, que son claramente inferiores a los registrados por Blas Arroyo (1994: 144) en el distrito urbano de Campanar (Valencia), quien para los mismos valores obtenía a comienzos de la década de los noventa un 51 % de fidelidad lingüística. Y también son muy bajos en comparación con los datos que arroja el *Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia* (González González, 1996), que documenta que un 46,9 % de la población está a favor de la escolarización mayoritaria en gallego (un 53 % considera que debe ser la lengua vehicular habitual en el contexto escolar).¹⁶ Más parecidos, sin embargo, son los valores que señala Martín Zorraquino (1995) para la Franja Oriental de Aragón, con solo un 29,42 % de la población que juzga buena la enseñanza del habla vernácula en la escuela de forma voluntaria (y un 4,03 % de forma obligatoria), frente al 57,89 % que considera que no debe enseñarse).

De todo ello puede concluirse precisamente que los datos que hemos obtenido en la comarca de Els Ports solo son equiparables a los que se documentan en otra comarca rural como la Franja Oriental de Aragón. Como resultado de las políticas lingüísticas llevadas a cabo en la Comunidad Valenciana a partir de la promulgación del Estatut de 1982 y de la *Llei d'Ensenyament i Ús del Valencià*, de 1983, deberíamos estar más cercanos a los datos de otras comunidades de habla ya referidas. Al fin y al cabo, en Els Ports operan las mismas políticas que en otras comarcas valencianas (y similares a las gallegas); y, además, nuestro conocimiento de la comunidad nos habla de un arraigo del valenciano mayor que

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15. Acerca de la comparación que a continuación introducimos entre los datos que hemos obtenido y otras investigaciones a las que hemos tenido acceso, es necesario plantear una importante reflexión previa. Hasta donde conocemos, no se han estudiado con especificidad comunidades de habla del dominio lingüístico catalán con las características propias de Els Ports (con carácter rural, aisladas geográficamente, emisoras migratorias, zonas de transición desde el punto de vista dialectal, con identidad marcadamente propia, etc.); o, si se han estudiado, ha sido en el marco de investigaciones que intentaban afrontar el análisis de unidades geográficas mayores (pensamos, por ejemplo, en el caso de la comarca de Mataranya, en Teruel, vecina a Els Ports, con la que comparte muchas de sus características, que fue estudiada por Martín Zorraquino (1995) conjuntamente con el resto de la llamada Franja Oriental de Aragón). A la sazón, hay que añadir otra dificultad quizá con mayor calado, y es el diferente momento en que esas investigaciones se han llevado a cabo: en algunos casos, al comparar con investigaciones de otras zonas de la Comunidad Valenciana o del resto de España, median quince años –a veces más– entre aquellas y la nuestra. En este escenario, no pretendemos decir que la comparación con los datos que ofrecemos quede invalidada, pero sí subrayamos que las conclusiones a las que con ellas se llegue deben ser tomadas con cautela.
16. Nótese la gradación que se establece a este respecto en el MSG (1996): un amplio 53 % cree que, si el gallego es la lengua habitual de gran parte de la población gallega, esta debe ser también la lengua habitual de los centros educativos; pero ese porcentaje desciende ligeramente, al 46,9 % de respuestas favorables si de lo que se trata es de opinar acerca de que el gallego sea la lengua mayoritaria en que se escolarice a los e.

en otros territorios. Y sin embargo, no es eso exactamente eso lo que nos dicen los datos obtenidos en nuestra investigación; al contrario, nos informan de que, en parte, factores como el aislamiento y la situación geográfica, las características demográficas particulares de una zona poco poblada y preeminentemente rural, pueden tener una gran incidencia, similar a la que se ha detectado en otras comarcas del mismo tipo, como la mencionada Franja Oriental de Aragón.

En cuanto al *orgullo lingüístico* y a la *presión social subjetiva*, las consideraciones son similares. Si retomamos el estudio de Blas Arroyo (1994: 147), veremos que documenta un 52,8 % de respuestas favorables a la presencia del valenciano en los actos oficiales, y un 53,3% en los medios de comunicación en el distrito valenciano de Campanar en los momentos de mayor reivindicación para el valenciano. Sea como fuere, y como se desprende de la comparación con nuestros datos (recordemos que hablábamos de un 20 % general de respuestas positivas en Els Ports por lo que respecta a orgullo lingüístico, y un 18 % de respuestas positivas en cuanto a presión social subjetiva), se trata de cifras globales claramente superiores a las que nosotros mismos documentamos en nuestra comunidad de habla.

Los índices anteriores son también son bajos si los comparamos con los de otros territorios diferentes de la Comunidad Valenciana. Por lo que se refiere a Cataluña, los estudios del CIS (1998) indican que un 33,5 % de la población catalana preferiría que los actos públicos fueran solo en catalán, y un 37,8 % querría ser atendido en catalán en un centro oficial, aunque aquí también las diferencias entre los diferentes grupos sociales (especialmente autóctonos y de origen inmigrante) son muy destacadas. Por su parte, Torres (2005) señala que un 66,7 % de la muestra analizada considera que tendría que aumentar el uso social del catalán, aunque con notables diferencias de nuevo en función de la lengua materna. Y en la misma línea desfavorable al catalán se pronuncian los datos más recientes de Huguet (2007) en su estudio sobre las actitudes de los universitarios catalanes o los de Newman, Trenchs-Parera y Ng (2008) en su análisis de actitudes de los jóvenes barceloneses a través de la técnica del *matched-guise*. En todos los casos se trata de valores —en ocasiones muy— superiores a los nuestros.

Por lo que se refiere a Galicia, Rojo (1981: 292) documentaba en un estudio pionero a finales de los años setenta del siglo anterior que el 68 % de la población gallega estaba de acuerdo con que la radio en esa comunidad histórica fuera exclusivamente en español; y estos valores se incrementaban en las esferas del cine (un 80 % consideraba aceptable que fuera exclusivamente en español) y de la televisión (con un 82 %). Años más tarde, sin embargo, González González (1996) certificaba en el MSG una considerable inversión de las preferencias: un 89,4 % decía estar a favor entonces de ser defendido en un juicio en gallego; un 41,5 % preferiría que la misa fuera en gallego; y por último, un 65,6 % estaba ya a favor de una mayor presencia de la lengua autóctona en la televisión.

Parece, pues, que la efectividad de las políticas lingüísticas operadas en la comarca de Els Ports, al menos en la esfera actitudinal, ha sido inferior a la de otras comunidades también tradicionalmente diglósicas, como Galicia. Es fácil ver que, *grosso modo*, nuestros datos se aproximan más a los que Rojo (1981) presentaba hace casi tres décadas en Galicia. Mientras que quince años más tarde los índices de presión social subjetiva del gallego se habían recuperado hasta prácticamente invertirse en esa comunidad, en una comarca valenciana como Els Ports se siguen documentando índices de presión social subjetiva considerablemente bajos.¹⁷

Ahora bien, por lo que respecta a la segunda de nuestras reflexiones, esto es, el componente dinámico o estático de estas actitudes, los datos de nuestra investigación apuntan a que la diglosia en esta comarca parece contener ya un punto de dinamismo. En general, hemos visto como hay una serie de grupos sociales que destacan por una mayor sensibilidad y entusiasmo hacia la dignificación social de la propia lengua, y estos no son otros que los jóvenes, las mujeres y los informantes de estrato bajo.

Si prestamos una atención especial al factor generacional, vemos que la diglosia detectada es claramente menos acusada en la generación joven que en las generaciones adulta, y no digamos, en la mayor. Es indudable que son los jóvenes quienes, con diferencia, manifiestan mejores actitudes hacia el valenciano, tanto en los indicadores de fidelidad y orgullo lingüístico, como en los niveles de presión social subjetiva. Al mismo tiempo, hemos advertido una clara gradación entre las actitudes positivas de estos jóvenes, en un extremo, y las negativas de los mayores, en otro, pasando por niveles intermedios –aunque, por lo general, más cercanos a estos últimos– en la generación adulta, en consonancia con lo que habían diagnosticado ya otros autores en territorios similares, como la mencionada Franja Oriental de Aragón (Huguet y Llurda, 2001).

En conclusión, si bien es cierto que los índices obtenidos en este estudio –fidelidad y orgullo lingüísticos, y presión social subjetiva– nos permiten confirmar que los informantes de Els Ports todavía hoy presentan unas actitudes claramente diglósicas (con el valenciano como lengua no prestigiada), también detectamos de forma manifiesta una tendencia a que los jóvenes valoren cada vez mejor su lengua propia, lo que nos lleva a concluir la existencia de un componente dinámico –favorable esta vez al valenciano– en la situación sociolingüística de la comunidad de habla. Y a ello, se nos antoja, han debido de contribuir probablemente las políticas lingüísticas que, desde hace ya casi tres décadas, vienen operando en la Comunidad Valenciana y cuya penetración, sobre todo

17. No hay que perder nunca de vista que se trata de territorios muy diferentes, sin duda (la comparación con absolutas garantías debería realizarse entre comunidades o entre territorios gallegos o catalanes también aislados y rurales como Els Ports); en cualquier caso, resulta llamativo este contraste tan evidente.

en el sistema educativo, parece haber terminado calando en las actitudes de los hablantes hacia el valenciano.

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A Struggle to Change the World: Pelin Esmer's Documentary *The Play*

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ABSTRACT: This article is about the important position that women's experiences occupy in feminist filmmaking, about women's images in the context of film production in Turkey, and about the function of various narrative styles in documentary films. Pelin Esmer's documentary *The Play* (*Oyun*, 2005) offers the opportunity to reconsider the importance of sharing intercultural works about women within the paradigm of a national and global audience (Kirel, 2009).

Keywords: film, feminism, documentary, stereotypes, counter-gaze.

RESUMEN: Este artículo aborda la posición decisiva de las experiencias de la mujer en la filmografía feminista, la imagen de la mujer en el contexto de la producción filmica de Turquía y la función de los diversos estilos presentes en el género documental. En esta línea, se argumenta que el documental *The Play* (*Oyun*, 2005), dirigido por Pelin Esmer, presenta la oportunidad de reconsiderar la importancia de compartir trabajos interculturales sobre mujeres dentro del paradigma de audiencias nacionales y globales.

Palabras clave: film, feminismo, documental, estereotipos, mirada subversiva

Pelin Esmer, the director of *The Play*, is a young Turkish female filmmaker whose wholehearted, direct, and elaborate documentary has both a subject and a narrative style worthy of analysis. It is an important production with real women who can take action with solidarity and who can speak out frankly when they have an opportunity to express themselves. *The Play* focuses on nine women living in the village of Arslanköy, near the city of Mersin in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. The social conditions of women in this region are more moderate than

those in Eastern Turkey, where social roles are more rigid for women than for men. *The Play* is a mature film that enables the audience to witness the experiences of these women by capturing a five-and-a-half week period during which they prepare an amateur theatrical production called *The Outcry of Women*. Beyond its cinematic qualities, the political discourse of the documentary is more striking in light of the world it portrays. By making the substantial process of solidarity and collective action visible, it serves to break down prejudices regarding Turkish women in rural areas, who, like their counterparts in some other parts of the world, are usually expected to be silent. Furthermore, along with its narrative style, theme, and relationship to its audience, *The Play* deserves to be discussed as an encouraging and inspiring example for Turkey. Its rich elements allow for various interpretations of the nature of documentary, reality, representation, and experience, as well as contributing to the visibility of women's experiences in media.

