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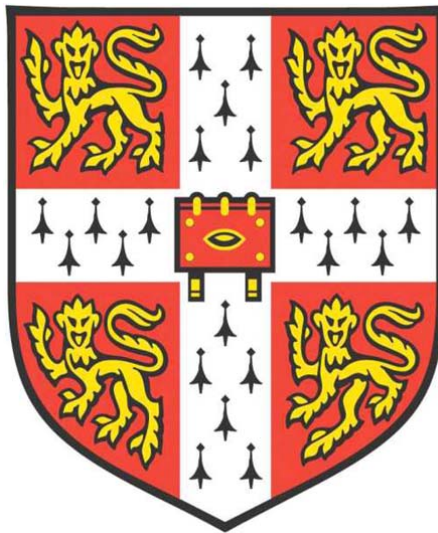
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**Literary Historicism:**

**Conquest and Revolution in the Works of Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012) and  
Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980)**



**Sandra Liliana Velásquez-Alford**

**King's College**

**November 2017**

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## THESIS TITLE

Literary Historicism:  
Conquest and Revolution in the Works of Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012) and Alejo Carpentier  
(1904-1980)

## ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis analyses the depiction of the historical topics of Conquest and Revolution across the literary writings of Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) and Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012). These historical tropes constitute core topics of reflection throughout their literary and critical works, stressing the interplay between literature and history. I propose the concept *literary historicism* to analyse their portrayal of historical topics and characterise the role of history in their poetics. This concept denotes the historical awareness that underpins the authors' literary reinterpretations of historical events; their use of a historicist writing methodology; and the critical relationship established to historiographical sources and narratives. I argue that the authors' deliberate historicism characterises their narratives, challenges disciplinary boundaries and posits literature as an alternative medium for the production of historical interpretation.

This comparative study focuses on a corpus of fifteen fictional works from both authors that depict Conquest and Revolution. The first section analyses the authors' literary portrayal of the Conquest of Mexico (1521) and stresses the relationship established to the historical sources consulted and their literary reinterpretation of this historical event. An assessment of the reflections and symbolisms embodied by their literary-historical figures elucidates the authors' understanding of the Conquest. Thus, this section demonstrates the defining character of these authors' literary historicism in their writing methodology and semantic interpretation when addressing historical *tropes*. The second section explores Fuentes's and Carpentier's depiction of historical Revolutions including the French, Mexican, Haitian and Cuban Revolutions. This section comprises a transversal and diachronic analysis of their Revolution cycles to demonstrate recurrent narrative, thematic and stylistic patterns in Fuentes's and Carpentier's literary portrayals of this historical phenomenon. I highlight the further meaning that these patterns acquire in their works, articulating a critical assessment of these historical revolutions.

This thesis adds to the scholarship on these authors from an interdisciplinary perspective that re-centres attention on History. Through the concept of Literary Historicism, I demonstrate the existence of a central concern in their *oeuvres* to critically reassess the Latin American past and its historical interpretations from literary discourse. This study contributes to the understanding of history and literature in Latin America, for it analyses the interactions between these branches of written culture.

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This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

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Sandra Liliana Velásquez Alford  
Cambridge  
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## 1. Introduction

Echoes of re-elaborations and interpretations of historical events resound in the literary productions of Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012) and Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980). Both Latin American authors publicly acknowledged the central role of History in their writings as a motor, a topic of discussion and a central concern. In *Valiente mundo nuevo* (1990), a critical overview of the Latin American literary tradition, Fuentes postulates: ‘creadores de *otra* historia, los artistas, sin embargo, están inmersos en *esta* historia. Entre ambas se crea la verdadera historia, sin entrecomillado, que es siempre resultado de una experiencia y no de una ideología previa a los hechos’ (Fuentes 1990: 13-14). This comment underlines the contribution of Latin American literary creations (*otra* historia) to the understanding of past events, while acknowledging the influence of particular historical contexts (*esta* historia) in their depictions. Similarly, in the 1975 conference ‘Lo Barroco y lo Real Maravilloso’ at El Ateneo in Caracas, Carpentier concludes his reflection on these theoretical postulates by saying: ‘nos hemos forjado un lenguaje apto para expresar nuestras realidades, y el acontecimiento que nos venga al encuentro hallará en nosotros, novelistas de América Latina, los testigos, cronistas e intérpretes de nuestra gran realidad latinoamericana’ (Carpentier 2003: 86-87). Carpentier’s identification of Latin American novelists as chroniclers suggests the connections between literary and historical discourses in the interpretation of Latin America. Such interpretative endeavour draws attention to the relevance of studying the place of history and historiography in their literary works, as well as the convergences and divergences in their approaches.

In particular, this doctoral thesis focuses on analysing the depiction of the historical topics of Conquest and Revolution across the literary writings of Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) and Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012). These recurrent themes of reflection throughout their literary and critical works stress the interplay between literature and history. I will analyse their literary portrayal of historical *motifs* transversally and diachronically to establish thematic, stylistic, methodological and narrative patterns. I intend to demonstrate the further meaning that these models acquire in their works, and how they articulate a critical assessment of these historical events in the light of the authors’ present contexts. I propose the concept *literary historicism* both to frame the methodological and semantic study of such patterns in their portrayal of historical topics and to characterise the role of history in their poetics. This concept denotes the historical awareness that underpins the authors’ literary depictions of historical events, their use of a historicist writing methodology and the critical relationship established to

historiographical narratives that characterises their re-interpretations.<sup>1</sup> I will argue that the authors' deliberate historicism pervades their narratives, challenges disciplinary boundaries and posits literature as a complementary vehicle for historical reflection, and history as a source for literary creation.

This comparative study comprises a corpus of fifteen fictional works by both authors that depict Conquest and Revolution. My analysis of the theme of Conquest features the following pieces by Fuentes: *El naranjo* (1993), *Todos los gatos son pardos* (1971), and by Carpentier *La aprendiz de bruja* (1956) and *El arpa y la sombra* (1979). In addition, the novels analysed on Revolution are Fuentes's *La región más transparente* (1958), *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), *Agua quemada* (1981), *Gringo viejo* (1985), *La campaña* (1990), *Los años con Laura Díaz* (1999), *Federico en su balcón* (2012), and Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949), *El acoso* (1956), *El siglo de las luces* (1962) and *La consagración de la primavera* (1978). Fuentes's and Carpentier's critical and essayistic production has been included in the analysis of their literary writings.

Despite Fuentes's and Carpentier's acknowledgement of the importance of history in their writings, the scholarly tradition has privileged the literary analysis of their works. As will be argued throughout this thesis, critical works on these authors that include history, explore this topic either as monographic studies, or as part of broader analyses on modernity, family, or 'the Other'. My research diverges from the current criticism available by emphasising historical *tropes*, going beyond monographic analyses and proposing an encompassing framework of interpretation for these topics. The pertinence and novelty of my research lie in the perspective from which it is undertaken. Through the concept of literary historicism, I explore the methodological and semantic engagements with history in Fuentes's and Carpentier's literature. Additionally, the diachronic and comparative scope of this analysis permits following the changes and continuities in their depictions of Conquest and Revolution, while drawing bridges between the *oeuvre* of both authors.

This comparative interpretation seeks to establish the historicist vocation of both authors' literary rendering of historical tropes. It adds to the rich scholarship on these authors from an interdisciplinary perspective that re-centres attention on history. Through the notion of literary historicism, I demonstrate the existence of a central concern in their *oeuvres* to critically reassess the Latin American past and its historical interpretations from the literary discourse,

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<sup>1</sup> I will provide a detailed definition of this concept further in this introduction.

without losing sight of their works as literary endeavours. This thesis contributes to the understanding of history and literature in Latin America, for it analyses the interactions between these branches of written culture.

## 1. 1. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical critics who have written about the dialogue established between literature and history have influenced my reading of Carlos Fuentes's and Alejo Carpentier's literary works. I have focused on Sergio Mejía, Ángel Rama, Linda Hutcheon, and Roberto González Echevarría, whose works examine the relationship between Latin American literature and history.<sup>2</sup> My research adheres to the historian Sergio Mejía's definition of *historicismo americano* in 'La noción de historicismo americano y el estudio de las culturas escritas americanas' (2009) and in his 'Seminar on American Historicism' at La Universidad de los Andes. The notion of *historicismo americano* includes texts from different writing genres (history, poetry, chronicles and novels) centred on American republics. He argues that parallelly to historiography, these series of written culture build interpretations on the historical, social and economic development of these republics. This concept allows me to study Latin American traditions of interpretation and the dialogue between them (Mejía 2009: 247-262). Carpentier's and Fuentes's *oeuvres* along with the historiography on Conquest and Revolution, from which these authors draw in their literary reinterpretations, belong to this tradition.

Linda Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* refers to the relationship of twentieth-century literature with other written discourses. From a postmodern perspective, Hutcheon conceptualises as *historiographic metafiction* the historical interest of this literature:

Historiographic metafiction refutes the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive major claim to truth for that identity [...] both genres unavoidably construct and textualize that past. (Hutcheon 1988: 93)

She acknowledges, as Rama and Mejía, the impact of the historical, social and economic background of an author on his literary works. Hutcheon suggests that these literary writers actively intended to think historically, contextually and, above all, critically in their fictions (89). Furthermore, like Mejía, she stresses that both literature and history were ways of

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<sup>2</sup> Although I am familiar with the theoretical contributions to the topic made by Hayden White, Michel Foucault and Roger Chartier, among others, in this thesis, I have decided to stress the works of authors who have studied the phenomenon in Latin America.

making sense of past events from present perspectives and, thus, turn to the past to understand contemporary institutions, events and societies (Hutcheon: 110; Mejía: 260).

Maarten Van Delden criticises Hutcheon's concept arguing that, in proposing it, she posed a radical division within modernist and postmodernist literature 'as a healthy, historicizing reaction against the ahistoricism of the modernist period' (Van Delden 1998: 112). Nonetheless, Hutcheon's criticism of the modern-postmodern discussion hinges on the binary character of these debates. She acknowledges that the 'indeterminate nature of historical knowledge' and 'the questioning of the ontological and epistemological status of the historical "fact"' (Hutcheon 1988: 88) were not discoveries of postmodernism, but were greater emphasised in the 1970s. However, the characteristics that Hutcheon attributes to postmodern fiction are present in early-twentieth century Latin American narratives, and certainly in Alejo Carpentier's works. For this reason, and in the light of Mejía's observations on the subject, it seems pertinent to extend the characteristics of *historiographic metafiction* beyond post-modern literary productions when studying Latin American fiction.

Likewise, Roberto González Echevarría in *Myth and Archive* (1990) develops the concept of *Archive* to theorise the place of other discourses and disciplines within the New Latin American novel (1953-). His readings of Carpentier's works were central to the creation of this theory. According to him, these authors deliberately built their novels as inventories of the writing genres that have contributed to the interpretation of Latin America since the sixteenth century. In them, we find samples of administrative, ecclesiastic, poetic, and narrative discourses that, each in its own time, helped to create order in the colonial societies. The *Archive* includes Spanish American novels, from 1953 onwards, where the past is rewritten in a mythical way. Therefore, they constitute repositories of narrative forms (histories and fictions) used by American culture to understand itself. Finally, González Echevarría stresses that Latin American literature embraced and reproduced three prevailing discourses: the legal discourse current in Colonial times, the scientific discourse of nineteenth-century travellers and locals, and early twentieth-century anthropology (González Echevarría 1990: 22). In sum, this thesis seeks to complement his theory by identifying history as one of the dominant discourses re-worked by these fictions, which was not included in González Echevarría's theoretical notion.

Ángel Rama's analysis in *La novela en América Latina* of the evolution of Latin American novels during the twentieth century has also influenced my approach. He posits that writers

respond to particular realities and cultural heritages. Thus, their literature is an interpretation of their societies (Rama 1982: 14-16). Furthermore, he argues that these novels become testimonies of the time and place in which they had been written:

La función de la novela no es sustituir los tratados de sociología, es la de proveer estructuras de sentido que ubiquen artísticamente al hombre en el mundo [...] no dejan de ser los mejores y más hondos testimonios estas entradas particulares a una sociedad, que las novelas consagradas explícitamente al tratamiento de los temas importantes. (78)

Additionally, he attributes to these works a rising critical awareness directed to address the problems of their societies and interrogate previous writing traditions. He also highlights their use of the past to create identity discourses in Latin America (466).

I have also drawn upon the theoretical frameworks in which the works of Fuentes and Carpentier have been inscribed, either by their authors or by their critics. In *Valiente mundo nuevo*, Fuentes makes explicit the theoretical background behind his analysis of the Latin American novel, which resonates in his literature. In this book, Fuentes underlines his use of Giambattista Vico's (1668-1744) postulates on history and time, as well as Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) ideas on the novel. Fuentes considers that twentieth-century Latin American novels are better understood in the light of both perspectives:

Quisiera unir en este libro las ideas citadas por Vico y por Bajtín: la historia la hacemos nosotros, el pasado es parte del presente y el pasado histórico se hace presente a través de la cultura, demostrándonos la variedad de la creatividad humana, las ideas de Vico unidas a las ideas de Bajtín: la novela como un producto cultural que traduce dinámicamente los conflictos de la relación del ser propio y el ser ajeno, el individuo y la sociedad, el pasado y presente, lo contemporáneo y lo histórico, lo acabado y lo inacabado, mediante una constante admisión de lo plural y diverso en el lenguaje y en la vida. (Fuentes 1990: 37-38)

On the one hand, in *The New Science* (1725) the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico studies the 'history of all nations' namely the 'ideas, customs and deeds of mankind' (Vico 1948: 100) of ancient civilisations in comparison to modern nations to propose as its sum the *ideal eternal history*. Vico confers a central role to language in the production of history and knowledge, as in his view 'a man is properly only mind, body and speech, and speech stands as it were mid-way between the mind and body' (353). This statement stresses the dialectic construction that mediates the relation between man and medium; and moreover, between man, culture and history. Vico identifies three main stages in human development: the divine (theological), the heroic (aristocratic) and the human (civic), along with three similar times: religious, barbarian and civil. Through the succession of these stages, Vico underlines the cumulative character of history as a human construction, which was not only transposed from stage to stage, but also diffused into other cultures by means of contact or colonisation. The succession of human thought and time was characterised by the recurrence (*ricorsi*) of

‘human civil things’ (372): a cyclical process in ‘the history of every nation in its rise, progress, maturity, decline and fall’ (93). I concur with scholars of Vico who, instead of a circular movement of endless repetitions, see a spiral form in this cyclical movement of *corsi e ricorsi* (occurrence and recurrence) of events that allows progress given the cumulative historical experience.

Indeed, Fuentes draws on Vico’s notion of history as a cumulative human construction:

Vico rechazó el concepto puramente lineal de la historia, concebida como marcha inexorable hacia el futuro, que se desprendía del presupuesto racionalista. Concibió la historia, en cambio, como un movimiento de *corsi y ricorsi*, un ritmo cíclico en virtud del cual las civilizaciones se suceden, nunca idénticas entre sí, pero cada una portando la memoria de su propia anterioridad, de los logros así como de los fracasos de las civilizaciones precedentes: problemas irresueltos, pero también, valores asimilados; tiempo perdido, pero también tiempo recobrado. (Fuentes 1990: 31)

In this sense, history as a cultural invention remains present in time and needs to be constantly revised in the light of new presents, societies and circumstances (Fuentes: 32). Likewise, in ‘Aproximaciones a ¡Ecue-Yamba-O!’, Pedro Lastra notes a spiral form in Carpentier’s cyclical conception of time suggesting the influence of Vico’s ideas in his literature (Lastra 1972: 50). As such, the notion of a cyclical time in its movement of *corsi e ricorsi* is central to these authors’ works and, thus, to this thesis.

On the other hand, in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975) Mikhail Bakhtin places the emergence of the novel in the Renaissance, a time characterised by the encounter of cultural and linguistic others. In his view, the novel is defined by its *polyglossia*, open-endedness and fluidity, which allows it to absorb fictional and non-fictional genres alike, without ‘imply[ing] their subjection to an alien generic canon; on the contrary, [...] their liberation from all that serves as a brake on their unique development’ (Bakhtin 1981: 39). The dialogical nature of the novel and its *polyglossia* provoked the subversion of an established language through *parody*, which paved the way for the rise of *heteroglossia*: ‘I imagine this whole to be something like an immense novel, multi-generic, multi-styled, mercilessly critical, soberly mocking, reflecting in all its fullness the heteroglossia and multiple voices of a given culture, people and epoch’ (60). This concept stresses the dialogical nature of the novel in its simultaneous inclusion and subversion of multiple discourses and languages across time.