1. Being a Woman Director in Turkey

The insufficiency of women's presence in film production and the almost total absence of feminist film productions in Turkish automatically provide a basis for this study. *The Play* as a cultural product must be examined from a perspective that encompasses production practices that are different from those that are possible in countries with an established intellectual feminist tradition. Thus, the documentary will be explored in light of its own cultural milieu as well as the viewpoint of Western feminist theoreticians. In this context, identifying concepts of feminism as "transnational", "Western", and "local" becomes mandatory.

First, the male-dominated production dynamics of Turkish cinema must be summarized briefly if one is to understand the presence of women in documentary film production in this country.¹ In the framework of the feminist

1. Ruken Öztürk's analysis of female filmmakers in Turkish cinema between the years 1914 and 2002 is considerably useful. In that detailed analysis, 1990-2002 is the most "fertile" period for women directors in Turkey, with a ratio of 5.76%, even though only sixteen women directors produced 30 movies of the total of 521 movie productions. During the whole period of 1914-2002, of a total of 6035 movies produced in Turkey, only 96 were shot by 23 woman directors (Öztürk, 2004: 34). After the year 2002, when the research ends, even though the percentage is not certain, several names such as Selma Köksal, Berrin Dağcınar and Ela Alyamaç could be listed as women fiction film makers (Özgüç, 2008). In the case of Turkey, regardless of the content of their work, or whether they make feminist films or not, it is clear that the percentage of women directors has not increased much. According to the BSB (the Association of Documentary Filmmakers in Turkey), at present there are about 30 members who are female directors in the documentary branch (<www.bsb.org.tr>). Additionally, there are some non-members of BSB in the documentary field. In Turkey the number of female filmmakers producing documentaries appears to be higher than women making fictional movies.

filmmaking process, the term “transnational feminism” (Suner, 2007) might be applied to international productions. When discussing production conditions in Turkey, Yeşim Ustaoglu said, “Turkish cinema has built a tight circle around itself, which does not easily allow outsiders to step in”. In the same interview she said, “I do not like to make a distinction such as man-woman or young-old. Everyone exists in the same system. The difference is in the feelings, in being you” (Colin, 2006: 131). We can accept her words as a critique of gender-based categorization of female filmmakers; however, one cannot deny the cultural context in which female filmmakers live and work. For instance, assuming it is possible to give a name to the gender orientation of Turkish cinema, Güchan (1992) calls it “purely masculine”. It is very clear that Turkish cinema, since its inception, has been a male-dominated industry, and its patriarchal characteristic has determined the content of its films. In this respect, the “world” of the movies has always been male-oriented, inevitably reflecting male views and preferences. Thus, until now, Turkish popular cinema has been dominated by a male point of view and the conservative gender representations emerging from that view (Kirel, 2005: 169). Given the historical background of Turkish cinema, the development of a feminist tradition in a culturally determined male-dominated industry has to be questioned.

The feminist movement that gained momentum in Turkey in the 1980s has been central in the intellectual background to women’s issues, both in public opinion and in the mass media. Associations such as the “Flying Broom”² (1996) and FILMMOR³ (2003) have organized activities such as film screenings, workshops, traveling festivals, and information networks, all of which have contributed to that intellectual background. These organizations have been influential in the successful establishment of a “center” for women’s movie-making experience in Turkey. Historically, however, apart from the absence of female directors - a problem in itself - images related to women’s issues were also confused in the patriarchal imagination of Turkish popular cinema, particularly in the 1980s. Usually, films were made by male directors in a populist manner to respond to the new popular feminist wave by exploiting women’s bodies and pandering to the audience’s interests.

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2. “Flying Broom” was established in 1996 “with the aim of enhancing consciousness of gender equality, providing information and training to empower women, and contributing to the development of efficient policies for solving women’s problems that stem from inequality” (<www.ucansuperge.org>).
 3. In 2003 FILMMOR (Filmmor Women’s Cooperative) was launched with a structure proposing “openness only for the participation of women” and listed the reasons for its existence as “to make cinema for women by women, to challenge, produce, dream, and act” (<www.filmmor.org>).

2. Pelin Esmer and her Documentary Style in *The Play*

Before analyzing the documentary, some notes about director and producer Pelin Esmer's cinema career are in order. She was born in Istanbul in 1972. After studying sociology, she began her cinema career and worked as an assistant director in some co-productions.⁴ After several collaborative experiences, Esmer made an experimental film called *The Snow* (*Kar*, 2002) and her first documentary, *The Collector* (*Koleksiyoncu*, 2002). Then she finished her first feature-length film called *10 to 11* (*11'e 10 Kala*, 2009). Esmer was the director, producer, and even the camera operator for *The Collector*. When she decided to make a documentary about her old uncle, who is a real collector, she preferred to record the complete documentary by herself so as not to disrupt the flow of real life (BÜKAK, 2005: 153-154). In spite of its very low production budget, *The Collector* gained attention when it was nominated for and won several national and international awards.⁵ Following *The Collector*, Esmer made *The Play* in 2005. As a young Turkish female director, Esmer reached both local and global audiences and once again earned several national and international awards.⁶ Her most recent film, *10 to 11* (*11'e 10 Kala*, 2009), has won several awards in some prestigious festivals.⁷ She has changed her career path from documentaries to fictional films and has been trying to adapt the real life of her uncle, first filmed as a documentary, to a fictional feature.

The story of the production of *The Play* confirms Esmer's ability to capture details from real life. When she read what she called a "very insignificant" news article about a group of women who had gathered to perform a play in Arslanköy, Mersin, she wanted to meet the women immediately. This was the first step into making the documentary. In 2003, she traveled to Arslanköy to record the women during their preparations and rehearsals. She edited the documentary over the next two years. As with her first documentary, *The Collector*, she had a very small production group of three people, which helped to give *The*

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4. *Conversations Across Bosphorus* (documentary), *Cumhuriyet*, *Deli Yürek-Bumerang Cehennem* and *Gönlümdeki Köşk Olmasa* (fiction movies).
 5. *The Collector* won The Best Documentary award at the 3rd Rome Independent Film Festival (RIFF); at the 14th International Ankara Film Festival it was chosen 3rd in The Best Documentary category; and was also screened at 11 international festivals (Turkey, Greece, Denmark, Cuba, Germany, Italy and America) (<www.lokomotifkamera.com>).
 6. Festivals where *The Play* has won awards: Tribeca International Film Festival (USA) "Best Documentary Director Award", Trieste International Film Festival (Italy) "Best Documentary Award", Creteil Women's Film Festival (France) "Best Documentary Award", Navarra Punto de Vista Film Festival (Spain) "Audiences' Prize", Nurnberg Turkey/Germany Film Festival (Germany) "Special Jury Award", and Vitoria New European Film Festival "Human Rights Award".
 7. *10 to 11* has won several awards already such as: Best Film in Golden Boll Film Festival (2009), Best Screenplay in Golden Boll Film Festival (2009), and Special Prize of the Jury in the Istanbul Film Festival (2009) (<<http://www.10to11.com/index.html>>).

Play a sincere narrative style. Some of her interviews provide insights into her production process. For instance, she was frequently asked, “Why did you choose a documentary style, instead of fiction?” Her answer: “Perhaps I shoot documentaries because I like real stories that might as well be fiction [...] Perhaps because of my interest in dramas and real life stories [...] In other words, it would be quite different to make nine actresses ‘act.’ It might have been a good movie, but the fact that it is real makes me more excited” (<www.arslankoy.org>). Obviously, her approach to filming is concerned with capturing reality. Her main purpose, however, is, as she says, to “produce a film” rather than “documenting” it. In Esmer’s own words, “What I wanted to do was not a documentary-like fiction, but a fiction-like documentary. When the line between the play and their real lives got blurred in time, it became a significant experience to watch the film take place between the lines of documentary and fiction” (<www.kameraarkasi.org>). In this respect, Esmer’s preference for making a documentary could be described as witnessing “actual” and “spontaneous” events in Arslanköy during rehearsals and performance of the play, titled *The Outcry of Women*.

As she herself observed, “the dramatic structure of reality” affected the narrative style of her documentary in many respects, particularly in her wish to portray the effects of the play production upon the women and the people around them in the village. Esmer’s own words summarize her point of view: “In my opinion, the most effective side is that these women could have been anywhere in the world; they even could have been men. I mean, I have never thought of them as village women of Mersin” (<www.arslankoy.org>). She goes on to underline and focus on the problem of illiteracy in rural areas, particularly of women, and their collective struggles to overcome its negative effects. As for the women’s purpose, Esmer sees the real motivation behind their production of the play as their desire to say, “We are here, too” (Yücel, 2005: 58).

Considering documentary filmmaking methods, *The Play* can be described as an “observational” documentary. According to Nichols (1991: 38), “The observational mode stresses the non-intervention of the filmmaker. Such films cede ‘control’ over the events that occur in front of the camera more than any other mode”. Furthermore, the observational filming style allows the spectators to hear and see the experiences of others as they occur (Nichols, 1991: 42).⁸ In *The Play*, Esmer’s presence is rarely felt and only becomes noticeable to the

8. Bill Nichols (1991: 32-33) separates the dominant modes of documentary production into four categories: Expository, Observational, Interactive and Reflexive. Among these, the “observational” documentary model is made possible by the development of new mobile recording devices. Since the presence of the camera is unattractive, this method of working allows the director to shoot people more freely. This production method departs from the “interactive” documentary production mode in which the director is expected to participate directly in the filmed action.

audience when others address her during the shooting. Apart from these few instances, the director participates in the documentary only as an observer and listener and does not interpose herself, as judge or interpreter, to change the flow of events. As Esmer declared in other interviews, “I did not use a ‘candid camera’ sort of approach, and did not shoot any moment they did not want [...] I never asked them not to look at the camera. Thus, I am not in the film visibly, but of course I have a relationship with them throughout the shooting” (BÜKAK, 2005: 156). It is clear that Esmer carefully considers the effect of the camera during the shooting.

3. The Nine Women’s Presence in *The Play* and *The Outcry of Women*

As mentioned above, *The Play* focuses on nine women’s experiences during the rehearsals of the play *The Outcry of Women*. It begins with the primary school principal, Mr. Hüseyin’s announcement: “*The Outcry of Women* will be performed today at half past four in the afternoon, in the garden of the Arslanköy Primary School”. Mr. Hüseyin, holding a microphone, introduces the performers⁹ both to the audience of the play in the village square, and to us, the audience of the documentary film. After the opening credits, the following words indicate that an unusual play is going to be performed in Arslanköy. We hear Ümmiye’s voice: “To me, life is a theatre. Everyone around me plays different roles. Also, I’ve performed all sorts of roles in my life. I worked as a maid; I played the maid to earn money for the family. I worked as a nanny. I played the nanny. To a certain extent, I become each of these characters”. Actually, Ümmiye and the others are very ordinary characters living in a village. They harvest the fields, cook, carry firewood, take care of their children, and so on. However, as we get to know them better and listen to their conversations, it becomes possible to share in their thoughts about theatre, about gender roles, and about how male-dominated dynamics have been established in the village. A critical analysis of the documentary reveals that they are aware of their contact with the whole country, or the whole world, through the camera (Yılmaz, 2006: 12). The director’s gaze travels around them to the village, the fields, the school, the hair-dressers, and the rehearsals.

Esmer, with her camera, represents a significant and extraordinary role model for the women. In this context, her experiences in the village are worth mentioning in a more detailed way. For instance, when the director arrived at

9. Since 2001, the group has performed plays such as the *Mangy Donkey*, *First Country*, *Then Veil*, *Woman’s Suffer*, *Stoned Almonds*, *Traditional Village Play* and *The Outcry of Women* (<www.aksyon.com.tr>).

the village to meet the women, she did not want to record anything for a few days. She only wanted to get to know them, their village and their lives, closely. She wanted to avoid conveying the impression that she was from the city and had come to observe them (<www.arslankoy.org>). Moreover, the first night of her stay, the women sewed a “şalvar” (local women’s pants) for her; then Esmer wore her şalvar during the shooting. She notes that the şalvar “became a symbol for making all of us equal” (<www.arslankoy.org>). Culturally, wearing pants is accepted as one of the most common characteristics of urban women’s dressing style, whereas the şalvar belongs completely to rural areas in Turkey. The essential point here is that a spirit of communication was established after that first mutual effort at cultural contact.

The name *The Play* is worth analyzing for its cultural meanings. First and quite simply, a theatrical drama is called a “play.” “Play” in Turkish also refers to the activities of childhood, as in English. This point raises the possibility that the “play” might be a tool for creating an alternative sphere for human beings beyond responsibilities, against all that is “serious”. This alternative sphere might sometimes run counter to the dominant power, the system, or things represented by power. According to Söalp (2002: 13), play is “the space-time of rendering changes into experience, seeing the possibility of experiencing changeability”. In this context, the title of the documentary not only refers to a theatrical play, but also to the act of playing. In that respect, the nine women in Arslanköy could be seen as women breaking free from the rigid rules and expectations of being a woman in the village. We can admit all their struggles and efforts as a cheerful rebellion and a celebration of solidarity. The women through the act of performing begin to understand their own realities more analytically. Considering the concept of “play” in these terms, Türkoğlu (2002: 34) underlines the relationship between the audience and the play: “The audience is not constantly in the spectators’ position. [...] If someone keeps on watching something, then that image has something that fits into the viewers’ own reality”. Hence, play becomes a very important resource for facing reality, both for spectators and, more importantly perhaps, for the players, as a self-reflexive process that links their reality and its representation. Through the process, ultimately, they manage successfully to create and stage a play inspired by their own life experiences, despite the fact that they were not initially aware of that intention. In other words, as they start to name, identify, understand, and criticize themselves, then they begin to realize the male-oriented/male dominated world they have been living in.

It is very clear that the intersecting layers of *The Play* and *The Outcry of Women* were planned and edited successfully. Certain life experiences of almost everyone in the group were represented in *The Outcry of Women*, although not all of them were. As Ümmiye points out, “The important thing is not the part that belongs to me, nor the part that belongs to you; the important thing is to be able

to tell, to recite the lived experiences of our village, and of other villages”. They aimed not to show everything, but to represent what they had been experiencing as women in a rural area. It is a “representation” and they are very much aware of it. Thus, *The Outcry of Women*, created and shaped by the women’s own experiences, focuses on some important issues, such as illiteracy, oppression, forced marriage, giving birth, motherhood, lack of communication in marriage, sexual problems, and violence. In the village, traditional social relations and expectations dominate, while generational conflict is one of the biggest problems for women in their social lives. Obviously, the purpose of the women was not simply to spend their spare time acting or having fun together. During the rehearsals, when they express their lifetime experiences, they confront both themselves and their families, and they start to speak up and express themselves without any hesitation. The first screening of the film was held in the village on March the 8th. The nine participants in the documentary attended the screening together with their families. After that screening, *The Play* and the “players” were invited to several national and international festivals, such as the Istanbul Film Festival and San Sebastian Film Festival (<www.radikal.com.tr>). The positive changes in Arslanköy in terms of constructing more equal social relations, and enabling a better communication between men and women are not solely the beneficial effects of *The Play*. Even before the documentary was made, the experience of the theatre helped the women significantly to realize important aspects of their lives. It should be recognized, however, that the positive and transformative energy of the director throughout the filming of the documentary helped to effect positive changes in the village.

4. Analyzing *The Play* as a Documentary in Terms of Feminist Filmmaking Practices

The Play might be read in light of some of the essential arguments of feminist film criticism in reference to the nature of reality, representation, and the usage of film language. In “Theories and Strategies of the Feminist Documentary”, E. Ann Kaplan (1988: 80) disputes the accepted representations of reality and suggests using the cinematic apparatus as a new way of changing the audience’s expectations and assumptions about life. Furthermore, the documentary film constantly refers not only to “profilmic” events, but also to the “real world” in general (Kuhn, 1994: 129). In this respect, we can place *The Play* somewhere between reality and representation.

In the context of feminist filmmaking practices, not only the content of films has been discussed, but also cinematic preferences and priorities. For instance, Kuhn (1994: 129) warns us about the use of a voice-over in documentary film.

In *The Play*, nine women speak for themselves, making it possible for the audience to see their experiences without the “guidance” of an overriding voice. On the subject of voice-over, Mary Ann Doane (1986: 341) reminds us of Pascal Bonitzer’s critical questions: “Who is speaking?”; “Where?”; “In what time?”; and “For whom?”. These crucial questions apply also to the making of a feminist documentary about women’s experiences. In this sense, Welsch (1994: 166) follows Bakhtin’s interpretation about dialogue and states:

For women making, participating in, or viewing women’s documentaries, dialogue can occur between filmmakers and participants or viewers, among the film participants or between them and viewers, among viewers, and within a viewer. These multiple dialogic exchanges are possible because viewers are encouraged to respond to the films and because filmmaking practices are chosen with dialogue in mind. For instance, rather than relying on the seemingly omniscient voice-over of many traditional documentaries, feminist documentaries have often favored interviews and on-screen discussions.

Keeping in mind these theoretical approaches, the use of voices in *The Play* can be analyzed. From a technical point of view, Esmer uses voices to connect different scenes. However, *The Play* through the entire production process is concerned with the establishment of “dialogue”. In this sense, the whole performance process includes a “dialogic” triangle between the women, the director, and the audience. The effect of this comprehensive dialogue is one of the most important parts of the documentary. The experiences of all the women and the transference of experience are the crucial points of the documentary. Patricia Erens (1988: 556) points out that filmmakers should consider the message “The personal is political” while documenting the everyday lives of ordinary women. Furthermore, she declares that by allowing individual women to tell their life stories, filmmakers not only restore the voice of women, but in some cases they create positive role models, as well. Focusing on the functions of feminist documentary filmmaking within the historical and cultural context of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States in particular, Lesage (1987: 14) says, “Feminist documentary film-making is a cinematic genre congruent with a political movement, the contemporary women’s movement”. She treats the feminist documentary aesthetic as a part of the contemporary women’s movement in America. Moreover, Laura Mulvey summarizes two general principles that influenced feminist film culture:

1) changing the content of cinematic representation to present realistic images of women, record women talking about their real-life experiences, and mix consciousness-raising and propaganda.

2) concern with the language of representation and cinematic process led filmmakers to using aesthetic principles from the avant-garde tradition. (in de Lauretis, 1994: 141)

Unfortunately, feminist filmmaking that embodies these principles has still not become an established tradition in Turkey. In this sense, cinema has not been used as a strategic medium for studies of women as it should have been. Thus, Esmer's work has to be seen as an important step toward establishing a new tradition among the filmmakers.

It might be useful to recall the well-known comments of feminist theoreticians on the necessary characteristics of feminist films. As Claire Johnston (1999) points out, many women filmmakers seek ways of breaking down the traditional borders between documentary, experimental, and fictional genres by using new forms and narration techniques (see also Erens, 1988: 561). Thus, the aim of projecting women's experiences can be realized substantially through the making of documentary films. "Making visible the invisible" is a significant step in filling the vacancies and deficiencies of the representation of women in media. Kuhn (1994: 71) adds:

But the activity of making the invisible visible can also work at the level of film production itself, through an examination of the place of films within the contexts in which they are produced, by looking at the question of how films are put together in the ways they are, the kinds of social relations involved in that process, and the relationships between modes of production and the formation of textual structures and operations foregrounded by a feminist perspective.

Thus, the nature of the representation of women in feminist films is a functional guide for criticizing the film's text in a general manner. Furthermore, the production dynamics of films are a vital part of the analysis. In that context, in order to maintain a "counter cinema" Johnston (1999) suggests that advancing collective work would be a major step forward. Gaining and sharing skills would become a significant challenge to the male-dominated film industry. Such an expression of solidarity (sisterhood) among women might provide a self-sufficient alternative practice against the rigid structures of male-dominated cinema. This strategy might be formulated to include the notion of film both as a political device and as an entertainment instrument. According to Johnston (1999: 39-40), "Our 'collective' fantasies must be released": instead of voluntary or utopian perspectives, a collective cinema production must emerge. Therefore, to create a counter cinema, consciousness and a conceptual foreground have to be established. Hence, in its production style, structure, and content, *The Play*

provides a model for counteracting a significant deficiency in the Turkish film community.

From a technical perspective, the mobile digital camera has made a positive contribution to the creation of this counter-cultural sphere. As Süalp (2004: 664) points out, “While the anti-media organizations are considered as agents for expression of political discourse, the struggle for information and societal civil rights, a number of common exchanges might be observed in every kind of video experience”. Furthermore, Ilyasoğlu (2001: 27), in noting the importance of women’s narrations, suggests using the oral history method for collecting the history of women’s lives. According to her, the oral history method provides the opportunity to reach new areas of knowledge about women, such as social experience, history, and information about “how things have happened”. These attempts also make women “visible”. Advanced recording techniques and digital cameras are appropriate for collecting and sharing first-hand knowledge about women and for establishing a new counter public sphere through the revelation of women’s experiences.