Fuentes draws on the ideas of *polyglossia*, *polyphony* and *heteroglossia* that Bakhtin attributed to the novel. Indeed, Fuentes stresses the potential that Bakhtin saw in the novel as a medium for knowledge that comprised multiple levels of understanding between a subject

(author) and another (reader) - mediated by their particular backgrounds (Fuentes 1990: 37).

Thus, language became the mediator and mean for such dialogue:

De la pluralidad de contextos inherentes al lenguaje, el texto narrativo extrae y concierta una serie de confrontaciones dialógicas que le permiten al novelista darle a las palabras significados nuevos, y sobretodo, problemáticos. La novela es instrumento del diálogo en el sentido más amplio: no solo diálogo entre personajes, sino entre lenguajes, géneros, fuerzas sociales, periodos históricos distantes y contiguos. (37)

Fuentes's interpretation of Bakhtin reveals the potential that he saw in cultural writings for pluralising historical reflections, and creating new understandings of their national past and identity that could also be passed on to the readers.

Finally, Fuentes stresses the influence of Bakhtin's concept of *Chronotope* and Jorge Luis Borges's 'cronotopía total' on Latin American Literature. Bakhtin poses the *chronotope*, the time-space setting, as the central coordinate of a novel and 'the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied' (Bakhtin 1981: 250). Chronotopical settings constantly change in the light of the socio-historical contexts in which a novel is created and read. According to Bakhtin, 'the reality reflected in the text, the authors creating the text, the performers of the text [...] and finally the listeners or readers who recreate and in so doing renew the text, participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text' (253). The dialogical nature of the novel here triggers the constant renewal of the chronotopes, diverse discourses and semantics embedded in the narrative form.

Borges's conception of literary and extra-literary times, as well as the role he assigns the literature-reader seem to reach a similar conclusion. Indeed, what Fuentes identifies as a 'cronotopía absoluta' lies in Borges's ideas of the 'Biblioteca total' and 'El aleph' as places where all times and spaces coincide (Fuentes 1990: 38-40). Borges's short story 'Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote' (1944) engages in a meta-literary discussion of the relation between author, text and reader. In this story, the interplay between the different authorial voices and perspectives on Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1605) and the superposition of times and meanings is reminiscent of the heteroglossic essence and the ever-changing semantic process that Bakhtin saw in the novel. The conclusions reached by both thinkers stress the constant multiplication of meanings embodied in the processes of writing and reading where the past and future are mobilised into the present by means of literature or culture. This semantic proliferation, in turn, emphasises the cumulative construction and renewal of knowledge.

The potential that Rama, Mejía, Hutcheon and González Echevarría see in analysing Latin American literature in relation to other discourses, and particularly to history, stems in the works of Fuentes and Carpentier from Vico's and Bakhtin's postulates. The validation of heterogeneous cultural discourses in historical reflection de-centres its production, granting autonomy to a plurality of voices that both challenge and complement the understanding of the past and present in these societies. The analysis of these authors' literature in this light opens paths for the interpretation of their works, but above all for a more inclusive approach to the creation of collective memory.

## 1. 2. On Literary Historicism

In the light of the above-mentioned theoretical approaches, I propose the concept of *literary historicism* to study the methodological and semantic aspects of Carlos Fuentes's and Alejo Carpentier's literary interpretation of historical topics and sources. I have chosen the notion of historicism influenced by Carpentier's usage of the term 'historicity' to situate in history his literary characters.<sup>3</sup> Historicity, as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is the 'historic quality or character; esp. the historical genuineness or accuracy of an alleged event' (Stevenson 2007: 1255). I retrieve this meaning in my definition of literary historicism, which entails the historical positioning and origin of these authors' literature. This concept also derives from Mejía's general notion of *historicismo americano* explained earlier, which points to the elucidation of America as a central concern in diverse cultural registers. However, my concept seeks to focus on the characteristics that the interpretation of Latin American history acquires in the twentieth-century literary production of the continent.

It is pertinent to contextualise the notion of historicism within the literary and historiographical currents that have defined the historical production and the place of history in literature under this concept. The definition and use of the term historicism in historiography has been object of an active debate and interpretation since the eighteenth century. Thus, it is not my intention to expand here on the different and often-conflictive methodologies associated with this concept. In 'What is Historicism?' (1999), Andrew Reynolds identifies as *mundane, methodological, Popperian, epistemic, and total historicisms* the different historiographical currents grouped under this term.<sup>4</sup> Within these types, there are two divergent tendencies worth noting. Georg Hegel's (1770-1831) and Carl Popper's (1902-1994) historicism sought to find general patterns of human and historical development

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<sup>3</sup> See Alejo Carpentier's 'Acerca de la historicidad de Víctor Hugues' in *El siglo de las luces* (1962).

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed overview of *historicism* see Reynold's article 'What is Historicism?'

through the study of history to make future predictions. In contrast, historians and philosophers like Vico, Leopold Von Ranke (1795-1886), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), Robin Collingwood (1889-1943), Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996), and Michel Foucault (1926-1984), each in their own times, stressed the contingency of historical phenomena and the specificity of their study, situating both in their particular contexts. The former perception is closer to the understanding of this notion in my analysis.

Likewise, the trend *New Historicism* (or *Cultural Materialism*) is derived from the term coined by Stephen Greenblatt (1943-) 'poetics of culture', and became a school of post-modern literary interpretation that has influenced critical studies since the 1970s. Set against *New Criticism* and its aesthetic analysis of literature that conceived history merely as the background setting of a literary piece, Greenblatt underlines the need to include the analysis of historical contexts in literary studies (Bressler 2003: 179-181). He argues that the contextual specificities, in which an author or texts were inscribed, determined their literary production and shed light on the meaning they conveyed (Veenstra 1995: 184). My conception of historicism goes beyond that of *New Historicism* for besides reading Fuentes's and Carpentier's works with attention to their contexts, I seek to analyse the relationships established to history and historiography within their literary texts.

Although my concept literary historicism is tied to the former trends, its definition stems more directly from Sergio Mejía's and Linda Hutcheon's contribution to the study of literature and history as cultural discourses of interpretation. In this thesis, literary historicism denotes the methodological and semantic aspects of the literary engagement with historical topics characteristic of the *oeuvres* of Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier. This concept is also pertinent to analyse different twentieth-century Latin American literary movements that have similar characteristics.

On the one hand, the methodological aspects of literary historicism comprise the operative selection, inclusion and discussion of historical topics and sources. This literature is characterised by an approach to history that exceeds the time-spatial (*chronotope*) setting and encompasses the discussion of the portrayed historical events. The recurrent inclusion of historical topics often comprises a historicist intent, namely the concern of documenting their depictions with historiographical research. In the light of Vico's idea of cumulative construction of knowledge, the authors' use of historical sources and narratives stresses an active engagement with varied traditions of interpretation that underscores their literature.

Moreover, the methodological re-working of these sources within literary depictions often encompasses their inclusion through quotations, references, inter-textual allusions and paraphrasing, which echoes Bakhtin's ideas of *polyphony* and *heteroglossia*. In the light of these characteristics, I suggest that González Echevarría's notion of *Archive* should be extended to incorporate the historical discourse as a pervading component of these fictions. Indeed, by including historical interpretations (from varied sources), these literary portrayals simultaneously enclose (archive) these narratives and mobilise them into new reflections.

On the other hand, these methodological aspects are often tied to semantic endeavours of reinterpretation. It is pertinent to stress the Americanist perspective embedded in these depictions. Not only is the interpretation of America (*historicismo americano*) central to these narratives, but the authors' mobilisation of past and contemporary accounts is also marked by their present political and geographical contexts. Literary historicism is underpinned by a critical approach to the depiction of historical events and their interpretations. This critical attitude is perceived in the inclusion of American and overseas sources, the emphasis placed on overlooked events or characters that stresses historiographical silences, and their diversion from the sources to posit updated reflections *vis-à-vis* present contexts. Another defining feature in the authors' literary historicism is their use of non-fictional genres (literary criticism, essays and journalism) to accentuate the reflections embedded in their fictions. As such, literary historicism implies an active engagement with the representation and interpretation of the past through the literary discourse that mobilises literary resources into intellectual reflections, without losing sight of its aesthetic and entertaining purposes.

### **1. 3. Literature Review**

The rich literary criticism on the writings of Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier has increased steadily given the authors' prolific production, the international recognition of their literature, aided by the *Boom*, and the academic specialisation on Latin America. The majority of these critical studies privilege an analysis of literary tropes, narrative structures and techniques, language, literary resources and recurrent topics. This literature review highlights the academic critical tendencies that have framed my approach to the study of historical and contemporary events in the *oeuvre* of these authors. Each chapter will engage in a more detailed discussion with the analytical studies overviewed in this introduction.

Critics like Raymond L. Williams and Kristine Ibsen have focused on stressing the connection between Carlos Fuentes's biography and his fictions. However, Williams's re-reading of

Fuentes's works in the light of *Terra nostra* and its interplay with history, and Ibsen's succinct reflection on the historical discourse in Fuentes's works have paved the way for my analysis. The study of Carpentier's narrative presents a similar trend, following the author's remarks on the link between his biography and works. This is the case of the studies of Emir Rodríguez-Monegal, Roberto González Echevarría and Alexis Márquez Rodríguez. These critics in particular study his fiction in comparison to his theories on *lo real maravilloso* and *el barroco americano*.

The analyses of Linda Egan, Maarten Van Delden, Julio Ortega, Rafael Rojas and Steven Boldy have been especially helpful in situating Fuentes's literary journey and identifying the intellectual influences that shaped his literary approach to historical topics. Most of their analyses are centred on Fuentes's narrative structures, language, literary resources, as well as constant topics such as Mexico City, Mexican identity, the Mexican Revolution and Mexico's relationship with the United States, among others. Nonetheless, they also include considerations on Fuentes's assessment of past-and-present contexts. Boldy's contribution on Fuentes's narrative is crucial in noting the narrative constants and generational patterns that structure his works and his depiction of the Mexican Revolution. Ortega, Van Delden and García Gutiérrez stress Fuentes's meta-literary approach and the inter-textual relationship with other literary traditions such as the Spanish, Christian, Greek and Latin American.

Georgina García Gutiérrez's *Los disfraces: la obra mestiza de Carlos Fuentes* (1981) and Florence Olivier's *Carlos Fuentes o la imaginación del otro* (2007) stand closer to the design of my thesis as they include history as a central part of their studies. García Gutiérrez's analysis on Fuentes's earlier works points to methodological patterns and inter-textualities that would characterise the later production of this author, allowing me to establish continuities in the approach to history in his later works. Olivier analyses Fuentes's novels published after 1990 and addresses the topics of the Conquest and the Revolutions for Independence. It is relevant to mention the emergence of an interest in the study of philosophical and historical inter-textualities that stemmed from these analyses, and in which Daniel Chávez, Covadonga Prieto and my work can be inscribed.

The critical studies of Zsuzsanna Csikós, Magdalena Perkowska-Álvarez, Daniel Chavéz, and María José Bustos on Fuentes's *La campaña* involve its establishment as a 'traditional' or 'new' historical novel. Bustos, Chávez and Perkowska stress Fuentes's inter-textuality and his subversion of realist conventions. Maarten van Delden and Carlos Alonso, instead, address

the historical *tropes* in Fuentes's works from the debate on Modernity and Postmodernity, and the Freudian psychological processes of Mourning and Melancholia, respectively. However, critics like Alonso, Perkowska and Csikós disregard the presence of history in Fuentes's works concluding that it is merely used as the *locus* of the sentimental plot of the novel.

Conversely, the critical study of history in Carpentier's works has been stimulated by the clear connection of his plots to historical events and his declarations on the historicity of his novels. Critics like Carlos Santander, Seymour Menton, Santiago Juan-Navarro, Richard Young, Irene López and Julio Zárate studied the figure of Christopher Columbus through monographic analyses of *El arpa y la sombra*. While Menton, Young and Juan-Navarro examine *El arpa* from the perspective of *historiographic metafiction*, López applies a semiotic analysis on the novel *vis-à-vis* Columbus's diaries. Santander follows the binary structures of the text to stress the symbolic meaning of the story, and Zárate analyses the literary process of unmasking the historical figure. These recent works have been useful to situate the study of history in Carpentier's writings.

However, most of the literary criticism on historical themes in Carpentier's writings centres on *Revolution*, a topic that appears across his literary production. Indeed, Carpentier's classic and modern critics, including Julio Ortega, Roberto González Echevarría, Luis Harss, Emir Rodríguez-Monegal, Modesto Sánchez, Steven Boldy, Leonardo Padura, Alexis Márquez, Araceli García, Seymour Menton and Carlos Fuentes address this topic in his narrative. Studies like those of Pablo Rocca, Karl Kohut and Seymour Menton discuss Revolution as part of their analyses of particular novels. Roberto González Echevarría, Modesto Sánchez and Julio Ortega have predominantly focused on the interactions between history and fiction in Carpentier's works. Sánchez and Durán emphasise the presence of history in monographic analyses on *El acoso* and *Viaje a la semilla*. They address, with variations of depth, the relations with history and historiographical sources.

In particular, González Echevarría's *Myth and Archive* (1990), *The Pilgrim at Home* (1978) and his article 'Semejante a la noche: historia/ficción' (1972) have become central to my analysis. Indeed, my interpretation of the place of history in Carpentier's writings assesses his contributions critically, problematizing and complementing them where pertinent. Nonetheless, it is relevant to mention the inclination of these works to drift away from the historical *trope* in favour of the analysis of literary topics or theories, including those by Carpentier. Boldy's analysis of the relationship between culture, writing and history in *El*

*reino* renders González Echevarría's radical division of the black and white mentalities as simplistic. This study has shed light on my assessment of González Echevarría's conclusions on history in Carpentier.

In the light of this literature review, and unlike the predominantly monographic studies on the works of Fuentes and Carpentier, this thesis aims to offer a transversal analysis of the historical topics of Conquest and Revolution in their *oeuvres*. Additionally, this study will demonstrate that their literary reinterpretations of such topics were marked by an overarching presence of literary historicism that stressed the historical consciousness in them. This research seeks to contribute and to complement the existent literary criticism on history, Conquest and Revolution in the works of these authors.

#### **1. 4. Carlos Fuentes and 'La edad del Tiempo'**

Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes was born in Panama in 1928, and died in Mexico in 2012. The son of a diplomat family (Rafael Fuentes and Berta Macías), Fuentes lived and studied in different American countries including Panama, Argentina, Mexico, Chile and the United States. He returned to Mexico in 1944 and undertook his secondary school at Colegio México and a degree in Law at the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM). His writing and diplomatic career endorsed his cosmopolitanism, as he also lived in France, Italy Switzerland and the United Kingdom during his life. Nonetheless, Mexico became the dominant topic of reflection and study across his literary *oeuvre*. In *Myself with Others* (1988), Fuentes recalls that despite having studied in different international schools during his early years, his 'father made [him] read Mexican history, study Mexican geography, and understand the names, dreams and defeats of Mexico' (Fuentes 1989: 4). In addition, his intellectual formation was influenced by his discovery of Jorge Luis Borges's literature, his conversations with Alfonso Reyes (1889-1959), his work under Fernando Benítez at *Siempre!* and by his university years and the formation of the cluster 'la generación de *Medio Siglo*'. This group counted amongst its members, intellectuals like Sergio Pitol, Víctor Flores Olea, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Miguel de la Madrid.<sup>5</sup>

Fuentes's literary production ranges from *Los días enmascarados* (1954) until the posthumous publication of *Aquiles o El guerrillero y el asesino* (2016) under the edition of Julio Ortega. However, his written production goes beyond the literary genre and comprised

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed overview of Fuentes's intellectual biography see Raymond L. Williams's *The Writings of Carlos Fuentes* (1996).

books on literary criticism, journal articles and essays on Latin American literature, politics and history. His archive is currently held at Princeton University in the United States. Carlos Fuentes's relevance in the development of Mexican literature of the second-half of the twentieth century, along with other writers of his generation, is associated with the renewal of the narrative form and topics of the Mexican novel. His *heteroglossic* narrative style and the fragmentation of its voices and times remain part of the experimentation of the narrative form of the 1950s and 1960s. Likewise, his focus on Mexico City as well as on the history, cultural identity, politics and socioeconomic development of Mexico, in relation to other countries, contributed to the reflection on the country following the trends opened by Samuel Ramos (1897-1959) and Octavio Paz (1914-1998). Moreover, as a result of the *Boom* of Latin American authors, his literature not only received international recognition but also fostered his relationship and friendship with other Latin American and European intellectual figures.

His writings are characterised by a meta-and-extra literary self-reflexive endeavour on Time and on Mexico, which complements the reflections put forward in his fictional productions. Each of his works is tied by the inclusion of a similar clause on Time that contains phrasing variations such as: 'nos [escritores] damos cuenta que, el pasado depende de nuestro recuerdo aquí y ahora, y el futuro, de nuestro deseo aquí y ahora. Memoria y deseo son imaginación presente. Este es el horizonte de la literatura' (Fuentes 1990: 49). The previous statement encloses the axial notion that Time and history acquire in his works, underlining the concurrency of the historical times and the critical positioning of the present as the pivotal point for assessing past events and forging future hopes. Indeed, the present becomes the encompassing moment of the past and future times, as the look into the past often embeds current hopes for the future: 'mi tiempo constituye una recuperación constante del pasado en el presente y del futuro en el presente' (Fuentes in Williams 2000: 200). Moreover, not only is the understanding of the past undertaken in the light of contemporary contexts, but our present access to the past is always mediated by its cultural remains (texts, ruins, etc.). In this conception of history and memory, Fuentes is also echoing Saint Augustine as this triad alludes to the parts Augustine adjudicated to the soul: *memoria*, *intellectus*, *voluntas*. This conception of time and history appears recurrently through his works and elucidates the insightful character that he saw in literature as means for the reflection on past and present matters in Latin America.

The idea of Time also pervades Fuentes's own notion of his *oeuvre* since 1981 as 'La Edad del Tiempo', which underwent constant revisions by the author until 2011. Under this general

title, Fuentes organised most of his literary works grouping them under specific times: El Mal del Tiempo; Tiempo de Fundaciones, Tiempo Romántico, Tiempo Revolucionario, Tiempo Político, and Crónicas de Nuestro Tiempo. While the list does not follow a chronological order, in consonance with Fuentes's nonlinear conception of time, the 'Tiempos' it contains are closely related to the Latin American and Mexican historical development. Such structure suggests that Carlos Fuentes intended for his literary production to be read in relation to time and history. In turn, it also highlights the semantic endeavour that the novel seems to acquire in his works as 'un gran depósito de estos cambios, de estas transformaciones históricas' (199). More importantly his need to continually re-interpret the past and his chosen literary form may also insinuate his dissatisfaction with the available interpretations of these events.

### **1. 5. Alejo Carpentier Between Lo Real Maravilloso and El Barroco Americano**

Alejo Carpentier was born in Switzerland in 1904 and died in France in 1980. He was the son of the French architect Jorge Carpentier and the Russian language-teacher Lina Valdmont. His family moved to Cuba shortly after his birth; nonetheless he travelled to Russia and France with his parents in 1913. Carpentier lived mostly in the Cuban countryside until 1921 when he was admitted to pursue a degree in architecture at La Universidad de la Habana, which he would never complete. In Havana, he started his career as a journalist working for several periodicals including *La Discusión*, *El País*, *Social* and *Carteles* and joined the intellectual Grupo Minorista where, influenced by Julio Antonio Mella, Rubén Martínez and Juan Marinello, he took part in the Cuban *avant-garde* movement. In 1927, he signed the *Manifiesto Minorista* 'por la revisión de los valores falsos y gastados. Por el arte vernáculo y, en general, por el arte Nuevo en sus diversas manifestaciones. Por la reforma de la enseñanza pública. Por la independencia económica de Cuba y contra el imperialismo yanqui' (Carpentier 2003: 46). In the same year and as a result of this manifesto against Gerardo Machado's dictatorship, Carpentier was imprisoned under the accusation of sympathising with communism. With the aid of the surrealist poet Robert Desnos, Carpentier moved to France in 1928.

In France, he continued working as a journalist in *Documents*, *Bifur*, *La Révolution Surrealiste* and *Imán*, and became acquainted with the principal exponents of the French and European *avant-garde* including André Bretón, Ives Tanguy and Pablo Picasso, among others. Carpentier returned to Cuba in 1939 where he stayed until 1945 when he moved to Venezuela in a self-imposed exile due to Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship. In Venezuela, he wrote for the newspapers *El Nacional* and *El Universal*. Carpentier would only return to Cuba

in 1959 with the victory of the Cuban Revolution, in the hopes to part-take in its unfolding. He held different cultural positions in the revolutionary government. In 1966 he returned to France after being named Minister for the Cuban Embassy where he remained until his death. Carpentier also travelled around Latin America including countries like Mexico, Haiti and Guadeloupe.

As can be seen, Carpentier's literary production from *Ecue-Yamba-O* (1933) until *El arpa y la sombra* (1979) was accompanied by his journalist career. This author also engaged with other writing genres including essays, literary criticism and theory, and history with *La música en Cuba* (1936). It should be noted that Carpentier's interest in music also permeated his literary production. Indeed, music, Cuba, the Caribbean, Afro-American culture, Conquest, Revolution and in general Latin American geography, culture and history comprise the central topics in his literary narrative. I have underlined the cosmopolitanism of this author given the influence of his travels and experiences abroad in the development of his literature and his understanding of Cuba and Latin America. Indeed, in numerous statements, Carpentier stresses the link between his personal experiences and his literary fictions. Furthermore, he affirms that it had been during his time in France when America became an obsession for him: 'por espacio de casi ocho años creo que no hice otra cosa que leer textos americanos' (Carpentier 2003: 365). Carpentier's literature and literary theories became a central influence on the development of Latin American literature from the twentieth century and particularly to writers such as Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez.

Carpentier situates the emergence of his theory on *lo real maravilloso* in a trip to Haiti and Sans-Souci in 1943 with the actor Louis Jouvet. This theory was first published in the form of a prologue to *El reino* (1949) and expanded later in the essay *De lo real maravilloso Americano* (1948-1964). By *lo real maravilloso* this author identifies the unusual or unexpected alterations of reality, with no value judgement, which could be found in the history, geography or reality of Latin America:

lo maravilloso comienza a serlo de manera inequívoca cuando surge de una inesperada alteración de la realidad (el milagro) de una revelación privilegiada de la realidad, de la iluminación inhabitual o singularmente favorecedora de las inadvertidas riquezas de la realidad, de una ampliación de las escalas y categorías de la realidad, percibidas con particular intensidad en virtud de una exaltación del espíritu que lo conduce a un modo "de estado límite" (Carpentier 2003: 39; 2007: 7)

Through this theory, Carpentier criticises the artifice in the surrealist techniques to achieve its distorting effects, as well as its commodification in the repetition of formulas that had proliferated in the artistic production of the late 1940s. In particular, Carpentier addresses this

criticism to Latin American artists and writers who merely imitated European authors or movements, without developing their individual styles. He argues that America had a natural predisposition for the marvellous, where it could be found in its raw state, and declares that the task of Latin American artists is to unveil and express the oddity of American realities.

Carpentier considers that the particularity of American realities could only be fully expressed through the *Baroque*: an autochthonous language that comprised the plurality of Latin American cultures. Indeed, he identified the baroque as a ‘constante del espíritu que se caracteriza por el horror al vacío’ (Carpentier 2003: 72), and becomes manifest in contexts of constant transformation and mutation. In his view, America was baroque given the encounter of multiple languages, cultural imaginaries and races, which resulted in its *mestizaje* and hybridity. This author places the expansion of the baroque when the creoles’ gained ‘conciencia de ser otra cosa, de ser una cosa nueva’ (79).

As such, Carpentier’s theories on Latin America and its arts establish a connection to history, which suggests the direction taken by his fictions. On the one hand, the identification of America as baroque stems from a history of encounters that have been both excoriated for their violent destruction of originary populations and celebrated as productive of its unique *mestizajes* and hybrid formations. On the other hand, Carpentier insinuates that Latin American history and geography are a streak for mining *lo real maravilloso*. This suggestion highlights the historicist vocation of his literature and stresses the pertinence of reading his *oeuvre* in the light of its connections with history. Finally, the presence of history in the landscapes and realities of American societies that Carpentier claimed to experience while visiting Sans-Souci and La Gran Sabana comprises a reflection on Time that resonates with that of Fuentes: ‘puede decirse que en nuestra vida presente conviven las tres realidades temporales agustinianas: el tiempo pasado –tiempo de la memoria–, el tiempo presente –tiempo de la visión o de la intuición–, el tiempo futuro o tiempo de espera. Y esto, en simultaneidad’ (158). This characteristic that Carpentier sees in American Time leads him to conclude that in Latin American literature the traditional narrative temporality had to be modified ‘ante la presencia del pasado en nuestro presente, viviendo en un hoy donde ya se perciben los pálpitos del futuro’ (159). Finally, the similarity in the authors’ conception of Time, which stresses Carpentier’s influence on Fuentes, along with their considerations on the past places the reflection on history at the centre of their literary endeavours.

## 1. 6. Methodology

This thesis engages in a transversal and diachronic multi-fold study of Conquest and Revolution across the *oeuvres* of these authors and their relation to historical interpretations. I have based the methodology undertaken in this analysis on the concept of literary historicism to establish the place of history in these writers' literature. Indeed, this notion also frames my analysis of the literary, narrative and thematic patterns that characterise their methodological and semantic approaches to the fictional re-interpretation of historical tropes. This comparative approach aims to stress the convergences and divergences in the way that Fuentes and Carpentier address and re-interpret historical topics and the evolution that these present across their *oeuvres*. I emphasise their contributions to the understanding of these historical events.

On the one hand, the methodological recourse to literary historicism seeks to establish the historicist drive in the works of these authors. As such, I analyse the relationship established by Fuentes and Carpentier to the historiographical interpretations of Conquest and Revolution. Such comparison allows me to study the methodology followed by each author when addressing historical tropes: the relationship established with the historical sources consulted, their literary treatment of historical topics and sources, and point to their proposed interpretation of them. In both sections, the historical sources for comparison were selected according to references given by both authors in their writings. On the other hand, I emphasise the semantic aspects of this concept, by analysing the debates, reflections and interpretations embedded in their literature. This discussion engages with more general patterns of historical depiction in their construction of literary characters and in narrative and thematic constants that appear recurrently in their fictional writings and that convey critical interpretations of these topics.

Although the two sections of this thesis aim to address the methodological and semantic aspects of literary historicism, the emphasis placed on each facet may vary according to Fuentes's and Carpentier's treatment of each historical trope. While Carpentier's works on the Conquest contain a historicist drive, it is in his novels on Revolution where this characteristic can be better illustrated. For this reason, this methodological aspect will be readdressed with greater emphasis in the second section with regards to his portrayal of Revolution. This is also why I begin the argument with the analysis of Fuentes's works. Moreover, the extensive historiography on the Mexican, French, Haitian, Independence, Russian and Cuban Revolutions makes the establishment of all the historical sources used by Fuentes and

Carpentier challenging. Thus, the section on Revolution will engage more actively with general patterns of depiction and interpretation of these historical revolutions. To grant continuity to my argument, however, I will stress where pertinent the critical relationship established to historiographical interpretations on specific revolutions.

### 1. 7. Structure

In the light of the above, this comparative analysis of the literary writings of Alejo Carpentier and Carlos Fuentes and their depiction of Conquest and Revolution is structured as follows. The first section (chapters 2 and 3) analyses the authors' literary portrayal of the Discovery, Conquest and Colonisation of America stressing the methodological relationship established to the historical sources consulted and their literary reinterpretation of this historical event.

The second chapter addresses Carlos Fuentes's literary reinterpretation of the Conquest and of New Spain in *El naranjo* (1993) and *Todos los gatos son pardos* (1971). I examine Fuentes's elaboration of historiographical sources in his literary creations demonstrating his use of different techniques to simultaneously include and transform the narratives of Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Fernando Benítez, *Los anales de Cuauhtitlan*, Miguel León Portilla, Suárez de Peralta and Manuel Orozco y Berra. My analysis identifies the author's general model for the depiction and commentary of historical events and their interpretations. This approach is complemented by a discussion on Fuentes's literary figures that are based on historical characters. Fuentes's mirrored-construction of characters in the duplets Malintzin<sup>6</sup>-Aguilar, Doña Marina-Cortés and Martín Cortés 1-Martín Cortés 2 conveys reflections on the power of language, the origin of modern Mexico, colonial society and the inclusion of the other. Overall, in these works Fuentes reflects on the Spanish and Indigenous heritage in America and the silences left in historical accounts.

The third chapter addresses Alejo Carpentier's *El arpa y la sombra* (1964) and *La aprendiz de bruja* (1979). This chapter also points to the establishment of an operative literary historicism in his depictions of the Conquest, which will touch upon the identification and treatment of historical sources and topics, namely: Díaz del Castillo, Christopher Columbus's diaries, Mexican Codices, Antonio Solís, Bernardino de Sahagún, Roselly de Lorgues and León Bloy, among others. However, the emphasis in this chapter is placed on the semantic aspect of literary historicism through Alejo Carpentier's construction of historical characters, as well as

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<sup>6</sup> In this thesis, I will use both the indigenous name Malintzin and the Spanish name Doña Marina to refer to this historical character, in consonance with Fuentes's and Carpentier's works. I have avoided using the appellation La Malinche due to its semantic connotations.

the symbolism and reflections conveyed by his literary figures. Due to the historical events depicted, the characters analysed for comparison are analogous to those in Fuentes: Aguilar, Malintzin, Cortés and Columbus. Through these figures Carpentier discusses topics such as acculturation and resistance during the American/European Encounter, as well as problematizes the historical rendering of figures like Cortés, Malintzin and Columbus. However, Carpentier's re-working of historical figures differs from that of Fuentes, thus affecting the structure of the chapter. Likewise, the emphasis is placed upon the similarities and differences in the construction of both authors and signpost its significance.

The second section (chapters 4 and 5) explores Fuentes's and Carpentier's depiction of historical revolutions including the French, Mexican, Haitian and Cuban Revolutions. I introduce and define the concept of Revolution drawing mainly on the theoretical works of Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1962), and Peter Calvert, *Revolution* (1970). While this section includes considerations on the authors' methodological engagement with historical narratives, particularly with regards to Carpentier, it emphasises the semantic study of their depictions. As such, it comprises an analysis of their Revolution cycles to demonstrate recurrent narrative, thematic and stylistic patterns in their literary interpretations. I highlight the further meaning that these models acquire in their works, articulating a critical assessment of these historical revolutions. Although both authors emphasise the effects of different revolutions in their own countries, contexts and interests, most of them are related to independence whether it is racial, economic or national.

The fourth chapter studies Fuentes's narrative-cycle on Revolution, which comprises *La Región más transparente* (1958), *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), *Agua quemada* (1967), *Gringo viejo* (1985) and *Los años con Laura Díaz* (1991), as well as *La campaña* (1990) and *Federico en su balcón* (2012). This chapter explores the patterns found in Carlos Fuentes's recurrent and diverse interpretations of the Mexican, French and Independence Revolutions. Firstly, I emphasise the influence of Octavio Paz and Alfonso Reyes in Fuentes's understanding of the Mexican Revolution and Mexican identity through the character Manuel Zamacona in *La región*. Moreover, I propose a reading of the thematic recurrence of the massacres of Cananea (1906) and Río Blanco (1907) as an endeavour from Fuentes to identify and complement historiographical silences. I analyse the tension between solidarity and individuality and the depiction of familial generations as part of Fuentes's balance of the Mexican Revolution and its impact in shaping Mexico's development during the twentieth century. The chapter finishes with the analysis of *La campaña* and *Federico* and their

depiction of the revolutions of Independence and the French Revolution. These illustrate a journey through the historical phenomenon from the national to the international, as well as a return to its historical origins summing up Fuentes's previous explorations on the topic.

The fifth chapter explores the narrative patterns in Carpentier's Revolution cycle composed of *El reino de este mundo* (1949), *El acoso* (1956), *El siglo de las luces* (1962) and *La consagración de la primavera* (1978). Firstly, I emphasise Carpentier's historicist drive as a methodological pattern that stresses the historical awareness of his literary depictions. This chapter establishes a dialogue with González Echevarría's works, furthering his findings by re-centering attention on history and broadening his theory of the *Archive*. Secondly, I examine the structural and semantic binary oppositions that characterise Carpentier's portrayal of Revolution. In particular, I address the following dualisms: the individual and the society in relation to the racial struggle in Latin America, ideology and practice, and the conflict between reason and faith in ideological implementation, and the encounters between the Atlantic shores that pervade hegemonic and alternative discourses on Revolution in Latin America. I conclude this chapter by examining the movement of *corsi e ricorsi* that characterises Carpentier's depictions of historical and contemporary revolutions. This chapter also contains the comparison between Carpentier's and Fuentes's concepts and representations of Revolution.