In analyzing *The Play*, the “invisible” but “assumed” social conflict between urban and rural women has to be understood within the Turkish socio-cultural context. As Özbay (2002: 16) indicates, the place of village women as “other” is important in the analysis of the status of women, especially as they deal with the impossibility of having rights or of improving themselves to the level of urban women. Özbay (2002: 44) underlines the importance of experiencing the public sphere for “the other” women and she adds that whenever we understand “the other” women, it will become possible for them to find the solutions for their problems. The division of the public and the private spheres has always been used both as an explanation of the obedience of women and as an ideology that establishes their position (Davidoff, 2002: 190). Given the focus of this article, some features of the public sphere and women’s experiences might be reviewed very briefly. Although there are several theories on the nature of the public sphere, in this article only the women’s experiences in the public sphere are detailed. Köker (2004) points out that the democratic potential of togetherness and the states of conversation that are created in women’s public spheres are valuable for creating an alternative public sphere for women themselves (Özbek, 2004: 460). Furthermore, Köker (2004: 546) indicates that such a public sphere can arise only through conversations. On the other hand, Özbek (2004: 466-467) emphasizes that it is not only common use that makes a place public. A public sphere should be available for every member of society and it must be of value in resisting as much as possible the pressures of bureaucratic hierarchy, materialization, and “the tyranny of the private”. It is to be considered as a significant transformation when the women of Arslanköy transfer their experiences into a theatrical event,

choosing to express their problems through the play, which they performed in the village and later at universities and festivals.

The concept of “feminist counter-cinema” is considered to be an important component of feminist theory. Kuhn (1994:172) insists:

Feminist counter cinema is not a matter simply of a set of films which embody matters of expression and/or formal strategies that may challenge those of dominant cinema, or which construct a specifically ‘feminine’ cinematic language [...].

and

The logic of dominant cinematic institutions works in the final instance towards the production of dominant meanings. Dominant institutions of film production, distribution and exhibition cannot, for the most part, accommodate alternative or oppositional textual practices.

It is impossible not to agree with Kuhn’s argument. Her emphasis is important in establishing that the produced film is not to be taken merely as a film text. The paradigms of the circumstances in which a film is produced must also be taken into account as much as the period and circumstances (historical, social, emotional, and physical) when it is released. Therefore, in order to analyze the film as a text and its effects on the audience, the complete conditions of the screening place and time and the situation of the viewers must also be considered. Identification is another important aspect of the relationship between the documentary and its audience. Identifications are more directly related to “what is represented in the image” in the documentary, and for that reason, “a film about a woman’s life and her work as a mother may bring about forms of recognition in female spectators of themselves or their own everyday lives” (Kuhn, 1994: 130).

Beyond all the theoretical arguments, the responsibilities of female documentary filmmakers in structuring their filmic language have to be discussed more precisely. Reliability is essential for evoking identification and trust for what is presented as “real” in documentary films. Therefore, feminist filmmakers have to consider that the capacity of documentary films to represent reality is larger than that of fictional films in terms of the audience’s expectations and what they are willing to accept. Feminist documentaries have to focus on the examples that have the potential to create awareness and consciousness among audiences, not to dictate or persuade. Beyond production, it is important to have the documentary released. As the spectators of feminist films are more engaged with feminist issues and already sensitive towards women’s matters, it is essential to search for and find the methods to reach an audience outside that engaged

circle. The limited distribution and screening possibilities for documentaries (for example, thematic showings and festivals) have to be reconsidered in a multi-dimensional way. *The Play* is an important achievement in that it was screened in movie theaters in Turkey along with other popular films.¹⁰ *The Play*, with its fluent narrative style and interesting real characters, managed to attract a large audience, and brought a welcome change in audiences' expectations about documentaries in Turkey. Moreover, in the context of feminist film criticism of documentaries, it provides another set of meanings for evaluation. By means of its alternative narrative style, content, and production mentality, we can think of *The Play* as an independent women's documentary film. Although Esmer does not define herself as a feminist filmmaker, clearly the content and filmic language in this documentary are entirely compatible with a feminist filmmaking strategy. Considering the lack of a well-established feminist filmmaking tradition in Turkey, she constitutes an important development.

5. Conclusion

The Play offers an inspiring message about rural women's solidarity. In a small Mediterranean village, nine women come together to confront the male-dominated, rigid social roles and cultural expectations in a very unusual way. They manage to complete a theatrical play called *The Outcry of Women* and perform it in their village. The nine women, and then the documentary made by Pelin Esmer, challenge stereotypical perceptions of rural women and establish a new and uncommon image: the brave and intelligent village woman as a positive image in life and in the media. Indeed, *The Play* is a documentary about the cheerful rebellion of nine rural women in Arslanköy, Mersin, through the possibilities of drama. At the beginning of the documentary, the director introduces us to the village in general, using a long zoom in. Then she reveals the purpose of the characters, to focus on each women acting in the play, one by one. Apart from the introduction in the first scene, the emphasis is not on the performance of the play itself, but on the preparations and rehearsals before the performance. The film starts on the play's opening day: we meet the women first and the details of the production process of the play are shown through flashbacks. The production process of the documentary was also an important experience for the director and for the nine "players" of Arslanköy. By the time

10. *The Play* had a box-office of 7,962 tickets (30th Nov. 2007) (Temel Verileriyle, 2008: 30), followed by the release of a DVD version of the documentary by a prestigious video company in Turkey.

the shooting was over, all involved realized that they were not much different from one another.

Moreover, *The Play* proves that it is possible to use the documentary to capture women's experiences and share them in a significant way. Regarding the content and production facilities of cinema in Turkey, *The Play*, with its women, the director, the producer, and the nine women in the film, has the potential to break down prejudices derived from the cultural differences between urban and rural women. In that context, cultural elitism and distinct differentiation of "urban" and "rural" women has been criticized and discarded by the documentary, through the confrontation between "local" and "global" experiences in the media. In *The Play*, the production definitely proceeds as a means for the transmission of experience among women. In the process, the phase of confrontation enables women to observe and celebrate their lives from a different perspective. Above all, change is inevitable after the women's theatrical experience. Women in Arslanköy came out of their own geographically and culturally restricted world and met the external world. Esmer's contribution to the process is an "experience transferring bridge" of feminist¹¹ cinema practice across which previously invisible women were able to become visible. In *The Play* all the experiences related to being a woman, including motherhood, gender, violence, lack of communication, identity problems, marriage, and female-male relations, are dramatized by nine women in a theatrical production, and Esmer as a female director, editor, and camera operator allows us to see them as we otherwise never would have seen them.

Thus, *The Play* helps to break down the stereotypes and traditional role models of rural women and shows that another world for them is possible. That kind of responsibility fits into feminist film practice. Above all, the documentary offers an amazing experience, to witness the change brought about by women coming together with other women. In the light of this change, the question is, what constructs conservative femininity and masculinity and leads to the acceptance of given role models? Media culture perpetuates the idea that life should remain as it is. *The Play* with its unique, positive tone proves that lives may change when women get together. With regard to the relationship between the representation and the artistic work, a strong link toward unity has emerged between the text and performance. Rather than using the professional acting techniques of the theatre performance, "real people" perform essentially their own roles, thereby gaining a mutual experience. By sharing their problems,

11. I am using the term "feminist" intentionally, although Pelin Esmer does not define herself as a feminist director.

women constitute a common consciousness through their performances and come to understand the experiences of one another.

Compared with the fictional film, the documentary has a unique power: the real lives of real people occupy documentaries, whereas representations of reality performed by professionals occupy fictional films. In spite of the struggles involved, the nine women chose to represent themselves in their performances. *The Play* is such a distinct example of an “alternative voice”, in the light of local conditions in the village and customary male-domination in the film industry. When one analyzes the production conditions of films, it is important to note the gender and nationality of the filmmaker. To succeed in the struggle to create a feminist counter cinema against the dominant Hollywood-oriented filmic culture, it is necessary to reach for international appeal (Kirel, 2006: 66-67). Feminist cinema has to adopt dynamic production and distribution attitudes to resist every kind of limitation imposed on women. When focusing on the global and international appeal of movies in general, the fact is that “local is political”, therefore, boundaries must be expanded to reach as many audiences around the world as possible. The problems of women are hardly ever local, even if they have seemed to be. They result from the restrictions imposed on women by patriarchal, ideological powers throughout the world; they appear in a thousand faces in the West and the East; and they are felt in the global experience of us all.

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Web Campaigns: Popular Culture and Politics in the U.S. and French Presidential Elections

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the campaign websites of presidential candidates during the 2007 election in France and the 2008 presidential campaign in the U.S. Positing the Internet and social networks as a manifestation of popular culture, it examines the reasons for the use of information technology in electoral campaigns. It also attempts to elucidate the reasons for the adoption of the codes of popular culture by exploring the concept of informalization as well as the significance of emotion in online campaign strategies.

Keywords: Internet, elections, campaigns, politics, website, popular culture, emotion, informality, aesthetics, Facebook, YouTube.

RESUMEN: El presente estudio examina las páginas *web* de las campañas electorales de los candidatos presidenciales en las elecciones de 2007 en Francia y 2008 en EEUU respectivamente. Desde la consideración de *internet* y las redes sociales como manifestaciones de la cultura popular, se exploran las razones para el uso de las tecnologías de la información en las campañas electorales. Igualmente, se pretende dilucidar los motivos para esa utilización de los códigos de la cultura popular mediante el análisis de los conceptos de informalidad y el papel de la emoción en las estrategias políticas en línea.

Palabras clave: Internet, elecciones, campañas políticas, sitio web, cultura popular, emociones, informalidad, estética, Facebook, YouTube

Popular culture is an elusive concept whose definition is by no means straightforward. It is possible, however, to try and delimit its meaning, albeit at the cost of a degree of simplification, by pointing out the existence of three major strands in the definition attempts carried out over the years. One of these strands emerged in the nineteenth century and identified popular culture as folklore in all its guises in pre-industrial societies. Popular culture was essentialized or, to put it differently, interpreted as the core of a given nation, and simultaneously idealized as the spirit or the genius of the people. This theory gained prominence in Germany, but it also influenced all the Western countries which were then engaged in their nation-building processes (Mouchtouris, 2007: 46).

The second strand is more contemporary and is exemplified by sociological interpretations relying on social class, with Bourdieu being one of its major proponents (Bourdieu, 1979). For him as for other sociologists, popular culture is nothing but a poor man's version of elite, dominant culture. Popular culture is only derivative and hence lacks any creativity (Mouchtouris, 2007: 47). A related definition of popular culture originated in the Frankfurt school with philosophers Horkheimer and Adorno in the 1920s. In this conception, mass-produced cultural goods are opposed to elite, culturally legitimate art forms and are therefore rejected as mind-numbing productions (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1974).

These two strands in the conceptualization of popular culture clearly evidence a strong tendency to formulate value judgments about it, and are therefore inherently ideological. Even though they have been extremely influential throughout the twentieth century, they can hardly function as analytical tools.

The third and most recent strand, on the other hand, manages to sidestep the normative tendencies of its two predecessors by adopting a descriptive approach and changing its focus. Instead of embracing all aspects of a culture, it narrows down its angle to the mass media and their place in numerous areas of people's daily lives (Strinati, 2004: x). Following Horkheimer and Adorno's lead, but leaving aside all value judgments, mass media are interpreted as the major manifestation of popular culture. The mass media, now converging with information technology and the Internet, may be thus be seen as the crucial arena where social and political issues are expressed, negotiated, or hotly debated (Hall, 1981: 239; Kidd, 2007). The Internet, therefore, and the social practices it gives rise to can be interpreted as emanations of popular culture. The conceptualization of the Internet as a manifestation of popular culture underpins the present paper.

As politicians have both widened and deepened their use of the Internet over the past decade, they have taken a turn towards the forms of popular culture that have evolved around the network, so that an important question arises: what

accounts for the introduction of the Internet and hence of popular culture in electioneering practices?

The present study will attempt to answer this question through a comparative analysis of candidates' websites during the 2007 presidential election in France, and the 2008 presidential race in the United States. The comparative approach has been chosen because it enables a more accurate analysis, inasmuch as an interpretive hypothesis can be subjected to control in different contexts (Vigour, 2005: 128). Indeed, the comparison between these two countries is likely to shed light on the uses being developed for the Internet by politicians and their campaign staff, perhaps even leading to the formulation of general principles, and underscoring the convergence of practices in modern democracies.

1. Historical Overview

The introduction of popular culture in electoral campaigns is by no means a recent phenomenon, whether in the United States or in France. In fact, it can be said to be inextricably linked to the rise of universal suffrage characterizing modern politics. As politicians had to be voted into office by vast swaths of the population who had little or no grasp of the issues being debated, and sometimes even less interest in them, they could no longer remain within the closed, patrician circle of professional lawmakers. They had to explain to a wide public the main points of their platform if they were to win over the people, to gain their support and their recognition and in so doing, to obtain the legitimacy required to act as leaders of the people. Politicians therefore connected with the people by using all the media available to them. From broadsheets in the eighteenth century to the penny press in the nineteenth century, from monthly news and commentary magazines to ladies' journals, every medium was put to use to convey political messages in easily accessible language (Boller, 2004). The advent of radio only intensified the trend, with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous "fireside chats" garnering massive, enthusiastic audiences (Jamieson, 1984: 21). Television, in its turn, was embedded in the strategies of all political parties starting with Kennedy's election in 1960 and has remained to this day the major playing field of any electoral campaign (Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar, 1991: 109; Freedman, Franz and Goldstein, 2004; Gillmor, 2004: 90; Rainie, 2007).

As of the 1996 elections in the United States, however, the Internet has slowly gained a foothold in the strategies of candidates in American elections (Bimber, 1998: 392; Foot and Schneider, 2002: 17; Chadwick, 2006: 152). But it was only during the following presidential race, in 2000, that all candidates made use of the possibilities offered by information technology to try and get more visibility by setting up an online presence. These early websites were largely

static; they provided documentation, pictures and daily updates of the candidates' activity, but offered no possibility for voters to interact with the campaign staff or add comments (Kamarck, 1999: 121; Serfaty, 2002 *b*).

The introduction of blogs in Howard Dean's 2004 campaign constituted a watershed inasmuch as it marked the insertion of supporter activity within the candidate's website; hundreds of volunteers created blogs to back Dean's bid for nomination and mobilize voters, and the links to these blogs appeared on Dean's official website. Large amounts of money were collected from small contributions, thus paving the way for a renewal of grassroots activism (Serfaty, 2006: 29; Perlmutter, 2008: 73). Then the 2008 campaign, starting with the primaries in early 2006, went one step further with the introduction of social networking in the blogs, with all the contenders creating pages on Facebook, MySpace, Friendster and other networks (Serfaty, 2009: 370).

In France, the introduction of information technology in political communication largely followed the same path, albeit with a short time lag. In its early stages, the Internet was only embraced by marginal parties that attempted to enlarge their audience and their impact thanks to this relatively low-cost new technology (Sauger, 2002: 180). Like in the U.S., the practice of maintaining an official election website also turned mainstream around the year 2000. This was when broadband Internet access became widespread in France, providing parties with a strong incentive to set up a site and to give their candidates an additional locus to deploy their campaign in, even though television still is the major media for electoral campaigns.

The methods used by campaign directors were similar to the ones prevailing in the U.S., with mainstream parties creating static websites, allowing no interactivity until the 2004 watershed, when individual politicians such as Dominique Strauss-Kahn, among others, started maintaining their own interactive blogs, where comments could be posted online. The 2007 presidential elections marked the true appropriation of the Internet by French presidential candidates, with both Ségolène Royal and Nicolas Sarkozy putting up complex, elaborate websites and making full use of the possibilities of social networks. Political campaigns have thus integrated the main features of what is known as Web 2.0, a phrase which refers to all the technologies enabling interactivity and networking. Let us now examine the emerging evolution of the candidates' sites in the U.S. and in France alike.

2. Political Website Aesthetics

The word aesthetics is not normative and does not refer to the 'beauty' or lack thereof, of a website. It must be interpreted in its descriptive sense, and it

refers to the design of the site deriving both from its strictly functional aspects, such as coding, and from the choices made by the party or candidate or by the web designer. Studying the aesthetics of a candidate's website thus means analyzing the layout of all the elements it is made of, i.e., the interweaving of text, images, sound, video, hyperlinks and their position, pop-up windows, as well as the use of colors and animations. The next step is conceptualizing the aesthetics of a political website so as to gain an insight into the social practices it is likely to prompt.

Campaign websites have already developed an orthodox aesthetic, thus creating a set of expectations in the public and among web designers (Bolter, 2001: 41). This was recently further evidenced by a mini-scandal that arose in the French political sphere in September 2009, when the former presidential candidate, Socialist Ségolène Royal, tried to renovate her site while keeping its former name, "Désirs d'avenir". Her team uploaded a rudimentary website for which they charged her backers more than forty thousand euros, a very large sum by the industry's standards. The web design community felt so incensed by this sub-par production that hundreds of automatic website generators were quickly put up to parody Royal's crude "Désirs d'avenir" website,¹ while an art director published a scathing critique of the site in a national daily (Girardeau, 2009). Although more may have been at stake in this furore than mere aesthetic outrage, the incident does pinpoint the existence of a set of rules for online campaign sites.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that successful political websites comply with the dominant aesthetic of websites, showing deep, underlying similarities beneath the apparently diverse surfaces. It is important to note that the aesthetic of campaign websites cuts across the political spectrum; whether in the United States or in France, both right wing and left wing parties pay tribute to the same standards.

This aesthetic, then, is first characterized by a high degree of semiotic complexity: websites attain this complexity by fragmenting the surface and connecting widely dissimilar elements through hyperlinks (Serfaty, 2002 *b*: 79; Foot and Schneider, 2006: 57). In addition, the front page of a website offers a significant accumulation of disparate material: audio and video files, pie-charts, downloadable text files, campaign goods such as posters or T-shirts inscribed with campaign slogans (Serfaty, 2002 *b*: 78). The front page of a site gives access to three categories of contents: the first one is a repertoire of actions designed to mobilize the electorate; the second one is a full and regularly updated archive of the candidate's speeches, portraits, photo-ops and television appearances; the

1. http://www.damienh.fr/desirsdavenir_generator.

third one comprises the voters' supportive comments, their own pictures and sometimes their amateur videos of the candidate's speeches on the campaign trail (Serfaty, 2009: 370). The website is thus packed with information of all kinds, turning the screen into a saturated surface, in which every item is loaded with significance.

The juxtaposition of all these elements in the same visual space means that viewers have to pick their way through the page. Thus, maximum non-linearity characterizes websites: the viewer is supposed to make sense of the densely packed page by clicking the links, without any pre-defined pattern being imposed on the clicking process. The viewer thus unfolds the website elements at will, recreating the candidates' political narratives through her own personal navigation. In this way, the viewer transforms the space of the screen into an inhabited, lived-in place, just as pedestrians transform an anonymous street into a fully-fledged place through the motions of their bodies, while walking through it (Manovich, 2001: 239).

The non-linear and largely individualized perusal process can be seen as a way of creating a kind of limited narrative interactivity, inasmuch as viewers can pick and choose elements from within the general narrative framework provided by the website. However, starting in 2006, during the primary elections in the U.S. and starting in 2007 in France, during the presidential campaign, this embryonic interactivity was increasingly supplemented by the possibility for the viewer to submit comments or pictures and have them published on the candidates' pages on any number of social networks. Sometimes, as is the case for Clinton's and Mitt Romney's sites, a few lines of the supporters' blog entries appear in the lower half of the candidates' site, with a link that can be followed to read the entire post, thus mimicking the 'teasers' found on print newspapers' front page.

The new space given over to supporters and potential voters has had numerous repercussions on the candidates' political communication. Before exploring them, however, it is essential to bear in mind that supporters do not have unrestricted access to the candidates' space; all the sites are moderated by administrators who screen messages for offensive content (Wojcik, 2007: 338). Moderators also greet participants, launch topics for debate or weigh in to reframe issues, sometimes acting as downright censors (Wright, 2006: 554). The need for moderators arises from the perception that the total absence of regulation would give free rein to the lunatic fringe instead of promoting *bona fide* participation. Their presence contributes to turning the websites into carefully controlled and mediated communicative artifacts, from which negative comments are largely excluded. The presence of moderators combined with the introduction of social networks means that it is now possible for a campaign website to do two contradictory things, i.e. both display social networking in real-time, and control

what is said by the members of the network in real time too. Campaign websites thus function as techno-political environments.

Let us now investigate the political and social consequences of the insertion of Web 2.0 technologies on campaign sites.

3. Social Networks and Politics

On Facebook, MySpace, Friendster or Ning, members display personal information such as age, gender, astrological sign, education, marital or relationship status, workplace and outside interests and activities; they often include a self-portrait as well. Although it might initially have looked as if people were going to be wary of disclosing so much information about themselves, in fact they have joined social networks in large numbers: the membership of Facebook, for instance, has now reached three hundred million,² and has grown by over two hundred and seventy percent in 2009,³ while it is the third most visited site in the United States, right after the Google and Yahoo search engines.⁴ This exponential growth in the number of people ready to post their personal details online shows that the boundaries of the private/public divide currently are unstable and in the process of being redefined. Far from deterring would-be participants, the revelation of personal details actually works towards establishing the trust necessary to social interactions and to participation in collective actions by reducing uncertainty about the intentions of others (Berger and Calabrese, 1975; Putnam, 2000; Valenzuela, Park and Kee, 2009). Social networks illustrate a powerful contemporary trend in popular culture: the creation of social links through self-disclosure and what can be described as distant intimacy, meaning the process of sharing highly personal stories with an unknown audience (Serfaty, 2004).

For campaigners, the large number of people embracing social networking means that politicians have to be where their potential electorate is. This is one of the reasons why they willingly submit to having their Facebook or MySpace page, giving them the same treatment as any other teenager. Social networks constitute a visual metaphor of connectedness.