## **First Section: The Conquest in the Writings of Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier**

### **2. Colonial, Republican and Post-Revolutionary Historiography on the Conquest**

The Encounter of the worlds in 1492 and the subsequent colonisation of the Americas by European Kingdoms shaped the development of the modern world. This historical juncture marked the racial, political, cultural and socioeconomic developments of American, African and European societies. The Castilian military conquest of the encountered territories, under the pretence of spiritual colonisation, stemmed from the peninsular historical context of religious warfare at the time. The surrender of the Emirate of Granada in 1492 marked the Reconquest of Spain from the Moors and Jews by the Castilian Monarchy. Indeed, the defence and expansion of Catholicism became the banner of Fernando de Aragón's and Isabel de Castilla's reign. Despite the religious justification for the acculturation and invasion of the New World, the American resources sparked the competition for political and economic power between European Kingdoms.<sup>7</sup> As such, the three hundred years of conquest and colonialism, counter-conquest and resistance, influenced the historical, political, cultural and identity debates on the Americas and their interpretation of this past.

The encounter, conquest and colonisation of the Americas emerge as constant topics of reflection in the works of Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier. Both authors discuss the Hispanic heritage in America and especially, Christopher Columbus's (ca. 1436-1506) arrival in the New World in 1492 and Hernán Cortés's (1485-1547) conquest of Mexico from 1519. Given the oppressive character of the encounter and colonisation of the New World, I refer to both processes under the general notion of Conquest. The historiographical rendering of the

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<sup>7</sup> Serge Gruzinski defines acculturation in *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* as a 'proceso por el cual la cultura de una sociedad se modifica al contacto con otra cultura: una aculturación puede ser dirigida, pero también puede desarrollarse de manera espontánea y sin que lo sepan los actores' (Gruzinski 2001).

Spanish Conquest has varied according to the positionality from which it has been undertaken. To analyse the methodological and semantic aspects of both authors' literary historicism, I introduce this section with an overview of the main historiographical trends in the interpretation of this process. This context will allow me to establish the place of historiography in the authors' reflections and highlight the relevance of their literary interpretations of this event. Due to the primary objective of this research, I will not analyse in detail these historical accounts.

### **2. 1. 1. Colonial Historiography (1492-1810): Political Rhetoric of the Conquest**

The historiography written in New Spain and the Metropolis since the American/European encounter often renders the Conquest in opposing ways, today associated with the *black* and *golden legends* of the Spanish Conquest. Rather than a marked Manichaeism in the understanding of the Conquest, these perspectives constitute general historiographical tendencies, which can also present exceptions. These accounts were mostly written by conquistadors, and religious or Royal scribes – Spaniard or Creole – and took the form of ‘*Cartas de relación*’, ‘*Diarios de viaje*’, chronicles and histories. Christopher Columbus's diaries, Hernán Cortés's letters to the Spanish Crown, and the histories of Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1584) and Francisco López de Gómara (1511-1566) belong to this historiography. Beyond the exposition of events, these accounts embed political projects that shape the depiction of the Spanish conquistadors and their indigenous other. As Rolena Adorno states in her study of the rhetoric of possession in the narratives on the New World ‘even those that presumably narrated historical events, are better characterized as polemical or moralistic narratives than as objective history’ (Adorno 2007: 8).

The accounts written from the colonisers' perspective are deferential towards the Conquest and bound to the Spanish political and economic purposes in the New World. These histories tend to silence the Amerindian perspective given the Spaniards' lack of regard towards the natives and their poor understanding of American languages and cultures. In addition, these narratives aim to justify the violent military invasion of the territory and the further domination of its indigenous population. For instance, Cortés, Gómara and Díaz, among others, emphasise the Conquest as a mandatory pious deed, rather than an economic one. The religious purpose of the Conquest is present in this historiography from the start, and can be traced to Cortés's *Carta de relación* of 1519:

Y en las muchas mezquitas que tienen, no hay año [...] que no maten y sacrifiquen de esta manera tres ó cuatro mil ánimas. Vean VV. RR. MM. Si deben evitar tan gran mal y daño, y

cierto dios nuestro señor será servido si por mano de VV. RR. MM estas gentes fuesen introducidas e instruidas en nuestra muy santa Fé católica, [...] Es de creer que no sin causa Dios nuestro señor ha sido servido que se descubriesen estas partes en nombre de VV. RR. AA. (Cortés 1866: 23)

Cortés's association of the indigenous temples with Mosques refers to the Crusades and Reconquest of Spain. Hence, the Monarchs and conquistadors are portrayed as God's warriors who ought to expand Catholicism in the New World. As illustrated by López de Gómara's account, Cortés's attacks on the indigenous population are justified on religious grounds: 'y a la verdad la guerra y la gente con armas, es para quitar a estos indios los ydolos, los ritos bestiales, y sacrificios abominables que tienen de sangre y comida de hombres: que derecho[n]te es contra dios y natura' (López de Gómara 1554: Fo.VIIIv). Thus, at the time war was endorsed against those who defied Catholicism in the Spaniards' view.

Moreover, historians and conquistadors frame their assaults on the indigenous population as defensive responses to attacks from the natives:

Dos de caballo que iban delante de mi vieron ciertos indios con sus plumajes que acostumbraban traer en las guerras, y con sus espadas y rodela[s] [...] E a la sazón llegaba yo, y fice que los llamasen y que viniesen y no hobiesen miedo [...] y ellos se juntaron y comenzaron á tirar cuchilladas [...] y pelearon con nosotros de tal manera, que nos mataron dos caballos, y firieron a otros tres y á dos de caballo. Y en esto salió la otra gente, que serían fasta cuatro ó cinco mil indios. E ya se habían llegado conmigo hasta ocho de a caballo, sin los muertos, y peleamos con ellos haciendo algunas arremetidas fasta esperar los españoles. (Cortés: 61)

The Spanish legal system elucidates the political *motifs* behind these accounts, as it condoned the violent subjugation of the natives and the appropriation of their land on the grounds of a just war in self-defence and in defence of Catholicism (Adorno 2007: 65).

Contrary to this historiography stand the sixteenth-century histories written by priests, including Bartolomé de las Casas (1474?-1566), Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590) and Juan de Torquemada (1557-1624). These histories are characterised by the emphatic denunciation of the conquistador's violence and greed in the New World, the defence of the native population and the preservation of pre-Hispanic cultural memory. In particular, Las Casas's criticism of the conquistadors contributes to the *black legend* of the Spanish Conquest in America, which intensified during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *mestizos* and descendants of the indigenous nobilities also wrote historical accounts on the Conquest. Such is the case of the histories by Domingo Chimalpain (1579-1660), Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl (1568?-1648), Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc (1520s?-1609), and of the anonymous *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* and *Anales de Tlalelco*. These Novohispanic histories usually dealt with the customs and history

of particular indigenous communities. Peggy Liss notes that in the 1530s the Franciscans created schools to indoctrinate the indigenous nobility sponsored by the Crown: 'earlier, religious indoctrination, primarily of *tlahtoanis*, chieftains, and especially their sons and those of other prestigious natives, the *principals*, began by royal order' (Liss 1975: 44). Schools like Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco taught languages (Spanish, Greek and Latin), the Christian doctrine and European and Classic history. Friars like Sahagún considered that the former indigenous nobility could disseminate the European religious, political and cultural imaginaries in their communities (Liss 1975: 71). Above all, they strove to understand the indigenous societies, cultures and beliefs for their religious conversion.

These subaltern histories derived from the initial acculturation of the native population by the Dominican and Franciscan orders. Miguel León-Portilla both in *Literaturas indígenas de México* (1991) and in his 1959 book identifies these records as 'la visión de los vencidos'. According to him, these testimonies provide an insight into the native's perception of the Spanish conquest and colonisation, as well as a self-interpretation of their indigenous culture and history (León-Portilla 1992: 169). León-Portilla stresses that although these accounts contain traces of the native mentality, their vision of the past was framed within the Hispanic imaginary as they had been written under the command of a priest (191-192). Colonial Hispanic and indigenous histories had limited circulation in the colonies and the Metropolis due to censorship and the scarcity of printing presses, making them prone to be forgotten or lost. In fact, this was the destiny of many colonial historical accounts, which have only started to reappear since the nineteenth century, and especially between the 1950s and 1980s.

## **2. 1. 2. Republican Historiography (1810-1910): the Intensification of the *Black Legend***

Nineteenth-century historiography presented a change in the attitude towards the Conquest and the Spanish Colonial dominion. Germán Colmenares underlines the anti-hispanic sentiment as characteristic of Latin American republican historiography. Independence entailed the need to redefine the new founded republics and their inhabitants, often against the past of oppressions perpetrated by the Metropolis. The works of Servando Teresa de Mier (1763-1827) and Carlos María Bustamante (1774-1848) are examples of this historiography. Mier's *Historia de la revolución de Nueva España* (1813) portrays the outbreak and unfolding of the struggle for Independence, disregarding the colonial past. As noted by Adorno, Mier was influenced by Las Casas's writings:

Mier made Las Casas into the father of the creoles of New Spain as well as the protector of the Indians; he handled this contradictory position of the creoles being the descendants of the

wicked conquistadors by asserting that [...] the New Laws, were not revoked but in fact honored, protecting the Indians and preventing further conquests. (Adorno 2007: 81)

Mier's strategic use of Las Casas's denunciation of the Conquest differentiates the Spanish American creoles from their Hispanic heritage while intensifying the *black legend*. In his history, the scattered references to the Conquest aim to justify Independence by denouncing current and historical crimes perpetrated by the Metropolis. He emphasises the persistence of the excesses perpetrated by the Spanish conquistadors against both natives and creoles: 'toda la América ardía en chismes, espionaje, delaciones, procesos, encarcelamientos y destierros, que recordaron todos los horrores de los conquistadores, recrudecieron todas las llagas, y excitaron un clamor general en el Nuevo Mundo' (Mier 1813: 217). Likewise, Bustamante focuses on the history of the revolution. Both historians render the Colonial domination as a dull period and thus, unworthy of historical analysis.

In Republican historiography, the deferential portrayal of the pre-Hispanic natives contrasts with the negative interpretation of the *gachupines* and the Metropolis: 'solo los españoles pueden producir otro ejemplo suyo reciente en Quito, y otros antiguos en México, como quando Alvarado degolló más de dos mil hijos de príncipes y señores, flor y nata de toda la nobleza Mexicana que dansaban descuidados en el templo celebrando la fiesta Texcatl' (298). Indeed, creole republican historians establish an ambiguous relationship with the Hispanic past. Although they blame the Spaniards for the disappearance of the indigenous heritage, they also praise the civilising efforts of the Metropolis. At the same time, they place the origin of Mexican nationality in the pre-Hispanic past: 'con el propósito de consolidar el nuevo nacionalismo, comenzó a enaltecerse lo indígena como la más honda raíz de México en oposición a lo aportado por la presencia española durante tres siglos' (León-Portilla 1992: 17). The anti-hispanic sentiment goes hand-in-hand with the creole republican project, which was also influenced by the French Revolution and subsidised by British loans. As such, history becomes an instrument used by the creoles to justify the Independence and the medium to shape the new republic.

### **2. 1. 3. The Influence of the Mexican Revolution in Twentieth-Century Histories (1910-1960)**

Twentieth-century historiography develops in the light of contemporary events like the Mexican Revolution (1910) and the Cristero Wars (1926–1929), which overshadow the unsettled debate regarding Spain. Post-revolutionary histories, written by members of the National History Academy, include the colonial past but maintain the anti-hispanic tone. For

instance, Justo Sierra's *Historia patria* (1922) and Alfonso Toro's *Historia de México* (1925) were used as textbooks in the schooling system throughout this century.

Like republican historiography, these histories acknowledge the Spanish introduction of culture and religion to the Americas but criticise its violent means. Walter Camargo underlines the influence of the Mexican Revolution in the historical interpretation of the past. As Camargo highlights, the revolutionary nationalism brought a stronger validation of the Mexican indigenous pre-Hispanic past. In this way, the discourse on Mexican identity perpetuated the idyllic representation of the pre-Columbian tribes while prolonging the *black legend* of the Spanish regime. Ironically, the modern Mexican indigenous population, often central to this political rhetoric, continued to be ignored, neglected or worse in the aftermath of the Revolution.

Toro's history criticises the Catholic Church and its power over Mexican society rather than Spanish colonisation, which had started to be regarded as an obsolete theme (Toro 1985: 272-277). On the contrary, Justo Sierra favours the Church and its influence, though he remains critical of the deeds of Bishops like Juan de Zúmarra in the Americas:

Ellos salvaron de la muerte a la raza conquistada y aunque cometieron algunos actos de repugnante fanatismo, como destruir documentos de nuestra historia antigua y hacer matar algunos indios, en las horribles epidemias y en los males de toda clase que llovieron sobre los indígenas, se portaron como santos. (Sierra 1922: 53)

As such, Sierra's and Toro's writings share the negative sentiment towards Spain but differed in their allegiance to the Church. Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier engage with this tradition of interpretation of the Conquest in their literary works. As will be analysed in due course, their interest in the topic and their portrayals are closely tied to these interpretations and respond to them, offering a mid-late twentieth century perspective onto this debate.

## **2. 2. The Method of Literary Historicism in Carlos Fuentes's Depiction of the Conquest**

Carlos Fuentes's interest in the literary interpretation of the Conquest of Mexico and the American pre-Hispanic past remains constant throughout the development of his *oeuvre*. Indeed, in his short story 'Chac Mool' and through characters like Teódula Moctezuma and Ixca Cienfuegos in *La región más transparente* (1958), Fuentes explores the often haunting

presence of the pre-Hispanic past in twentieth-century Mexico.<sup>8</sup> Novels like *Cambio de piel* (1967) and *Terra nostra* (1975) include depictions of the massacre of Cholula and the Peregrine-Quetzalcoatl's journey to Tenochtitlan, respectively. However, this event is the central *motif* of *Todos los gatos son pardos* (1971) and of *El naranjo* (1993). Thus, I analyse Fuentes's literary historicism in his portrayal of the Conquest in the *novellas* 'Las dos orillas', 'los hijos del conquistador' and the play *Todos los gatos*.

*El naranjo o los círculos del tiempo* is composed of five *novellas*, each with different characters and plots. In 'Las dos orillas', Jerónimo de Aguilar presents a fictional account of the Conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan led by Hernán Cortés from 1519. 'Los hijos del conquistador' reconstructs the establishment of the Novohispanic society in the voices of Hernán Cortés's kin. In 'Las dos Numancias', a literary Polybius of Megalopolis (200-118 BC) portrays Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus's siege of Numantia around 130 BC.<sup>9</sup> The chronicle 'Apolo y las putas' leaves behind historical tropes and narrates the Hollywood actor Vicente Valera's death during a holiday trip to Acapulco while in an orgy with seven strippers. In 'Las dos Américas', a fictional Christopher Columbus offers an ironic rendering of the commodification of America, from its utopian invention by Renaissance Europeans into a contemporary all-inclusive resort owned by Japanese entrepreneurs. These *novellas* are linked by shared topics, a final objective, inter-textual allusions and the recurrent symbol of the orange tree. Together they frame a reflection on the historical interpretation of Mexico, five centuries after the initial encounter of the worlds in 1492. Similarly to Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), the narrators of *El naranjo* are dead and claim that death has granted them a better perspective with which to recount witnessed events.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, *Todos los gatos* stages Cortés's journey and conquest of Tenochtitlan and his subsequent trial of residency at the Spanish court. The narrative emphasis is placed on the indigenous perspective and Marina's centrality to the campaign. The last scenes of the drama link history to contemporary events, conveying a critical commentary on the notion of progress and the conflictive relation between Mexico and the United States. The play ends by evoking the student massacre in Tlatelolco, perpetrated by Gustavo Díaz Ordaz's military forces in 1968.

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<sup>8</sup> The titles *Los días enmascarados* and *Agua quemada* allude to pre-Hispanic imaginary.

<sup>9</sup> Polybius's *The Histories* (264-146 BC) depicted the consolidation of the Roman Empire and the Numantine War. However, Fuentes was also referencing Cervantes's play *El cerco de Numancia* (Ca. 1585).

<sup>10</sup> The symbolism of the orange tree, which gives title to the novel, and its importance in Fuentes's reflection on History, will be presented in the concluding argument of this analysis.