Thus, during the U.S. primaries, with almost ninety thousand friends on MySpace in the spring of 2007, Hillary Clinton initially won hands down a sort of instant popularity contest with John Edwards, the other potential

2. <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>. [Accessed September 2009].

3. <http://www.istrategylabs.com/2009-facebook-demographics-and-statistics-report-276-growth-in-35-54-year-old-users/>. [Accessed September 2009].

4. <http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com>. [Accessed September 2009].

nominees of the Democratic Party, who had far fewer “friends” on social networks. However, she was rapidly overtaken by Barack Obama and his five hundred and sixty two thousand “friends” on Facebook as early as September 2007. Obama’s campaign team was obviously conversant with the social networking phenomenon and created pages on Linked-In,⁵ on MySpace,⁶ the latter displaying over one million eight hundred connections, and less active pages on lesser-known sites such as Gather⁷ or MyGrite.⁸ The Linked-In and MySpace page are still active nearly one year after the election, and the latter displays the pictures of supporters to this day. However, the Facebook page has been de-activated, and replaced by Obama’s own social network, asking people to keep on volunteering and donating to promote health care reform.⁹ Obama can still be followed on Twitter, the micro-blogging site, where messages have to be no longer than 140 characters.¹⁰ He also has his own channel on YouTube, featuring nearly nineteen hundred videos which still elicit large numbers of comments from the public.¹¹

Other candidates in the U.S. presidential race made full use of the possibilities of Web 2.0 technologies: John Edwards thus was present on twenty-three social networks, some of which, like “revver” or “collectivex”, for instance, do not possess the notoriety of MySpace or Flickr. YouTube was also used by John Edwards to announce his decision to run for the Democratic nomination, and by Hillary Clinton to post her speeches and film clips.

On the Republican side, Mitt Romney was notable for his online presence, with an elaborate site, a page on MySpace and Facebook, and videos on YouTube. However, he pulled out of the race for the Republican nomination rather early in the game. Unlike Romney, Republican candidate John McCain fought a more traditional battle and somewhat disregarded the online arena.

In France, the two main candidates also put up elaborate campaign websites for the 2007 presidential election, using, however, different strategies. Center-right candidate and eventual winner Nicolas Sarkozy chose an almost austere interface, with no link to outside social networks, and which can still be accessed long after the election.¹² On the other hand, in the site her campaign director put up, and which now is no longer available, Socialist candidate Ségolène

5. <http://www.linkedin.com/in/barackobama>. [Accessed September 2009].

6. <http://www.myspace.com/barackobama>. [Accessed September 2009].

7. <http://barackobama.gather.com/>. [Accessed September 2009].

8. <http://www.mygrito.com/BarackObama/>. [Accessed September 2009].

9. <http://my.barackobama.com/page/user/login?successurl=L3BhZ2UvZGFzaGJvYXJkL3ByaXZhdGU=>. [Accessed September 2009].

10. <http://twitter.com/BarackObama>. [Accessed September 2009].

11. <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=BarackObamadotcom#play/all>. [Accessed September 2009].

12. <http://www.sarkozy.fr/video/>. [Accessed September 2009].

Royal chose to include videos and blogs by supporters, as well as links to a popular video sharing site, Daily Motion, where excerpts from her family album showed her as a baby and as a young girl with her siblings. In other words, Royal chose to embrace the popular culture of social networking and increased transparency, showing herself in an intimate light, giving equal time to her supporters, illustrating in her very website her chief campaign motto: "France for president".¹³ Sarkozy, on the other hand, chose the distance and pomp befitting a more traditional head of state. His self-exposure remained extremely limited, with a brief, text-only biography appearing online. By keeping aloof of the popular culture symbolized by the introduction of social networks, Sarkozy's team sought to display a clear semiotic break between his official persona and his supporters. His site thus remained within the bounds of a more traditional conception of power.

Choosing to display the pictures or the statements of supporters on an official campaign website and campaigning on social networks are both important developments, with multiple symbolic meanings. The first one has to do with one of the recurrent problems in modern democracies, the perceived apathy of voters, with low turnouts for ballots and a general lack of involvement in the civic process (Putnam, 2000). Therefore one of the purposes of campaign websites and social networks is to give people an opportunity for involvement in the political process, even if this is only done by posting a picture and a comment.

The second important issue in modern-day politics is the perception that politicians function in a world of their own, without any real contact with the people and their concerns (Champagne, 1990: 281). The pictures of very large numbers of supporters provide candidates with what ultimately amounts to a visible testimony to the existence of a grassroots base, delivering undeniable and countable proof of the legitimacy of their aspiration to power. In addition, by making their voter base accessible to the public, politicians show a willingness to submit to the test of approval or rejection by the people, even before the election itself has been held. Candidates thus show that they did not reach their position in politics through political machines or through the influence of a few, but that they have a true propinquity to their electorate.

This propinquity is reinforced by the statements supporters post on their candidate's websites, next to a picture of their own choosing, often their own. Barack Obama's MySpace page, for instance, displayed the following comments a few months after he took office:

13. "La France présidente".

- 1) thank you mr president!!!
my faith and confidence in our country is back up two a all time high because
of you.
thank you
- 2) I LOVE OBAMA ur my #1 President
- 3) woow! u are AMAZING obama! im so glad u r our president!
- 4) Obama! My main man! haha
Im so glad your president!
Dude, you totally rock
♥ Kiawna
- 5) I hope you will help,us poor people,who are not making enough money to
keep our houses,instead of going on foreclosures....Many blessings to you and
the family....¹⁴

These words, and many others like them, contain a great deal of emotion, expressed in colloquial, everyday language, with the spelling mistakes characteristic of fast typing and, in examples 2, 3 and 4, with the spelling codes in use for texting. These examples show the supporters' process of identification with Obama's heroic figure, and the last one uses quasi-religious language to express her expectations from Obama's term in office, ending with a blessing.

The display of emotion and of identification with the candidate occurs on a regular basis, whenever part of a political website is given over to the public. The overwhelming proportion of laudatory comments is due to the presence of a moderator screening messages and eliminating disparaging ones. Such displays of positive emotions can then themselves prompt the emotions of other viewers and perhaps prompt them to get involved in the political process. In other words, campaign websites rely on the display of supporter emotion rather than solely on debate and deliberation.

It is important to underscore that the display of emotion certainly does not override more traditional forms of political expression; Sarkozy's site, with its austere look, for instance, is proof enough of the staying power of older structures. But even Sarkozy's site included videos which ultimately found their way onto the popular video sharing site YouTube and elicited passionate responses from the public. Even more blatantly, in the U.S. presidential campaign and in Royal's campaign in France, the emotion expressed online by supporters using the everyday language and spelling codes of popular culture, made a massive entry

14. <http://www.myspace.com/barackobama>, March 26, 2009. [Accessed September 2009].

into political discourse. The expression of emotion, of passion even, was allowed to co-exist, in an apparently non-hierarchical, horizontal relationship, with the necessarily more staid and consensual rhetoric of a candidate to the highest office. In this way, political discourse can be said to be undergoing a process of hybridization with the codes of popular culture, at least whenever it migrates to an online environment.

4. Popular Culture and Politics

In order to think through the co-presence of popular culture codes with those of political rhetoric, the notions of informality and informalization can yield significant results. The concept of informality refers to “a relaxed, casual or non-ceremonial approach to conformity with formal rules, dress codes and procedures”. It is opposed to formality, which “is thought to enable the preservation of social distance and structures of power” (Misztal, 2000: 17-18).

Norbert Elias was one of the early thinkers who identified the long term trend towards the informalization of modern day society. In his view, the rise of informality is linked with that of the autonomous individual. Individualism implies that people gradually leave behind formalized and standardized behaviors in order to redefine and sometimes reconstruct themselves. This does not mean that formality or formal rules disappear. In fact, the slow but steady emergence of more flexible, less conventional modes of sociability goes together with the internalization of social constraints, and hence generates a different kind of formalization (Elias, 1987). Later thinkers have built on Elias’ groundbreaking theory to interpret changes in the private and public spheres. Anthony Giddens, for instance, has shown how individuals now self-reflexively re-create narratives of self. For him, such self-reflexivity and self-determination lead to egalitarianism in both the private and public spheres (Giddens, 1991; Tucker, 1998: 205-6). In a similar fashion, Cas Wouters argues that the process of democratization and the blurring of social and gender hierarchies that occurred throughout the twentieth century led to more flexible kinds of behavior standards as well as to a modified relationship to power and patriarchal relationships. The formal modes of address denoting respect and submission to authority figures tended to be elided and to be replaced by social and psychological rapprochement between people of different social classes and genders (Wouters, 1995 *a*, 1995 *b*, 2007). This is what Wouters calls the informalization process. Like Elias, he believes informalization does not mean the absence of constraint, but the emergence of new social constraints. To him, the new, informal behavior codes demand the expression of emotion, albeit within strictly controlled boundaries (Wouters, 1995 *b*: 335).

The informalization process and its emphasis on the expression of emotion go a long way towards explaining the successful hybridization of political rhetoric with popular culture codes. In an egalitarian society, it is indeed essential for politicians to hold a position of power and to simultaneously refrain from appearing aloof from the people who voted them to power. The semiotic break between authority figures and the people can hardly be sustained and justified any longer, even though it is a necessity for the exercise of power. In its place, at least for the duration of a political campaign, there arises a communicational situation characterized by the elision of hierarchical, top-down flows and the egalitarian co-presence of the people and prospective leaders. The infusion of popular culture into politics thus has to be seen as a manifestation of the long term trend of society towards informalization and the expression of emotion. As a result, participating in an online campaign, even if only by posting a comment, is designed to be first and foremost an emotional experience that can be shared by the largest number of people. By engaging the emotions of a wide public through the use of all available popular culture vehicles, politicians prompt a more active approach to political processes (Rojas and Puig i Abril, 2009).

5. Conclusion

As this study draws to its close, it has become apparent that neither disregard for the possibilities of the Internet nor the competent use of social networks guarantee an election, whether in France or in the United States, as evidenced by the election returns in both countries. However, even though the impact of campaign websites may be impossible to assess with any degree of accuracy, it may safely be argued that the alliance of popular culture with politics through the use of information technology and the Internet is here to stay because it is uniquely suited to the deep under-currents of late modern societies. As evidenced by our comparative study of campaign websites, there is no significant difference between the approaches of online campaigning of French and American politicians. In both countries, popular culture enables the mediation of political rhetoric to a vast public through the hybridization of codes and the foregrounding of emotions. With the widespread use of social networks during presidential campaigns, popular culture appears to provide a means to engage citizens in political processes and enhance the proximity of political leaders to the people. As such, it infuses political traditions with new life, thus ensuring their long-term survival.

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Reseñas / Book Reviews

Corpus Sociolingüístico de Castellón de la Plana y su área metropolitana.

Por BLAS ARROYO, J. L. (coordinador); B. NAVARRO MORALES; J. C. CASAÑ NÚÑEZ (colaboradores). Laboratorio de Sociolingüística de la Universitat Jaume I. Castelló de la Plana: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, 2010. Pp. 50 + 1413 pp. Libro-CD ISBN: 978-84-8021-721-7. 20 €.

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Al igual que en otros países de nuestro entorno, la lingüística de corpus ha conocido en España un importante desarrollo en los últimos tiempos. No en vano, desde hace un par de décadas numerosas bases de datos textuales se han publicado en nuestro país en diversos formatos, un esfuerzo en el que se han implicado diferentes instituciones públicas y privadas. Aunque una parte destacada de estos corpus corresponden a materiales procedentes de la lengua escrita, no han escaseado tampoco los correspondientes al registro oral, con diversas aplicaciones que van desde la elaboración de diccionarios al reconocimiento automático del habla, pasando por otras de muy diferente naturaleza. Sin embargo, hasta fechas recientes han sido escasos los trabajos de este tipo cuya amplitud y representatividad permitieran un análisis riguroso de las comunidades de habla desde un punto de vista sociolingüístico. A llenar este

vacío han acudido, precisamente, en los últimos años proyectos colectivos como PRESEEA (*Proyecto para el estudio sociolingüístico del español de España y de América*), un ambicioso proyecto para el análisis sociolingüístico de numerosas ciudades hispánicas a uno y otro lado del Atlántico, y que en la actualidad se halla en diversas fases de ejecución.

En este contexto hay que saludar la publicación reciente del *Corpus Sociolingüístico de Castellón de la Plana y su área metropolitana* (CSC-SAM), una iniciativa del Laboratorio de Sociolingüística de la Universitat Jaume I, dirigido por el profesor Blas Arroyo, que actúa como coordinador del proyecto, y en cuya edición han participado también dos de sus más estrechos colaboradores, Beatriz Navarro Morales y Juan Carlos Casañ Núñez.

El corpus aparece en una edición en formato de libro-CD, prácticamente la única posible para albergar las

casi 1.500 páginas que lo componen, además de muy útil para el trabajo de los estudiosos del lenguaje. El trabajo consta de un capítulo introductorio en forma de librito, al que acompaña un CD-ROM en el que aparece la transliteración de setenta y dos entrevistas en español a hablantes representativos de diversos sociolectos de la ciudad de Castellón de la Plana, así como de las principales poblaciones de su área metropolitana (Vila-real, Borriana, Nules, etc.).

El capítulo introductorio (incluido también en su versión electrónica) es un extenso trabajo en el que el profesor Blas Arroyo enmarca el corpus en el seno de la lingüística de corpus española, además de examinar los principales hitos que han llevado a su elaboración. Entre estos destaca la minuciosa descripción de las poblaciones estudiadas (apartado 4), así como aspectos metodológicos relevantes, tales como la delimitación de la muestra (apartado 5.1), la concepción y posterior realización de las entrevistas (5.2) o los criterios seguidos para la transliteración y edición de los materiales (5.3). Especial atención dedica también Blas Arroyo a la descripción de los objetivos que han guiado la confección del corpus, y entre los que ocupa un lugar destacado la realización de estudios sobre variación sintáctica y discursiva (apartado 3), habitualmente menos frecuentes en la tradición sociolingüística que aquellos que toman como base el plano fonológico de la lengua. Muchos de esos fenómenos de variación (la expresión/omisión del

sujeto; la alternancia en diversas terminaciones verbales, la variabilidad en el tiempo y modo verbales, la posición de los clíticos, los fenómenos de régimen como el (de)queísmo, etc.) son ejemplificados a partir de materiales extraídos del mismo corpus. A estas variables se añaden otras más específicas de las situaciones de contacto de lenguas, como las que caracterizan a las comunidades de habla castellonenses, y a las que el coordinador de este proyecto ha dedicado una considerable atención a lo largo de los años. Entre estos destacan claros ejemplos de interferencia en el español hablado como consecuencia del contacto con la variedad valenciana del catalán (el grado de abertura de las vocales medias, el ensordecimiento de la /-d/, la confusión de preposiciones, el préstamo de diversas rutinas conversacionales vernáculas, etc.), así como otros desenlaces en los que las dos lenguas de la comunidad convergen hacia soluciones estructurales comunes, eliminando paradigmas irregulares (la omnipresente concordancia en la lengua oral entre el *haber* normativamente impersonal y el sustantivo siguiente, pag. 15) o simplificando determinadas estructuras sintácticas (pag. 14) o categoriales (el caso de la frecuente confusión en estas hablas de la preposición confusión *bajo* por *abajo/debajo*, pag. 14).

En la introducción, Blas Arroyo recuerda que el corpus forma parte de un proyecto de investigación más ambicioso, iniciado hace una década, y conocido con el nombre de

Macrocorpus sociolingüístico de Castellón y sus comarcas (MCSCS), un importante banco de datos compilado entre los años 1999 y 2006 por los miembros del mencionado Laboratorio de Sociolingüística de la universidad castellonense. Ese esfuerzo se materializó en la realización de 258 entrevistas semidirigidas de unos cuarenta y cinco minutos de duración aproximada a hablantes de todas las comarcas castellonenses. De este proyecto deriva la actual publicación del CSCSAM, un corpus que, no obstante, presenta algunas novedades destacadas con respecto al proyecto matriz. En primer lugar, la delimitación geográfica de las poblaciones estudiadas, más acorde con la tradición sociolingüística, generalmente circunscrita al estudio de núcleos urbanos. Con todo, dadas las particularidades lingüísticas de las comunidades estudiadas (por ejemplo, la existencia de diferentes grados de bilingüismo social e individual en la sociedad) consideramos un acierto la ampliación de los límites demográficos del corpus para abarcar toda el área metropolitana castellonense. Y ello pese a reconocer que el alcance -¿excesivamente?- amplio de esta última -el corpus abarca poblaciones del conocido como segundo cinturón metropolitano de la capital castellonense- podría ser objeto de discusión.

Otra diferencia importante con respecto al MCSCS estriba en que la muestra que se presenta en el corpus aparece guiada por un criterio de afiliación por cuotas idénticas de sexo (36

mujeres, 36 hombres), edad (tres grupos, a razón de 24 hablantes por grupo) y nivel de instrucción (24 informantes con estudios primarios, 24 con estudios secundarios y 24 con estudios universitarios). Este principio es cada vez más habitual en los estudios sociolingüísticos ya que garantiza una representación equitativa de los diferentes grupos sociales para el análisis de los hechos de variación. Complementariamente, dicha representatividad viene respaldada por la presencia de cuatro informantes en cada una de las celdas obtenidas mediante la combinación de los factores sociales reseñados, un número que supera a la cifra más habitual de tres con que se han confeccionado las muestras de población en numerosos desarrollos del proyecto PRESEEA. Así, los materiales incluidos en el CSCSAM superan ampliamente los criterios de representatividad habituales en la investigación sociolingüística de inspiración laboviana y sus casi seiscientos mil palabras garantizan un estudio suficientemente exhaustivo de numerosos fenómenos de variación lingüística.

En una etapa de postestratificación, a los criterios anteriores se han añadido otros de naturaleza sociológica, algunos habituales también en la tradición sociolingüística (el caso del nivel sociocultural), mientras que otros son más específicos y adecuados para el estudio de los patrones de distribución lingüística en las comunidades estudiadas, como ocurre con el lugar de residencia (42 residentes

en la capital, Castellón de la Plana; 30 residentes en el área metropolitana) o con la lengua materna (castellano (33); valenciano (36); mixtos (3), o la lengua dominante de los hablantes (castellano (30); valenciano (31), mixtos (11).

Las entrevistas siguen también un esquema clásico en la metodología sociolingüística, configurándose como conversaciones semidirigidas a partir de un cuestionario previo, que gira en torno a diversos ámbitos temáticos (experiencias y opiniones sobre la vida escolar; ocio y tiempo libre; experiencias personales). De este modo, se persigue homogeneizar en la medida de lo posible las muestras de habla obtenidas, facilitando con ello la realización posterior de estudios variacionistas. Por otro lado, la disposición de los ámbitos temáticos mencionados, así como la introducción en las fases más avanzadas de la entrevista de otro tipo de preguntas al hilo de la conversación, están pensadas para facilitar la introducción progresiva de contextos más personales y espontáneos. Precisamente a este eje estilístico se concede una atención particular en la confección del corpus. Y es que, junto a las estrategias ya reseñadas, cabe mencionar otras no menos significativas, como la introducción ocasional de terceros participantes en la conversación, o la distinción entre diferentes tipos de entrevistas en función del grado de conocimiento previo de los interlocutores, o del propio tenor de aquellas. A este respecto, señala Blas Arroyo en su introducción

que en algunas de estas los entrevistadores participaban activamente en el desarrollo de las conversaciones, por medio de interrupciones, señales de retroalimentación, aportando sus opiniones y/o experiencias personales en diversas fases del diálogo, cuando no, permitiendo la participación de más de un interlocutor, técnicas todas ellas que, por lo general, facilitaban una considerable mayor distensión comunicativa al cabo de pocos minutos de diálogo. En el extremo contrario, sin embargo, algunos entrevistadores se limitaban básicamente a seguir el guión de las preguntas que servían como base para la entrevista, y dejaban que fueran los entrevistados quienes llevaran el peso de la conversación. A nuestro juicio es esta una de las principales novedades metodológicas del presente corpus, cuyo interés ha sido puesto a prueba por el mismo autor en algunos de sus trabajos variacionistas mediante la comparación de los perfiles distribucionales de estos tipos estilísticos extremos. Así, por ejemplo, en su estudio sobre la variación entre las perífrasis *deber* y *deber de* + infinitivo, este investigador descubre que el tenor de algunas entrevistas condiciona el grado de elección de la variante prepositiva (*deber de*), que en franca desventaja con respecto a la otra variante (*deber*) consigue mantenerse todavía con cierta vitalidad en algunos contextos lingüísticos y sociales, así como en aquellas conversaciones caracterizadas como más espontáneas.

Cuestión novedosa, asimismo, es la representada por algunos de los criterios utilizados en la transliteración del corpus. Así, y frente al principio seguido por algunos autores de reproducir fielmente las producciones lingüísticas de los hablantes (seguido también en algunos casos en el presente corpus, como ocurre, por ejemplo, con la reproducción convencional de las aspiraciones de /-s/ mediante la letra “h”), en la transcripción de algunas variantes subestándares que suponen la elisión de unidades lingüísticas (el caso de /-d-/ intervocálica o la ausencia/presencia de la preposición *de* en los casos de (de)queímo, entre otros) se ha procedido a la restitución entre paréntesis de dichos segmentos con el fin de facilitar la localización de dichos fenómenos de variación por parte del analista. De este modo, un criterio quizá no demasiado convencional en la edición de corpus se convierte a la postre en una útil herramienta para el investigador, especialmente provechosa en los estudios de variación sintáctica.