As illustrated by *Todos los gatos*, Fuentes's portrayal of the Conquest stems from present contexts. In view of the Quincentenary of the American/European encounter, he advocated for a critical assessment of such celebration and the past it enclosed in *Valiente mundo*:

Pero aquí en las Américas, la otra fecha que se nos impone es la de 1992, el Quinto Centenario de algo que, antiguo y actual a la vez, ni siquiera sabemos nombrar, ¿Descubrimiento de América, como la tradición más eurocentrista nos indica? ¿Encuentro de dos mundos, como una nueva tradición, más esclarecida, nos propone? ¿Conquista de América que simplemente condena como un gigantesco crimen todo lo ocurrido a partir de 1492? (Fuentes 1990: 9)

Fuentes's reflection shows his awareness of the conflictive tradition of interpretation on the Conquest and frames his literary depictions on this topic *vis-à-vis* such historiography. In the 1990s, this Mexican author published *Valiente mundo*, *Cristóbal Nonato*, *El naranjo* and *El espejo enterrado*, addressing this historical event from literature, critical essays and history. This thematic fixation sheds light on the revisionist purpose of his works and the responsibility he places on intellectuals for its collective assessment. Fuentes's critical position on the Quincentenary is part of a worldwide mobilisation of intellectuals, like Michael Taussing and Fernando Benítez. These scholars underline the persistence of the cultural trauma of the Conquest in contemporary Latin American imaginaries, and its continuity in the discursive practices and research disciplines that study Latin America.

However, Fuentes's reassessment of the Conquest is also central to his essay *Cervantes y la crítica de la lectura* (1976), companion to his novel *Terra nostra*. Through the study of *Celestina* and *Don Quijote*, Fuentes explores the tension between the pluralistic medieval society and the absolutist regimes of Carlos V and Felipe II and its effects on the American colonies. Fuentes places the American conflict with Spain as a result of the cultural trauma caused by the Conquest. Moreover, he stresses the importance of the Spanish migration to Mexico during Franco's dictatorship for the confrontation of this past: 'esta tradición política es inseparable de una labor intelectual que ahonde en la naturaleza de nuestra relación con España. Hemos dado la espalda con demasiada facilidad a ese espejo de silencios que es nuestra historia colonial' (Fuentes 1998: 11). As such, Fuentes's approach to the Conquest and the colonial past encompasses the pursuit of an inclusive Mexican identity.

Carlos Fuentes's depiction of Cortés's conquest campaign goes beyond the identification of the conflictive historiographical tradition overviewed earlier. His works include discussions on the meaning, possibilities, limitations and purposes of history. This chapter explores Fuentes's recourse to literary historicism in his portrayal of the Conquest. In particular, I analyse his active methodological engagement with historical sources in the depiction of this

event and its characters. Furthermore, I study Fuentes's divergence from this historiography and its mobilisation into the creation of a modern and more contemporary interpretation in the light of this tradition.

### 2. 2. 1. The Historical Substratum of *El naranjo* and *Todos los gatos son pardos*

The literary reinterpretation of historical events demands research on historical accounts. Nonetheless, the selection of particular sources, the relationship established with them, their disclosure or concealment from the reader, and their impact on the literary portrayal, can elucidate the author's methodological literary historicism. In *Cervantes*, Fuentes highlights:

toda obra escrita se apoya en formas previas, más que comenzar prolonga, más que formar transforma, entonces lo interesante es considerar, en primer lugar, cómo se apoya la escritura en la forma previa. Si el nuevo texto respeta la norma de la forma anterior, la escritura solo introduce diferencias denotadas que contribuyen a la norma de la lectura única [...] pero si el nuevo texto no respeta esa normatividad y la trasgrede [...] con el avieso propósito de romper la identidad entre signifiante y significado, de quebrantar la lectura única e instaurar en el abismo así abierto una nueva figura literaria, la escritura introduce una diferencia connotada. (Fuentes 1998: 27-28)

Fuentes's commentary sheds light on the writing process and purpose of his *oeuvre* and points to the deliberate use and transgression of previously written forms in his literary production. For instance, Fuentes states that *Cervantes* and *Terra nostra* 'nac[ieron] de impulsos paralelos y obedecen a preocupaciones comunes'(111), stressing the similar bibliography underpinning both texts. These references disclose the research involved in his writing process, and reveal how those preceding written forms simultaneously sustain his literary texts and are transgressed by them. Indeed, the thematic recurrence of the Conquest suggests the influence of this bibliography on other depictions of this topic in his *oeuvre*.

Additionally, Fuentes often directs the reader to his sources through meta-textual disclosure. *El naranjo* and the 'Prólogo del autor' in *Todos los gatos* include explicit allusions to historical accounts that suggest their inter-textual relationship. Indeed, the narrator of 'Las dos orillas' identifies himself as the historical figure Jerónimo de Aguilar (1849-1531):

Lo he visto todo. Quisiera contarlo todo. Pero mis apariciones en la historia son severamente limitadas a lo que de mí se dijo. Cincuenta y ocho veces soy mencionado por el cronista Bernal Díaz del Castillo en su *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*. Lo último que se sabe de mí es que ya estaba muerto cuando Hernán Cortés, nuestro capitán, salió en su desventurada expedición a Honduras en octubre de 1524. Así lo describe el cronista y pronto se olvida de mí. (Fuentes 2003: 12)

As Aguilar implies, this *novella* is related to *Historia verdadera de la conquista de Nueva España*, written around 1568, by the soldier and conqueror Bernal Díaz del Castillo. This history becomes a constant source in Fuentes's reinterpretation of the Conquest as it also appears referenced in *Todos los gatos*, *Cervantes* and 'Los hijos del conquistador'. In his

analysis of Díaz's history in *Valiente mundo*, Fuentes places the first publication of *Historia* in Madrid in 1632, and its complete publication in 1904 in Guatemala (Fuentes 1990: 72).<sup>11</sup>

Díaz del Castillo declares that his history was a response to Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias* (1552) and *Crónica de la Nueva España* (1554):

En la cual historia hallarán cosas muy notables y dignas de saber; y también van declarados los borrones, y escritos viciosos en un libro de Francisco López de Gómara que no solamente va errado en lo que escribió de la Nueva España, sino también hizo errar a dos famosos historiadores que siguieron su historia, que se dicen doctores Illescas y el Obispo Paulo Iobio, y a esta causa, digo y afirmo que lo que en este libro se contiene es muy verdadero, que como testigo de vista me halle en todas las batallas reencuentros de guerra. (Díaz del Castillo 1985, 1: 65)

Throughout his account Díaz del Castillo highlights Gómara's misinterpretations and asserted his version of the events. However, the structural similarities in the information and narration of both texts suggest that Bernal Díaz based his version on Gómara's history. Fuentes places the dissenting *motif* of this history on the chronicler's desire to 'hacer justicia a los soldados de la conquista. No tiene pretensiones literarias: escribe su libro para sus hijos y sus nietos y se lo deja como una suerte de testamento' (Fuentes 1990: 78). Indeed, Díaz's underpinning criticism of Gómara's history is the sole attribution to Cortés of the success in the conquest of Mexico. According to Fuentes, Bernal's chronicle 'niega que la conquista haya sido una epopeya individual, sino que más bien fue una empresa actuada por la clase media española, popular y emergente a la cual Bernal pertenecía' (77).

Bernal Díaz's collective rendering of the conquest also comprises a political intention. As Adorno and Carmelo highlight, Díaz's account is a reaction to Carlos V's *Leyes nuevas* (1543) that curtailed the political and economic privileges of the *encomienda* granted to the first conquistadors and their descendants: 'his appearances at court had shown him that his heirs would not likely receive rights in perpetuity to his encomienda grants' (Adorno 2007: 150). By claiming equal participation in the Conquest, Bernal was ratifying his post as 'Governador perpetuo' of Guatemala and the right to his *encomiendas*. This also underpins Gómara's appraisal of Cortés in his history, and is one of the main arguments emphasised by Fuentes in his depiction of Cortés, as will be seen in due course.

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<sup>11</sup> Carmelo Sáenz in *Historia de una historia* (1984) notes the survival of three manuscripts of *Historia verdadera* (*Remón*, *Guatemala* and *Alegría*). These texts present variations due to the intervention of different editors. Sáenz highlights that the Mercedarian friar Gabriel Adarzo interpolated the *Remón* manuscript to emphasise the deeds of his religious order in New Spain. Likewise, he attributes the interpolations in the *Guatemala* manuscript to Díaz's son Francisco and posited the *Alegría* manuscript as an edited version of the latter. The literary *motif* of *El naranjo*: the planting of orange-tree seeds by Bernal Díaz's in New Spain appears crossed out in the *Guatemala* manuscript, but the reasons for this elision are still unclear. For more information consult Sáenz's *Historia* and León-Portilla's introduction to the 1985 critical edition of this history.

Moreover, ‘Las dos orillas’ can be considered Fuentes’s literary rendering of his critical analysis of Bernal Díaz’s history in *Valiente mundo*. These texts contain similar arguments and examples in the reassessment of Bernal’s history and the importance of the horses, language, ‘tongues’, and the allied indigenous tribes for the Mexican Conquest. As such, we can see the complementary nature of Fuentes’s essayistic and literary works in the reinterpretation of historical topics. In ‘La épica vacilante’, Fuentes argues that Díaz’s chronicle was the first modern novel of the Americas, for it was torn between the creation of an epic remembrance of the Conquest and the admiration for the destroyed societies: ‘a medida que la narración se desarrolla, la voluntad épica vacila. Y una épica vacilante no es épica: es novela’ (Fuentes 1990: 73). Fuentes’s literary reading of *Historia verdadera* is reminiscent of Alejo Carpentier’s interpretation of this chronicle as ‘la primera novela de caballería real de todos los tiempos’ (Carpentier 2003: 311-312).

Fuentes’s insistent reference to Bernal Díaz in *El naranjo*, *Todos los gatos* and his critical works demands the reader’s association of his literary version of the Conquest with this historiographical depiction. Their explicit association also suggests a deeper discussion on history within his novels. *Historia verdadera* was Fuentes’s primary source of information for his literary portrayals of the Conquest, as well as the object of study in his critical analysis. Although, Florence Olivier mentions the link in ‘Las dos orillas’ to Bernal Díaz ‘a quien el narrador cita con abundancia’ (Olivier 2007: 36), she expands little on the inter-textual relation between these texts, focusing instead in ‘Las dos numancias’. Moreover, Raymond L. Williams’s analysis of the orange tree as a binding element in *El naranjo*, offers a brief synopsis of the *novellas*. However, when Fuentes’s and Díaz’s texts are read in close comparison, it becomes clear that ‘Las dos orillas’ is firmly based on Díaz’s narration, examples and argumentation.

On the one hand, in the *novella*, Fuentes sometimes quotes passages from *Historia verdadera*, which often appear signalled with inverted commas: “Pasó otro soldado que se decía Jerónimo de Aguilar; este Aguilar pongo en esta cuenta porque fue el que hallamos en la Punta de Catoche, que estaba en poder de indios e fue nuestra lengua. Murió tullido de bubas” (Díaz in Fuentes 2003: 14). The dialogues of characters like Cortés, Moctezuma and Cuauhtémoc illustrate Fuentes’s transcription from this history. Indeed, in Fuentes’s *novella*, Jerónimo de Aguilar narrates that Cuauhtémoc was:

Capturado junto con sus capitanes y llevado ante Cortés un día 13 de agosto, a hora de vísperas, el día de San Hipólito y en el año 1521, el Guatemuz dijo que él había hecho en defensa de su pueblo y vasallos todo lo que estaba obligado a hacer por pundonor y también

(añadió) por pasión, fuerza y convicción. “Y pues vengo por fuerza y preso-le dijo entonces a Cortés, ante tu persona y poder, toma luego este puñal que traes en la cintura y mátame luego con él” (17-18).

Similarly, in Bernal Díaz’s account of the capture of Cuauhtémoc we read:

Y entonces el Guatemuz dijo a Cortés: “Señor Malinche, ya yo he hecho lo que estaba obligado en defensa de mi ciudad y vasallos, y no puedo más; y pues vengo por fuerza y preso ante tu persona y poder, toma luego ese puñal que traes en la cintura y mátame luego con él.”[...] Prendióse Guatemuz y sus capitanes en 13 de agosto, a hora de vísperas, día de señor San Hipólito, año de 1521. (Díaz del Castillo 1985, 2: 112)

Thus, besides the excerpts quoted from Bernal’s history, Fuentes’s literary rendering of the capture presents a remarkable resemblance to Bernal’s prose, stressing the connection between the accounts.

On the other hand, the comparison of both accounts underlines that the author sometimes paraphrases Bernal Díaz’s narration in his literary re-interpretation. The shipment to Spain of the *Quinto real* stolen by the French pirate Jean Fleury (Juan Florín) and Cortés’s *Juicio de residencia* epitomise this relationship. For instance, Bernal Díaz narrates in detail the trick designed by Cortés to frighten the natives using the explosion of cannons and the neighing of horses in heat:

En aquel instante trujeron al caballo que había tomado olor de la yegua, y átanlo no muy lejos de donde estaba Cortés hablando con los caciques, y como a la yegua la habían tenido en el mismo aposento donde Cortés y los indios estaban hablando, pateaba el caballo, y relinchaba y hacía bramuras, y siempre los ojos mirando a los indios y el aposento donde había tomado olor de la yegua, y los caciques creyeron que por ellos hacía aquellas bramuras del relinchar y el patear, y estaban espantados. (Díaz del Castillo 1985, 1:152)

Fuentes’s *novella* summarises this passage, but Díaz’s information is maintained:

Y cuando el capitán Cortés quiso asombrar en Tabasco a los enviados del Gran Montezuma, juntó a un garañón con una yegua en celo y los escondió, instruyéndome a mí mismo para que los hiciera relinchar en el momento oportuno. Los enviados del Rey jamás habían escuchado ese ruido y sucumbieron, espantados, a los poderes del *Téul* o Dios español, como lo llamaron a Cortés desde entonces. (Fuentes 2003: 21)

These examples illustrate Fuentes’s recourse to direct quotation and paraphrasing that establishes an inter-textual relationship to Bernal’s account. Although in some cases Fuentes alters the structure and words of the passages used from *Historia verdadera* in *El naranjo*, the connection to Bernal Díaz’s voice and narration remains clear. These are not isolated cases in the *novella*, as it is possible to find similar examples scattered across ‘Las dos orillas’. In fact, the other stories in *El naranjo* and *Todos los gatos* also establish almost literal inter-textual relationships with historical sources, as will be demonstrated. Indeed, Georgina García Gutiérrez highlights the presence of ‘sistemas de codificación culturales’ (García 1981: 109) in *Aura*, while Florence Olivier emphasises the connection between ‘Las dos Américas’ and Columbus’s Diaries, and ‘Las dos Numancias’ and Cervantes’s play (Olivier 2007: 29-38). As such, the use of inter-textual allusions, paraphrasing and quotation emerges as a

methodological pattern of Fuentes's literary historicism when re-working historical sources on the Conquest. Fuentes's historicist writing method underlines the historiographical background and research behind his books. Besides, the inscription of Bernal's voice reveals the author's operative use of sources in the creation of his literary reinterpretations. The incorporation of other voices and genres in his fictional writings is perhaps the most literal manifestation of his take on Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* in the novel.

Indeed, Florence Olivier analyses the topic of alterity in Fuentes's works published in the 1990s, framed through Bakhtin's theory of the novel. Olivier considers that 'las referencias al teórico ruso abundan en las entrevistas que [Fuentes] concede alrededor de 1987 y en sus ensayos críticos posteriores' (Olivier 2007: 16). Thus, she situates Fuentes's discovery of the Russian thinker in the eighties, stressing his influence over the author's conception of the novel and literary writings in the following decade. Olivier follows Bakhtin's notion of the carnival to characterise the relationship established with historical accounts in Fuentes's novel as an 'ilustración literal de los modos particulares de esta cronotopía a partir de la glosa paródica de sus fuentes: el diario del descubridor y las crónicas de los conquistadores' (95). She argues that the parodic inversion of these chronicles 'parece implicar la ficcionalización de una venganza de los vencidos' (80), challenging its epic rendering.