Las cuestiones éticas, siempre latentes en la creación de bancos de datos de este tipo, y que se han visto agravadas considerablemente en los últimos tiempos, han sido también atendidas en la presentación de los materiales del corpus. La siempre

complicada dialéctica entre el derecho a la intimidad de los informantes y la obligación del lingüística de dar cuenta responsablemente del origen de sus datos (la *accountability* de la que hablara hace ya varias décadas Labov) han llevado a los responsables del corpus a la adopción de algunas medidas tendentes a hacer compatibles ambos requisitos. De este modo, por ejemplo, y con el fin de garantizar el anonimato de los hablantes y de las personas –y determinados lugares– directamente mencionados en las conversaciones, los nombres propios se han sustituido por una inicial, lo que impide su identificación. Con todo, las casi mil quinientas páginas de transcripciones hacen que en algunos casos se haya pasado por alto este criterio, un error que junto a algunas erratas y errores tipográficos aquí y allá cabe incluir en el debe de este importante trabajo.

Sin lugar a dudas la publicación de este *Corpus Sociolingüístico de Castellón de la Plana y su área metropolitana* constituye un importante hito en la lingüística de corpus española, al tiempo que puede representar una herramienta fundamental para el estudio de unas variedades de contacto que, como ha señalado el coordinador de la obra en diversas ocasiones, han sido injustamente desatendidas por la tradición lingüística española.

Filosofía en acción. Retos para la paz en el siglo XXI. Por COMINS MINGOL, I.; S. PARÍS ALBERT (eds.). Castelló de la Plana: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, 2009, pp. 357; ISBN: 978-84-8021-712-5; 24 €.

Reseñado por Elena Martínez Santamaría, Investigadora de la Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía para la Paz.

Este libro, titulado *Filosofía en acción. Retos para la paz en el siglo XXI*, publicado en 2009 por la Universitat Jaume I de Castellón y editado por Sonia París Albert e Irene Comins Mingol, es el fruto de la investigación desarrollada a partir de once tesis de estudiantes del Máster Internacional en Estudios de Paz, Conflictos y Desarrollo de la Universitat Jaume I de Castellón. Están divididas en dos partes principales y, por ello, previamente vienen precedidas por las reflexiones de Comins Mingol, en la primera parte, sobre la *Educación y cultura de paz* y por París Albert, en la parte segunda, sobre la *Transformación pacífica de conflictos*. Las reflexiones de las editoras muestran los contenidos más actuales e innovadores en estas cuestiones y, asimismo, suponen la voz escrita de más de quince años de investigación llevada a cabo por la Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía para la Paz, de quien depende el mencionado Máster. Estas tesis mantienen propiamente el carácter interdisciplinar que caracteriza a los Estudios para la Paz, por lo que sus páginas pueden resultar de gran interés no sólo a investigadores y académicos, sino a colectivos y miembros de la sociedad que sientan

curiosidad y preocupación por estos temas.

En la parte primera, se exponen aquellas tesis que se centran en la reflexión sobre la construcción de culturas de paz, puesto que tal y como indica Comins Mingol en el capítulo «Filosofía, educación y epistemologías no excluyentes», las reflexiones filosóficas no deben «convertirse en una actividad aislada de la vida, desligada de sus preocupaciones y necesidad» (17). Con ello queda plasmada la importancia del compromiso de la filosofía para la paz con la existencia humana. Esta existencia no es única, es decir, no hay una única forma de relacionarnos, sino que habrá tantas formas posibles como diversas son las culturas y las personas. Este es el sentido que se extrae del concepto de culturas de paz que ha sido desarrollado por Vicent Martínez Guzmán, Director honorífico de la mencionada Cátedra. Sin embargo, para que en nuestra realidad veamos la posibilidad de construir otras realidades, es necesario también que centremos nuestros esfuerzos en la elaboración de epistemologías de y para la paz. Ello significa mostrar epistemologías no excluyentes, es decir, «por un lado, visibilizando y destapando el velo de

la violencia cultural, de los discursos que marginan, excluyen y sirven para legitimar en último lugar la violencia estructural y cultural, y por otro lado, trabajando por construir y reconstruir discursos que legitimen y promuevan la paz» (29). De ahí que el interés de las cinco tesis de esta primera parte sea la educación como una herramienta en la construcción de culturas de paz y la inclusión de nuevos paradigmas epistemológicos en los currículos educativos.

En esta primera parte, tras las reflexiones de Comins Mingol, se nos presenta el capítulo elaborado por Sophia Herrero Rico, titulado «La educación para la paz desde la filosofía para hacer las paces: el modelo reestructivo-empoderador». Supone una nueva forma de entender la educación sobre el giro epistemológico propio de la filosofía para la paz. Algunos elementos de esta *Educación para la Paz* desde el mencionado modelo serían, por ejemplo, la importancia de generar sentimientos positivos y el uso de la fantasía e imaginación para hacer las paces.

El siguiente capítulo es el realizado por Cristóbal Blázquez Castelló y lleva por título «Inmigración y escuela». Efectivamente, se plantea esa relación enfocada en la acogida del alumnado inmigrante por parte de los centros escolares. Así, las conclusiones de esta investigación revelan que, siendo hoy en día la inmigración una realidad, para ser beneficiosa se deberían potenciar políticas de desarrollo. En la realidad escolar éstas

pasarían por una generalización de los planes de acogida en todos los centros escolares, la formación de base en interculturalidad para todos los profesionales de la educación y la implicación de los profesionales, incluidos los servicios sociales y los sanitarios.

El tema de la educación sigue siendo explorado en el tercer capítulo titulado «La educación intercultural: el camino hacia una cultura de paz», elaborado por Mónica Brea Santateresa. Partiendo de la diferenciación terminológica y de uso entre interculturalidad / intercultural y multiculturalidad / multicultural, la autora defiende un modelo educativo cimentado sobre las bases de la interculturalidad que, entre otras características, «promueve la interacción, el respeto, el reconocimiento y el diálogo entre culturas» (111), lo que la convierte en educación para la paz.

Desde la perspectiva de la educación se pasa, en el siguiente capítulo, al aspecto cinematográfico como un ejemplo de práctica cosmopolita. Esto es desarrollado por Mahdis Azarmandi en el capítulo titulado «Cine transnacional como práctica cosmopolita: una herramienta para cambiar representaciones híbridas y promover diversidad». Según la autora, este tipo de cine sería un ejemplo de práctica cosmopolita porque «refleja y anima a los principios de apertura y de diversidad. Permite nuevos procesos de la formación de la identidad lejos de las dicotomías del sí-mismo/otro y se basa en la multiplicidad e hibridación» (144).

Finalmente, en el sexto y último capítulo de esta primera parte, encontramos la sección titulada «Sexualidades y conocimientos: invertir el discurso represivo. Un llamamiento por la inclusión de la sexualidad como materia en los Estudios para la Paz», elaborado por Hannah Lea Dröge. Analiza profundamente los diferentes elementos que constituyen nuestra sexualidad y explica por qué la sexualidad es un tema que debe preocuparnos. Siendo la sexualidad un discurso represivo y vergonzante, la autora argumenta la importancia de incluir los derechos sexuales dentro de los derechos humanos. Dentro de la parte segunda, el eje sobre el que giran las primeras reflexiones es en el capítulo titulado «Una interpretación de la transformación pacífica de los conflictos desde la filosofía», donde según París Albert se «pone el énfasis en la reconciliación y reconstrucción de las relaciones humanas, generando una visión positiva de los conflictos como situaciones de intercambio y aprendizaje que propician el contacto entre las personas» (199). Este nuevo sentido más positivo del conflicto viene acompañado de una serie de componentes dentro de la metodología propuesta en esta transformación: la cooperación, la percepción, el poder, la responsabilidad, los sentimientos, el empoderamiento y la reconciliación. De ahí la oportunidad de encontrar en la sección seis capítulos que reflexionan e investigan sobre cómo podemos activamente transformar los conflictos por medios pacíficos.

En el primer capítulo, titulado «Los retos de la seguridad humana ante las sociedades del miedo», escrito por María Cristina Cabrales Baquero, se reflexiona sobre la construcción social de los miedos con el fin de deconstruir el concepto de seguridad humana y de «construir un contradiscurso que fragmente las retóricas del miedo que legitiman el paradigma de seguridad militar» (222).

El segundo capítulo ha sido elaborado por Javier Fabra Mata y lleva por título «Acompañamiento internacional en conflictos violentos. Una lectura performativa de Brigadas Internacionales de Paz». Los efectos del discurso performativo de las Brigadas Internacionales de Paz tienen un impacto muy positivo en situaciones de violencia política. Así, su acompañamiento «actúa como satisfactor sinérgico, cubriendo múltiples necesidades (protección, afecto, participación, libertad)» (245) y supone un considerable refuerzo para el poder transformador de la sociedad civil. Además «proporciona un tipo de seguridad que se entiende positivamente como factor movilizador» (245).

En el tercer capítulo, «Las relaciones entre sistemas médicos en un mundo intercultural: una mirada desde la Teoría del Reconocimiento», María Lidón Escrig Sos se propone la reflexión sobre la salud y las relaciones entre los sistemas médicos desde diferentes esquemas conceptuales de paz, para concluir en lógicas de paz que faciliten «el reconocimiento y

el diálogo intercultural entre sistemas de salud» (271).

Juan Manuel Jiménez Robles desarrolla el capítulo cuarto titulado «Los procesos de perdón y reconciliación como una propuesta para la paz sostenible: un acercamiento desde el modelo de reconciliación de Lederach». Su investigación se centra en los procesos de perdón y reconciliación en contextos posbélicos para concluir en la importancia que ambos tienen en la construcción de una paz más sostenible.

El capítulo cinco lleva por título «Filosofías para hacer las paces y el trabajo de mediación de conflictos interpersonales y de familia. Reflexiones sobre la experiencia colombiana». Claudia C. Caicedo se propone el estudio de la práctica mediadora en los procesos de regulación de conflictos interpersonales y de familia. Así, desde el estudio del contexto colombiano, se resalta el valor de las expe-

riencias y narrativas de las personas que viven el conflicto así como de los mediadores y mediadoras.

Finalmente, el último y sexto capítulo de esta segunda parte reflexiona sobre «La integración imperfecta de los que viven y los que están en España», desarrollado por Said Bahajin. Desde los estudios de transformación pacífica de conflictos, la inmigración en España es un tema no resuelto pero no imposible. Para resultar exitosa, la integración de los inmigrantes debe considerarse como un «proceso bidireccional, dinámico e imperfecto que busca la adaptación voluntaria de los que viven y de los que están en la sociedad donde viven y que comparten» (355). El empoderamiento, la hospitalidad, el reconocimiento y los derechos humanos serán los que asentarán las bases de una cultura de paz que permita a los que viven y a los que están vivir la interculturalidad.

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