Although Fuentes's 1990s texts are steeped in the theory of Bakhtin, instead of becoming a narrative rupture it asserts the continuities in his *oeuvre*. The inter-textuality established with cultural and historical documents is present in his earlier writings and, as seen in *Cervantes*, often encompasses their subversion and re-signification. These early instances of *heteroglossia* and semantic multiplication of times and narratives can also be attributed to Borges's influence. Fuentes's literary rewriting of Bernal's historical account echoes Pierre Menard's rewriting of *Don Quijote*. Moreover, as noticed by Olivier, there is carnivalisation and inversion of the Spanish epic narrative of the Conquest in Fuentes's *novella*. Olivier identifies Fuentes's parodic rewriting in the mundane character acquired by scenes like the tricks to frighten the natives or Moctezuma's imprisonment. Nonetheless, these scenes also contain a *picaresque* tone in Bernal's chronicle. Thus, by amplifying its humorous tone, Fuentes highlights the novelistic character of Bernal's epic. Likewise, the parodic inversion associated by Olivier with the revenge of the vanquished exceeds the carnivalisation of the history of the Conquest and comprises the idea of 'la recuperación de la palabra' exposed in *Cervantes*, which will be further expanded in due course.

### 2. 2. 2. The Vision of the Vanquished in *Todos los gatos son pardos*

The thematic emphasis of *Todos los gatos* is placed on the encounter of Moctezuma and Cortés, who represent the opposing cultural imaginaries of the Aztecs and Spaniards at the time of the Conquest. Fuentes's prologue contrasts the circularity (pre-determination) of the Aztec theocratic cosmology to the Spaniards' belief in personal will during the Renaissance: 'Moctezuma o el poder de la fatalidad. Cortés o el poder de la voluntad' (Fuentes 1971: 17). Fuentes states that the binary character of this play was influenced by Arthur Miller's view on the conquest of Mexico, which Marina summarises at the beginning:

No es sino la historia de dos hombres: uno lo tenía todo y su nombre era Moctezuma Xocoyotzin, gran tlatoani de México; el otro nada tenía y su nombre Fernando Cortés, pequeño capitán y pequeño hidalgo de España. Yo viví esta historia y puedo contarla. No es sino la historia de dos historias: la de una nación que dudó demasiado y la de otra nación que dudó demasiado poco. (25-26)

Like Aguilar, Marina claims narrative authority by asserting her participation in the event. Marina emerges as a borderline character that mediates these opposing imaginaries due to her role as Cortés's 'tongue' during the Conquest. This binary structure frames Fuentes's reinterpretation of this encounter and determines the historiographical basis of his account.

Moreover, Fuentes identifies his play as a response to the politics of amnesia of official history, which avoided confronting the traumatic past of the Spanish Conquest: '¿Es de extrañar que la historia oficial de nuestro país sea un ejercicio de enmascaramiento positivista con el propósito de evadir esa tensión, de volverla inocua? (16). Therefore, his play is positioned in direct relation to previous interpretations of the Conquest and hints at its historical and political purpose. Indeed, in this play, the recovery of collective memory through written culture and the creation of a more inclusive Mexican identity frame Fuentes's methodological and semantic literary historicism.

The author's prologue sheds light on the historiographical sources used in the construction of this play. Indeed, there is a direct reference to *Los anales de Cuauthtitlan* from which he reconstructed the legend of Quetzalcoatl. Moreover, there are explicit allusions to Cortés's *Cartas de relación*, Bernal Díaz's chronicle, and Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. However, Fuentes clearly mirrors the language of Miguel León-Portilla in *La visión de los vencidos* (1959): 'Moctezuma es la tragedia avasallada por la historia de los vencedores y Cortés es la historia contaminada por la tragedia de los vencidos' (Fuentes 1971: 18). A collation of the bibliography provided in *Cervantes* confirms Fuentes's knowledge of these sources. Given that the publication of *Todos los gatos* falls within the

time-frame of Fuentes planning and writing of *Terra nostra* it is plausible to infer the overlapping of this bibliography in both accounts.

*Todos los gatos* contains two major narrative displacements with regards to the traditional interpretation of the Conquest. If ‘Las dos orillas’ exposes the reader to Bernal Díaz’s account and, thus, the Hispanic rendering of the Conquest, this play stresses the indigenous perspective to include both versions of the encounter. Moreover, Marina’s principal role in the play as the intermediary between Cortés and Moctezuma, and as narrator, contrasts with the leading role granted to Cortés in the Hispanic tradition. This alternative perspective is marked by the opening scenes of the play, which comprise Marina’s introduction, the dreams of the *macehuales* and Moctezuma sweeping with a broom in penitence and awaiting answers from the gods in a metaphorical Mictlan. Indeed, the play opens with the portrayal of the first impressions and doubts generated by the foreign presence on the coast and the natives’ attempt to understand it within their historical and cultural imaginaries.

Like with the Spanish version of the Conquest, the perspective of the natives, portrayed in *Todos los gatos*, is based on the indigenous accounts collected by the scholars of Tlatelolco during colonial times. Fuentes’s emphasis on the Aztec perspective echoes the works of twentieth-century scholars like Ángel María Garibay and Miguel León-Portilla, who studied the pre-Hispanic societies through their cultural productions. Despite the lack of explicit references to León-Portilla’s work, the intention to give voice to the *vencidos* and the information on the natives’ perception clearly stems from *La visión*. His book includes Garibay’s translations of náhuatl literature, Sahagún’s history or *Florentine Codex*, and the annals of Tlatelolco and Cuauhtitlan. León-Portilla’s anthology of indigenous texts written shortly after the fall of Tenochtitlan portrays the natives’ experience of the Conquest.

Indeed, in Fuentes’s play, it is possible to find Aztec customs such as the acts of penitence of sweeping and bleeding the tongues and ears with thorns enacted by his literary characters (33). The initial impressions of the Spanish ships and the Spaniards brought first to Moctezuma by *macehuales*, and confirmed by his informants, echo the information in *La visión*. Moreover, Fuentes includes five of the eight ill-fated portents that occurred before the arrival of the Spaniards, which León-Portilla extracts from Sahagún’s and Tezozomoc’s histories (2005: 2-11). References to the fires in the east, the comets, the burning waters of the lake, and Cihuacoatl’s whining for the Mexicans’ fate appear emphatically at the start of the play through different characters. For instance, the shepherd claims ‘los presagios se suceden

[...] El cielo se incendia, los cometas vuelan, las aguas del lago hierven y las mujeres resucitan, exclamando “se acerca el fin del reino de Moctezuma” (Fuentes 1971: 27). Fuentes also stages the omen of the crane with a mirror on its head where Moctezuma is said to have seen the reflection of the stars and ‘una muchedumbre de hombres blancos’ (43).

Moctezuma’s doubts and anguish over the divine nature of these bearded beings and the association of Cortés with Quetzalcoatl stressed by León-Portilla, become central to Fuentes’s portrayal of this encounter: ‘como hubo oído todo esto Motecuhzoma se llenó de grande temor y como que se le amorteció el corazón, se le abatió el corazón, se le encogió con angustia’ (León-Portilla 2005: 31). These accounts emphasise Moctezuma’s fear, his attempts to gather information on the newcomers’ nature, and their identification with gods: ‘él tenía la creencia de que ellos eran dioses, por dioses los tenía y como dioses los adoraba’ (32). However, the *Tlahtoani*’s plan to flee Tenochtitlan, as well as his recourse to necromancers and gold presents to ward off the returning deities suggest his discontent with their arrival. These versions include descriptions of ‘la noche triste’, as well as, the conquerors’ massacres of natives in Cholula, in the main temple of Tenochtitlan during the festival of Tóxcatl, and in Tlatelolco where Cuauhtémoc’s surrender and capture, marked the defeat of the *Mexicas*.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the anthology comprises accounts on the aftermath of the war that elucidate the desolation brought by the victory of the Spaniards.

Given the dialogical nature of the dramatic genre, this play illustrates another aspect of Fuentes’s methodological literary historicism. Indeed, instead of a literal inclusion of the historical sources, Fuentes gathers the *motifs* and information present in these sources and reworks them in the dialogues of the characters to convey an inclusive account of the event. In *Todos los gatos*, the portents are directly associated with the promised return in Ce-Acatl of the Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl, ‘el dios que creó a los hombres y luego los enseñó a cultivar el maíz, a tejer la pluma y a pulir el jade’ (Fuentes 1971: 31). Fuentes not only portrays Moctezuma’s angst, but also offers a possible explanation through characters like Cihuacoatl, the shepherd and the augurs. Indeed, Moctezuma’s doubt on the divine nature of Cortés-Quetzalcoatl sways between the fear of the unknown and the threat that the fulfilment of this prophecy would pose to his rule. On the one hand, the occurrence of an unforeseen event would destabilise the Aztec’s theocratic conception of the world. On the other hand, the god’s return would imply the Emperor’s need to account for his oppressive rule, as well as for the

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<sup>12</sup> ‘La noche triste’ refers to the defeat of the Spaniards by the *Mexica* army on 30th June of 1520 in Tenochtitlan.

continuity of human sacrifices, which the god had abolished (31). In the play, Moctezuma's doubt is resolved through his choice of adjudicating Cortés a divine nature despite Cihuacoatl's realisation of the human-like behaviour of the newcomers: 'yo necesito que sean dioses para que el drama previsto se cumpla' (85). Nonetheless, like the historical figure, Fuentes's character uses human and magical means to avoid the encounter.

In the scenes that depict the Spanish journey to Tenochtitlan, Marina symbolises the indigenous perspective in her interaction with Cortés and his crew. The lack of documentation of the quotidian interaction of these historical figures is complemented by Fuentes's creation of possible scenarios through the fictionalisation of contextual *motifs* and the events narrated by Díaz del Castillo. In particular, he emphasises Cortés's realisation of the political division of the indigenous societies and the clashes of the divergent cultural and religious imaginaries, stressing the paradoxes of Christian theology such as the holy trinity and the virginity of Mary. Moreover, Marina's depiction in this play, as reinforced in *El naranjo*, comprises a reassessment of this figure that contrasts with the condemnatory status of traitor imposed on her by the historical and cultural tradition.

Fuentes's use of Hispanic and Amerindian colonial sources suggests that his aim was to represent the double perspective of the encounter. Indeed, Fuentes's inclusion of the vision of the vanquished in his literary depiction of the Conquest is crucial to his heteroglossic revisionist project and his methodological and semantic literary historicism. It represents an attempt to amend historical silences and cultural impositions by rescuing subaltern voices in his account. Moreover, Fuentes's interweaving of Bernal's chronicle and indigenous accounts can be considered an effort to create a mixed (*mestizo*) narration that contains both perspectives of the encounter. This play also illustrates the weight of present contexts in Fuentes's assessment of the past, and the pertinence of examining this traumatic past both in the light of new sources, but also of contemporary socio-political contexts. Indeed, *Todos los gatos* was written after the 1968 student massacre at Tlatelolco and it is imbued with references to the event. Such is the case of the emphasis placed on the fall of the Aztec empire in the outcome of the battle of Tlatelolco and the reappearance at the end of the play of a young victim of ritual sacrifice, this time dressed as a student killed by the state forces: 'Tlatelolco será siempre el lugar del crimen' (Fuentes 1971: 113). Marina's speech to her *mestizo* son points to the subsequent conquests and oppressions faced by Mexico, which is rounded off by a critical commentary on the notion of progress and the interventionist policies

of the United States. Thus, Fuentes's portrayal of the conquest stressed the continuities in oppressive practices in the fight for power of individuals.

### 2. 2. 3. Polyphony and *Heteroglossia* in 'Los hijos del conquistador'

In contrast to the previous texts, in 'Los hijos del conquistador' the historical sources used in the depiction of the Conspiracy of Martín Cortés in 1565 are not disclosed openly. The only explicit inter-textual references found in the *novella* are Bernal Díaz's epigraph and a quotation from Toribio de Benavente Motolinía (1482-1569). However, in a meeting with Professor Steven Boldy in 2014 he recalled that his friend Carlos Fuentes had given him a list of books that he needed for writing *El naranjo* and were available at the University Library in Cambridge. In fact, Professor Boldy's dedicated copy still contains this list, which mainly includes histories of Mexico. Its dedication reveals that these titles were the building blocks of his novel: 'Steven e Isabel, Esta nube está montada sobre los libros que ustedes me mostraron. Los quiere, Carlos Fuentes 1993'. Indeed, when collated, three of the books mentioned in the list appear in Fuentes's 'Los hijos': *Historia de la dominación española en México* (1938) by Manuel Orozco y Berra (1816-1888), *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Yndias y su conquista* (1878) by Juan Suárez de Peralta, and *The Century After Cortés* (1965) by Fernando Benítez (1912-2000).<sup>13</sup>

Suárez de Peralta's *Tratado* and Juan de Torquemada's *Monarquía Indiana* (1615) constitute the earliest accounts of the conspiracy. Although Suárez de Peralta's chronicle has been dated from 1589, it was only published in 1878 by Justo Zaragoza under the title *Noticias históricas de la Nueva España* (Gil 2007: 5). For this reason, Orozco y Berra's nineteenth-century histories of the conspiracy are mostly based on Torquemada's book and archival documents. Indeed, these three accounts and documentation have served as the primary sources of twentieth-century historians like Benítez and writers like Fuentes for the interpretation of this event. In the article 'La lectura posmoderna de Carlos Fuentes en *Los hijos del conquistador* sobre Suárez de Peralta' (2016), Covadonga Prieto argues that Suárez de Peralta's *Tratado* was the primary source of Fuentes's *novella*. Prieto analyses the convergences and divergences between both accounts through the Genettian concepts of hypotext and hypertext. However, I will demonstrate that beyond Suárez de Peralta, Fuentes established complex

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<sup>13</sup> Orozco y Berra published a documented account of the conspiracy: *Noticia histórica de la conjuración del Márques del Valle* (1853). Benítez's book was first published as *La vida criolla en el siglo XVI* (1953) by the Colegio de México and subsequently as *Los primeros mexicanos: la vida criolla en el siglo XVI* (1962) by Ediciones Era.

inter-textual relationships with all these historical sources in his literary depiction of the conspiracy.

In ‘Los hijos del conquistador’, Fuentes presents a similar use of direct quotation and paraphrasing in his transformation of historical sources. This *novella*, narrates the historical event known as ‘the Conspiracy of the Marquis of the valley’. In 1565 the kin of the first conquistadors, including Alonso de Ávila and Martín Cortés, conspired to establish a government independent from the Spanish Monarchy in New Spain. The conspiracy was a reaction to the policy changes of the Crown towards the first conquistadors, and the instalment of new institutions that aimed to limit the privileges of the *encomienda* initially granted to them. In contrast to ‘Las dos orillas’, ‘Los hijos del conquistador’ is narrated in the form of a dialogue from beyond death between two siblings: Martín Cortés 1 and 2. Both sons of Hernando Cortés: Martín 1(1532-1589), the first creole of New Spain, from his second marriage to Juana de Zuñiga; Martín 2 (ca.1523-1595), the first *mestizo* of New Spain, from his lover and interpreter Malintzin (Doña Marina).

Indeed, in her recent article Covadonga Prieto notes a similar relationship established with Suárez de Peralta’s *Tratado*. Through the analysis of convergent passages in both accounts, and framed within Vargas Llosa’s notion of ‘caja china’, she states that ‘Fuentes contrae una deuda que no salda, pues no la reconoce: una buena parte del cuento procede del *Tratado* [...] de Juan Suárez de Peralta (1876)’ (Prieto 2016: 30). This critic highlights textual similarities in both accounts with regards to Catalina Suárez’s sudden death of ‘mal de madre’, the welcoming festivities for the Marqués del Valle, the introduction in New Spain of the *Brindis* and masquerades and the execution of the creoles involved in the conspiracy.<sup>14</sup> Through these examples, she concludes that the main inter-textuality established in ‘Los hijos’ was with this sixteenth-century *Tratado*. Indeed, like in ‘Las dos orillas’, Fuentes’s literary portrayal of the conspiracy follows Suárez’s narration closely, maintaining words used by the sixteenth-century writer.

However, if Fuentes maintains Suárez’s descriptions, perhaps due to their spontaneity and vivid expression, his depiction loses the moralistic tone characteristic of the creole’s account. Benítez highlights this tone in the *Tratado*, which is also found in Torquemada’s account, and Suárez’s liberal rhetorical use of the devil and divine providence in his narration of the

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<sup>14</sup> Catalina Suárez’s surname also appears spelled as Xuárez in historical sources. In this thesis, I have kept the spelling used by each author, when referring to her.

events: ‘a unos [españoles] los animaba Dios y a los otros [indios] el Diablo: el poder divino y el poder demoniaco [...] libraban su batalla eterna transformando el suelo de las Indias en palestra’ (Benítez 1953: 259). Moreover, Suárez’s *Tratado* was written in Spain after the Crown’s *Leyes nuevas*, and it is indeed the nostalgia for Mexico and the lifestyle of the creoles what prevails in his narration. Virginia Gil stresses that ‘la obra retrata la mentalidad de su autor, sus opiniones y escala de valores, su interés por la vida social y su nula preocupación por incrementar la nómina de los historiadores de Indias’ (Gil 2007: 5). Although Fuentes incorporates this nostalgia in his creole narrator Martín 1, this tone is contrasted and diminished by the practicality of his *mestizo* brother.

In this *novella*, we witness a more sophisticated use of the historical sources than that described by Prieto. It combines the methodological approaches of ‘Las dos orillas’ and *Todos los gatos* for it is based on more than one source. Indeed, the two-fold narration by the Cortés siblings entails the existence of different perspectives and contexts in the composition of the story, which complement the depiction of this event. The plot presents an active interweaving of various historical accounts from the sixteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Echoing Bakhtin’s and Vico’s theories, and his view on history, Fuentes’s *novella* emerges as a polyphonic and heteroglossic account of the conspiracy.

Fuentes’s methodological historicist use of Bernal Díaz’s history in ‘Las dos orillas’ is reproduced in this *novella*; hence it will not be repeated here. The description and fate of the five carved and gilded emeralds that were given to Cortés by Moctezuma, as well as the legal procedures established against him, are further examples of the above. However, Fuentes’s depiction of the ‘paper wars’ between Cortés, and other conquistadors, and the Monarchy for their *encomiendas* showed an active threading of archival sources into his literary account. Following the *Tratado*, Catalina de Suárez’s death, of which Cortés was accused, is attributed to her ‘mal de madre’ in Fuentes’s *novella*. However, the author includes details of its description that are only found in Cortés’s *Juicio de residencia* (Martínez 1991, II: 79). This is the case of the emphasis placed on the ‘cardenales en la garganta y la cama orinada’ (Fuentes 2003: 72) in the story. Fuentes’s use of the surname Xuárez is also consistent with its spelling in the legal documents and is kept to indicate the change of source. Moreover, in the *novella* references to Cortés’s last wish to be buried in Mexico, his repentance over the *encomienda* and the return of the land to the natives, among others, have been extracted from his testament.

Furthermore, Fuentes based his depiction of several events of the conspiracy in *La dominación española en México*, written by the nineteenth-century historian Manuel Orozco y Berra. Examples of this inter-textuality include Alonso Ávila's incrimination in the conspiracy through the 'billetes' sent to his lovers; the masquerade staged by Ávila and Martín Cortés of Moctezuma's and Cortés's encounter and the plan to overthrow the vice regal institutions during the 'Paseo del pendón', a commemoration of the fall of Tenochtitlan. In 'Los hijos', these events illustrate Fuentes's consistent historicist method of quotation and paraphrasing of historical sources in his narrative. This can be seen his description of the celebration of the baptism of Martín Cortés's twins:

Yo tuve mellizos y sentí que éste era motivo de regocijo [...] Tomamos por nuestra cuenta la Plaza Mayor, la mitad de sus casas eran nuestras. De mi casa a la catedral mandé hacer un pasadizo de madera alzada sobre el suelo, ricamente aderezado para dar paso a la comitiva y llevar a mis hijos hasta la Puerta del Perdón [...] Lo anuncié con ruido, no faltaba más. Artillería, torneos a pie sobre el tablado y fiestas a las que todos fueron convidados, españoles e indios. Toro asado, pollos y montería, pipas de tinto para los españoles. Para los indios, un encierro de conejos, liebres y venados, según la tradición, así como muchísimas aves, que al romper la enramada salían corriendo y volando y eran flechados y regalados al menudo pueblo, alborozado y agradecido. Juegos de cañas, fuegos artificiales, piñatas [...] Ocho días de fiesta, rodeado del pueblo, brindis y mascaradas, y al cabo, la gran cena y sarao que para culminar los festejos dio en su casa mi verdadero hermano Alonso de Ávila. (Fuentes 2003: 89)

Orozco y Berra, based on Juan de Torquemada's history, describes it as follows:

Nacieron a don Martín de un solo vientre dos mellizos, y para solemnizar el nacimiento y el bautismo se hicieron fiestas dignas de un rey. Desde las casas del Marqués, llamadas ahora del Estado, en la plaza principal, se hizo hasta la iglesia que servía de catedral, por la puerta del perdón, un pasadizo de madera cuatro varas levantado del suelo, y seis de ancho, curioso y ricamente aderezado para dar paso a la comitiva [...] se disparó artillería, sobre el tablado hubo un torneo a pie en que doce caballeros armados de pinta en blanco se combatieron con valor y bizarría, y se dio al pueblo un convite en que ninguno era desechado, consultando el gusto de los criollos y el de los indios. Para los primeros se sirvió un todo asado y muchas aves de corral y de monte, con dos pipas de vino tinto y blanco, regalo de mucho precio por la escasez del licor que había en la colonia. Para los segundos se formó un bosque a la usanza antigua de los mexicanos, en cuyo recinto estaban encerrados conejos, liebres, venados y otros cuadrúpedos con aves de distintos géneros, que al romper la enramada salían huyendo en diferentes direcciones, y los flecheros los abatían al vuelo o la carrera, aprovechándose de las piezas así cogidas. Hubo además, juegos de cañas y en la noche iluminación, "una muy solemne encamisada y muchos alcanciazos" [...] Seis u ocho días duraron las fiestas, y en su transcurso, no solo se intentó atraerse al pueblo, sino aún a la gente noble y principal [...] Alonso de Ávila [...] convidó a los marqueses a una cena y un sarao en su casa. (Orozco y Berra 1938: 241)

Indeed, not only does the literary author maintain the information of the nineteenth-century historian, he even mirrors Orozco y Berra's language and phrasing. The resemblance between the two fragments is a good example of Fuentes's methodology of literary historicism. Furthermore, none of the events extracted from *La dominación* are included in Suárez's account of the conspiracy. This demonstrates the equitable use of diverse historiographical

sources into Fuentes's account, instead of the pre-eminence of the *Tratado* suggested by Prieto.

Moreover, Benítez's *Los primeros Mexicanos* (1953) has an overarching presence in 'Los hijos' and could be considered its all-encompassing source. This book studies the history, mentality, and culture of the Novohispanic creoles in the sixteenth-century through their writings. *Los primeros* includes the depictions of the conspiracy written by Suárez, Torquemada and Orozco y Berra. In addition, Benítez establishes a close inter-textuality with these sources, often echoing the sixteenth-century voices. As such, all the events of the conspiracy that structure Fuentes's *novella* are present in Benítez's twentieth-century account, whereas earlier sources contain discrepancies in the conveyed information. Fuentes's approach to Benítez's history resembles the one used in *Todos los gatos*, where the primary information and *motifs* that guides the literary version are taken from diverse sources and rewritten in a different form. Indeed, both texts lack the moralistic reflections of the sixteenth-century versions as well as the republican emphasis present in *La dominación*. Moreover, Benítez's arguments on the conquered conquistadors, their paper wars against the Spanish Crown to maintain their privileges, and the emergence of an incipient nationality among the creoles are gathered and reworked in the plot of 'Los hijos'. This is certainly the thematic light under which Hernán and Martín Cortés's long-lasting legal wars are depicted in the *novella*, which also highlights the duplication of family destinies, which Steven Boldy remarks upon, as a pattern of Fuentes's narrative.

The textual and thematic incorporation of the *mestizo* and indigenous perspective is also a pattern of Fuentes's literary historicism and a key feature in this *novella*. This theme is central to Benítez's account and his other works on the indigenous communities of Mexico. In contrast, the only allusions to the natives in Suárez's *Tratado* either justify the Creoles' use of native labour through the *encomienda* or their association with the devil. In Fuentes's *novella*, this perspective is included through his narrator Martín 2, the symbolic first *mestizo* of New Spain. Indeed, in the chapter where the narrators' voices merge Fuentes intercalates a Náhuatl poem by Netzahualcoyotl and a Spanish poem to symbolise the racial and cultural identity of Mexico.

Prieto argues that Fuentes's creation of Martín 2, is a historical imprecision given that he was raised in Spain from an early age. Indeed, Martín 2 is a symbolical character used to convey the voices and situation of the indigenous and mestizo population after the fall of Tenochitlán,

silenced by creole histories like the *Tratado*. Through the mestizo's descriptions, we gaze into the life and segregation of the enslaved native population, drawn from Benítez's text; this contrasts with the splendour and lavish lifestyle of the creoles: 'éste que ayer no más era sacerdote y ahora viejo mendigo cacarañado, de éste que era tan hijo del príncipe Azteca como yo y mi hermano del conquistador español, pero ahora él cargaba sacos de leña de casa en casa, y mi hermano bautizaba a sus gemelos en la catedral' (Fuentes 2003: 90). Moreover, through Martín 2, Fuentes also discusses the identity of the mestizo drawing on Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*, as will be discussed in due course.

Prieto considers Fuentes to have suffered from *horror vacui* for 'añadir elementos que no guardan relación con los documentos históricos' (Prieto 2016: 51). This statement indicates the limited scope of her analysis, as instead, added information is indicative of the intricate inter-textuality established in Fuentes's *novella* with its historical sources. Indeed, to use her example of the welcoming of the Marquis, information like the political hopes placed on Martín 1 by the creoles or the location of the Palace of Axayácatl, added to Suarez's description, is found in Benítez's account. As such, Fuentes's literary depiction of the creole conspiracy is based on the complementary weaving of his narrative voice and multiple historical sources. Thus, Fuentes gives voice to the colonial sources in the depiction of specific events but frames the *novella* through the information and thematic *motifs* present in Benítez's book.

'Los hijos' constitutes the most illustrative example of Fuentes's incorporation of Bakhtin's and Vico's theories into his writing. Indeed, Fuentes's *heteroglossia* is the result of the juxtaposition and close inter-textuality with his historical sources. Thus, his methodological literary historicism creates an archive of voices that represented the contexts, perspectives and historical portrayals of the conspiracy accumulated since the sixteenth century, amplifying González Echevarría's theory. Finally, as seen in *Todos los gatos*, Fuentes's approach to the depiction of historical subjects is tied to contemporary semantic intentions. In this case, there is a revaluation of the historical rendering of the interaction between the diverse cultures that compose the Mexican identity, at the start of the cultural encounter. Moreover, in the light of the quincentenary his works show an attempt to identify and fill silences left by three hundred years of colonial historical interpretation.

#### 2. 2. 4. La Recuperación de la Palabra: Convergence and Divergence from Sources

The previous analyses illustrate Fuentes's operative approach to the depiction of historical subjects like the Conquest. As has been seen, his literary accounts are characterised by the mobilisation of multiple sources and the effective interweaving of information and narrative extracted from this historiography. Fuentes's application of a consistent literary historicist writing method is linked to his conception of history and literature, in turn influenced by thinkers like Vico and Bakhtin, among others. His contemporary literary look on the Conquest offers a critical commentary of its *longue durée* social, political and cultural repercussions and the discourses behind its interpretation. Moreover, his declarations in *Cervantes* and *Todos los gatos* suggest his awareness of using preceding historical accounts to transgress their meaning and form through fiction: 'por la puerta falsa de la epopeya se cuela el autor, con la esperanza de penetrar el corazón del Castillo e instalar en él, en vez de la gesta, el ritual [...] la desintegración de una vieja personalidad y su reintegración en un nuevo ser' (Fuentes 1971: 20).

Indeed, Fuentes does not limit himself to summarising and paraphrasing colonial, republican and contemporary historical accounts in his literary depictions of the Conquest. Despite the time difference between both literary accounts, *Todos los gatos* already contains arguments explored further in *El naranjo*. As has been analysed, in his literary depictions, besides Fuentes's close relation to his sources we can find their mobilisation and transformation into the creation of inclusive accounts. Indeed, one of the aspects that characterises this author's historicist approach is the identification of historical silences and their filling through the incorporation of varied perspectives. On occasions, Fuentes modifies these histories to stress certain arguments and interpretations of the Conquest, which he considered key to its assessment such as the role of the horses and language, the ironic outcome of the Conquest, and the Mexican cultural heritage, among others. By doing so, Fuentes inserts his perspective and interpretation of these historical events.

In fact, in his account, Fuentes stresses an alternative explanation of the Conquest of Mexico in the hands of less than 500 Spanish soldiers (Fuentes 1990: 86). Through Aguilar, Fuentes explains that the Conquest was the result of the conjunction of many factors, and not merely an individual or collective deed from the conquistadors, like Gómara's or Bernal's histories state. Among the factors that made the Conquest possible, Fuentes underlines: the horses, the alliance with the Tlaxcaltecas and other tribes, and foremost Cortés's 'tongues' (translators). The fictional Aguilar acknowledges that Doña Marina gave Cortés the key to the Conquest:

‘le di al rey el secreto de la debilidad de Cortés, como doña Marina le había dado el secreto de la debilidad Azteca: la división, la discordia, la envidia, la pugna entre hermanos, que lo mismo afectaba a España que a México’ (Fuentes 2003: 28). As stressed in *Todos los gatos* and ‘Los hijos’, Fuentes extends these premises, to postulate that in the aftermath of the initial Conquest both natives and conquistadors had been victims of the Spanish Crown. Although these are not necessarily original hypotheses from Fuentes, they enclose and divulge more contemporary understandings of this event.

Finally, the author also introduces radical alterations of the sources that allow the fictional creation of possible scenarios to portray, not only what was stated by historical sources, but what could have occurred: ‘siempre pudo ocurrir exactamente lo contrario de lo que la crónica consigna. Siempre’ (Fuentes 2003: 13). An example of this, as well as an extreme intervention on the historical narratives, appears in the last subchapter of ‘Las dos orillas’, when the countdown gets to zero (0) and the narration ‘reboots’. The story seems to ‘restart’ using the same opening paragraph of the tenth section (10). However, the Aztec references are swapped for Spanish ones, and the roles of the conquerors and conquered inverted. The following passage is a mixture of both quotations where underlined words belong to the tenth chapter and those in square brackets to the 0: ‘yo vi todo esto. La caída de la gran ciudad azteca [andaluza], en medio del rumor de los atabales, el choque del acero contra el pedernal y el fuego de los cañones castellanos [lanzallamas mayas]. Vi el agua quemada de la laguna sobre la cual se asentó esta gran Tenochitlan dos veces más grande que Córdoba [del Guadalquivir y el incendio de la Torre del oro]’ (Fuentes 2003: 11/55). Subchapter 0 of the countdown reverses history, as it narrates a hypothetical scenario of what could have happened if the Mayans under the leadership of Gonzalo Guerrero had discovered, invaded and conquered Spain.

Gonzalo Guerrero’s introduction in the *novella* maintains fragments of Bernal’s historical narrative, but the dislocation in the setting of the events introduces semantic displacements that emphasise the symbolism embedded by Fuentes in this character. Instead of sending his message through Aguilar, the literary version sets Cortés and Guerrero face to face. The contrast between the Spanish conquistador and the Spanish conquered has a mirror effect in the *novella* and erects Gonzalo Guerrero as a symbol of counter-colonisation in *El naranjo*. Indeed, he was a Spaniard who had been conquered and colonised by a Mayan tribe. Moreover, he had turned down the opportunity to retrieve his Spanish life and immersed himself in the indigenous laws, culture and society to the point of leading the ending counter-

conquest of Andalucía. Fuentes uses his fictional account to stress the irony of this encounter and to suggest a constant question in his works: ‘¿Qué habría pasado si lo que sucedió, no sucede?’ (Fuentes 2003: 59), moving the readers to imagine alternative outcomes of the initial encounter. According to Olivier, this inversion of historical facts in Fuentes’s tale constitutes a fictional revenge of the vanquished against the conquerors and of literature against history. However, the symbolic meaning of this literary counter-conquest points to the cultural and economic contributions of Latin America to Europe (Spain) and its cultural heritage emphasising a two-way contact between the two shores. Moreover, Fuentes’s methodological and semantic literary historicism in his portrayal of the Conquest entailed the recuperation of both Spanish and Indigenous traditions to provide a modern interpretation: ‘la lucha por la palabra, entre nosotros, equivale a la lucha por el poder, pero no por el poder burocrático, el poder armado o el poder retórico, sino el poder ciudadano y personal, por el poder histórico de cada mexicano vivo y vivo ahora’ (Fuentes 1971: 17).

### **2. 3. The Semantic Aspects of Carlos Fuentes’s Literary Historicism: Characters and Symbolism in *El naranjo* and *Todos los gatos son pardos*.**

Fuentes’s method of literary historicism is complemented by his semantic construction of historical characters in *Todos los gatos* and *El naranjo*. Despite the gap between their publications, the recurrent portrayal of topics and characters underlines the continuity in the author’s interest and interpretation of this trope. In these depictions of the Conquest, the emphasis is placed either on polemical characters like Hernán Cortés and Malintzin or obscure historical figures such as Jerónimo de Aguilar and Martín Cortés 1 and 2. These characters are situated within racial or cultural frontiers, and their fictional construction comprises a revision of their historical interpretations. Indeed, the scarcity of historical documentation available on them sets forth Fuentes’s semantic literary historicism, as they are used as vehicles to convey arguments, and symbolism in order to remedy historical silences in his depictions of the Conquest.

The author’s polyvalent construction means that a single character could be linked to more than one particular symbolism, as is Marina’s case. The symbolism conveyed through the literary characters is also tied to historical reflection and complements or proposes narrative arguments. Critics like Georgina García Gutiérrez, Maarten van Delden, Raymond Leslie Williams, and Steven Boldy have addressed the dualism in Fuentes’s literary writings. These

critics study the mirrored construction of his characters. In *Los disfraces*, García Gutiérrez highlights the distinct opposing composition of Chac Mool's world:

El mundo que se recrea en "Chac Mool" está formado por parejas de oposiciones que al afrontarse producen movimiento (los actores, narradores, tiempos, realidades). El triunfo temporal de uno de los términos de las parejas obedece a la insistente confrontación del pasado y el presente en cada uno de los niveles del texto. La reunión de términos de signo contrario origina la sustitución de un tiempo por otro, de una realidad por otra. (García Gutiérrez 1981: 30)

Moreover, in *Todos los gatos*, Fuentes comments specifically on the importance of dualism in the Aztec cultural imaginary, which is echoed by his characters, time and spaces: 'Quetzalcoatl se fue sin saber que había sido el protagonista simultáneo de la creación y la caída. Sembró en la tierra, el maíz; pero en las almas de los mexicanos sembró una infinita sospecha circular' (Fuentes 1971: 10). However, in these characters, the duality can also be associated with the dichotomy between the Spanish and pre-Hispanic heritage.

This section analyses the symbolism of Fuentes's mirrored characters, whose opposition often complements their meaning. Through Jerónimo de Aguilar and Doña Marina, the 'tongues' of Cortés, Fuentes reflects on the power of language and translation in the Conquest and the interpretation of the past. Hernán Cortés and Malintzin allow him to explore the origin of *Mexicanness* and proclaim them the founding couple of modern Mexico. Finally, through the creole and mestizo siblings named Martín Cortés, Fuentes also examines Mexican identity and the social and racial silences in traditional Mexican history.

### **2. 3. 1. The 'Tongues': Jerónimo de Aguilar, Marina and the Power of Language**

The first couple of mirrored characters that appears in 'Las dos orillas' and *Todos los gatos son pardos* are Jerónimo de Aguilar and the Nahuatl princess Malintzin (also known as Doña Marina or La Malinche). Their opposition emerges from their common role as 'tongues' or translators in Cortés's conquest expedition to Tenochtitlan. This function is emphasised by Fuentes, as both characters become the main narrative voices of his literary accounts. Aguilar is the narrator of 'Las dos orillas', while Malintzin is the primary voice in *Todos los gatos* and appears as a prominent character in *El naranjo*. Fuentes's choice of narrators denotes a displacement of Cortés and the conquistadors as the protagonists of historical accounts, emphasising instead, figures that had been marginalised in historical records.

Jerónimo Aguilar became the first Spanish medium of verbal communication between the Spaniards and Mayans. As Bernal Díaz states, before Aguilar's rescue in Punta de Catoche, Cortés had relied on the native translators Melchorejo and Julianillo. These natives were

captured in Hernández's voyage and taken to Cuba to use them as interpreters in subsequent expeditions. Ironically, Aguilar had also learnt the Mayan language while enslaved by a native tribe, after the shipwreck of his vessel had cast the Spanish crew into the Yucatán peninsula ten years before Cortés's arrival there. When Aguilar joined Cortés's expedition, he was regarded as a reliable translator due to his Spanish and Catholic background. Aguilar is mentioned several times in Díaz's and Gómara's accounts. However, his importance is diminished by Republican historians and twentieth-century histories that barely reference him. Although Bernal Díaz includes Aguilar's biography and recognises his place in Cortés's entourage, his appearances in *Historia verdadera* remain scattered references in the dialogues between the conqueror and the indigenous tribes, which relegate him to a secondary place. Conversely, in Fuentes's *novella*, the literary Aguilar reclaims historical prominence in the Conquest by emphasising his voice and will, reversing the silences in historical accounts.

The historical figure of Malintzin in 'Las dos orillas' is built in convergence and opposition to Aguilar, drawing from her mythical and historical binary interpretations 'como heroína o como traidora' (Glantz 1994: 8). Although part of the indigenous nobility of Oluta, this historical character had been sold as a slave to a Mayan tribe in Tabasco, and was part of the cohort of nineteen women given to the conquistadors. Malintzin's knowledge of Náhuatl and Mayan became crucial for Cortés's communication in Nahua territories since Aguilar only spoke Mayan. Indeed, the verbal contact between the Spaniards and the natives was established through a translation chain from Spanish to Mayan to Náhuatl, and vice versa. Although she initially complemented Aguilar's function as 'tongue', after learning Castilian she overtook this role and became Cortés's right hand in the Conquest.

Like Aguilar, Malintzin is mentioned in the histories of the Conquest acknowledging her role as translator, but her importance is also overshadowed by the pre-eminence given to the conquistador. Moreover, as noted by George Baudot the historical figure has been the victim of a condemnatory-mystification *in crescendo* since the nineteenth century (Baudot 1994: 49). Glantz analyses Cortés's description of Marina's role as *faraute* and the complexities it embedded: 'es lengua, es faraute, es secretaria y como consecuencia, mensajera y espía' (Glantz 1994: 82). Indeed, Fuentes discusses Malintzin's role as 'tongue' in both literary texts. However, it is in *Todos los gatos* where her voice is more clearly emphasised. Without Aguilar's presence, in the play, she becomes the sole owner of the two languages and, more importantly, a translator of cultural imaginaries and customs. Indeed, she is not only present in all of Cortés's interviews with the indigenous chiefs but also speaks for them. As indicated

in the stage directions of the play: ‘los emisarios gesticularán sin decir palabra. Será Marina quién hable en nombre de ellos’ (Fuentes 1971: 54).

Through Malintzin and Aguilar, Fuentes portrays language and translation as the key weapons of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. In Aguilar’s terms: ‘solo confirmé [...] jugando el papel de lengua entre el conquistador y el vencido, el poder de las palabras cuando las impulsa [...] la imaginación enemiga, la advertencia implícita en el sesgo crítico del verbo cuando es verdadero’ (Fuentes 2003: 19). Indeed, Aguilar’s and Marina’s words forge the political alliances with the tribes of Tlaxcala and Cholula. Precisely, the military cooperation of native states that were enemies of the Aztec Empire is depicted as crucial for the Spanish victory in Fuentes’s writings.

In his works, words appear embedded with effective transformative power and are used by Aguilar and Malintzin to benefit their individual agendas: ‘la lengua era más que la dignidad, era el poder, era la vida misma que animaba mis propósitos’ (36). Indeed, the opposition of these characters stems from their struggle for verbal power, their places in both societies and their betrayal of their respective cultures. For instance, the fictional Aguilar shows awareness of his power and admits controlling the information transmitted to both sides: ‘traduje, inventé, traicioné’ (18). In contrast to Bernal Díaz’s assurance about the fidelity of Aguilar’s translations, Fuentes’s *novella* portrays him as a traitor. Indeed, he confesses that ‘todos mis actos [...] iban dirigidos a esta meta: el triunfo de los indios contra los españoles’ (28). However, his initial monopoly over language is challenged by Malintzin who eventually replaces him, and he realises that ‘ya no hacía falta, la hembra diabólica lo estaba traduciendo todo, la tal Marina hideputa y puta ella misma había aprendido a hablar español [...] me había arrebatado [...] mi *monopolio* de la lengua castellana’ (34).

Marina’s translations on behalf of the Spanish conquistadors are not void of intentionality as she takes advantage of Cortés who, ‘escuchaba a Marina no solo como lengua, sino como amante’ (Fuentes 2003: 31). Baudot portrays Malintzin’s active help to the conquistadors as ‘el resultado de una venganza de mujer [...] que así recupera su señorío, su lugar privilegiado’ (Baudot 1994: 62). Fuentes echoes these personal motivations in her aid of the Spanish conquistadors against Moctezuma’s oppressive power. According to Aguilar, ‘La Malinche, acarreaba el dolor y rencor profundos, pero también la esperanza, de su estado; tuvo que jugarse toda entera para salvar la vida y tener descendencia. Su arma fue la misma que la mía: la lengua’ (32). In ‘Las dos orillas’, it is Marina who instigates the Aztec emperor to surrender

to Cortés. Indeed, Aguilar remarks to the reader: ‘ustedes entienden que esto se lo dijo la mujer al emperador por su propia iniciativa, no traduciendo de Cortés sino hablando con fluidez la lengua Mexicana’ (26). Marina’s initiative and empowerment in the Conquest are also featured in *Todos los gatos*, where she tells Cortés how he ought to act to defeat Tenochtitlan (Fuentes 1971: 69). As such, Marina becomes a cultural translator (faraute), as through her knowledge of the indigenous mentality and customs ‘fue ella la que le reveló a Cortés que el imperio Azteca estaba dividido’ (31). Thus, in Fuentes’s works, Marina is depicted in ‘su papel como conquistadora’, instead of that of the slave (Nava 2013: 89).

Fuentes’s emphasis on language, and its power through Marina and Aguilar, conveys a reflection on translation and miscommunication that is amplified in his essayistic works. In the prologue of *Todos los gatos* and *Cervantes*, the author discusses this power with attention to its political and historical manipulation. In the literary texts, Fuentes forges different fictional scenarios that destabilise the meaning of words and the effectiveness of communication, sparking in the reader critical considerations on truth (history) and fiction. Indeed, through the tripartite communication and the active mistranslations of the characters, the veracity of the information in the chronicles is relativised. Not only does Aguilar openly acknowledge having altered the meaning of the words he translated, but he also questions Marina’s translations ‘pues podía inventar lo que quisiera al pasar del náhuatl al maya’ (Fuentes 2003: 32). When Aguilar gives Moctezuma the secret for defeating the Spaniards their misunderstanding stems from their divergent cultural imaginaries (29). Moreover, although Aguilar reversed Cortés’s words, his mistranslations end up conveying the truth as the promises made by the conquistador to the natives were merely disregarded: ‘¿No tuve razón en traducir al revés al capitán y decirle, con mis mentiras, la verdad al Azteca?’ (19). The ambiguity and multiplication of meanings in words and literature is further explored in *Cervantes* where Fuentes states that ‘las palabras se convierten en vehículo de la ambigüedad y la paradoja’ (Fuentes 1998: 71).

This reflection of literature as the space of ambiguity, where ‘todo es posible. Todo está en duda’(73), also questions the veracity in historiography as a narrative construction. As such, through his reflection on translation, Fuentes stresses the manipulation of language in pursuit of political power and to shape historical interpretations. Indeed, in *Todos los gatos* the fictional Cortés highlights how history is written by victors when dialoguing with Ordás:

Ordás: Hagas lo que hagas, cuídate de que la historia sea escrita a nuestro favor.  
Cortés: La historia...

Ordás: Nuestra historia, si vencemos. Sea escrito: había guerreros de Moctezuma en las barrancas, aprestados para darnos celada y muerte...

Cortés: Sea escrito...

Ordás: Estábamos rodeados y hambrientos.

Cortés: Sea escrito...

Ordás: Y si una sola traición dejábamos pasar sin castigo en cualquier lugar nos harían otras peores. (Fuentes 1971: 97)

Moreover, when Sandoval asks about the inevitability of the fall of Moctezuma's empire, given the divisions in the land, Cortés reprehends him: 'no repitas nunca esas palabras, Sandoval, que algún día el oidor del Rey puede usarlas contra nosotros, y negarnos las recompensas de nuestro esfuerzo. Digamos más bien, que gracias a nuestras heroicas acciones este imperio encontrará su verdadero destino' (81). These two examples illustrate how history has been manipulated through language to fit political purposes. Finally, as previously noted in *Todos los gatos*, Fuentes's highlights that 'en México, la palabra pública [...] ha vivido secuestrada por el poder, y en poder en México es una operación de amnesia' (17) and sets his literary works as an 'intento de recuperar la memoria recuperando la palabra' (17). Fuentes's attempts to pluralise the narration by including different versions in his historicist literature are also in consonance with this recuperation of the word and challenge to previous official interpretations.

### **2. 3. 2. Hernando Cortés and Doña Marina: a New Foundational Myth for Modern Mexico**

The conquistador Hernán Cortés and his indigenous lover Malintzin are also mirrored characters in *El naranjo* and *Todos los gatos*. Fuentes's literary reassessment offers a conciliatory understanding of these figures, in the light of their binary historical and mythical depictions as hero or villain, or as victim or traitor, respectively. Fuentes fosters a more inclusive comprehension of Mexican identity to help overcome the traumatic colonial past and its modern socio-political, cultural, racial and economic manifestations. Moreover, Fuentes's depiction was influenced by twentieth-century revisionist historiography on Malintzin, and the philosophical considerations on *Mexicanness* featured in the works of José Vasconcelos, Samuel Ramos, Alfonso Reyes and Octavio Paz.

In Fuentes's literary works, Hernán Cortés is rarely the protagonist. Instead, the reader is bound to construct the character through the voices of Jerónimo de Aguilar and his sons Martín, first and second. The author's depiction of Cortés is built with attention to his historical deeds and the philosophical context of sixteenth-century Spain. In *Cervantes*, Fuentes highlights the importance of Erasmus of Rotterdam's (1466-1536) philosophy in the

Spanish mentality of the Renaissance: ‘relativizado por la locura crítica e irónica el hombre deja de estar sujeto a la Fatalidad o a la Fe; pero no se convertirá en el amo absoluto de la Razón’ (Fuentes 1998: 68). Indeed, Fuentes frames his character through three main Erasmian themes that he also identifies in *Don Quijote*: ‘la dualidad de la verdad, la ilusión de las apariencias y el elogio a la locura’ (Fuentes 1998: 68). In this sense, Fuentes’s Cortés is defined by his duality and embodies the Erasmian tensions between faith and reason, destiny and will: ‘la locura de Erasmo es una puesta en duda del hombre por el hombre y de la razón por la razón, y ya no por Dios, el Demonio o el pecado’ (68). As such, Cortés is simultaneously depicted as adventurous and greedy, conqueror and conquered: ‘vanidad y misericordia unidas: una parte de él necesitaba el reconocimiento, la riqueza, el capricho como regla; otra pedía para nosotros, su nuevo pueblo mexicano compasión y derecho’ (Fuentes 2003: 69).

The narration by his sons illustrates the dual construction of Cortés emphasising his life after the conquest of Mexico. Martín 1 portrays Cortés as a tragic hero, but a hero nonetheless. Moreover, he emphasises Cortés’s adventurous character, his courage, his cunning mind, and his admiration for his father: ‘quiero y respeto a nuestro padre’ (78). Conversely, Martín 2, the *mestizo*, is often conflicted by the legacy of his father as seen in his oscillating expressions of love ‘lo quiero’ (99) and resentment ‘debo confesar que me alegraron sus desventuras’ (70). He underlines Cortés’s mundane characteristics such as his sexual potency, as a sarcastic allusion to the way in which the Conquistadors’ seed was spread in the New World. In contrast to his creole brother, his perception of Cortés is also critical as he describes his father as ‘muy colmilludo pero también muy pendejo’ (80). Both siblings stress the paradox of the conquered conquistador, victim to the Imperial legal bureaucracy that aimed to ‘dilatar los negocios hasta que todos se olviden de ellos’ (112-113).

Likewise, Aguilar’s depiction of Cortés in ‘Las dos orillas’ displays praise and criticism for the conquistador. Aguilar describes him as a multifold figure, ‘mezcla deslumbrante de razón y quimera, de voluntad y flaquezas, de escepticismo y de candor fabuloso, de fortuna y mal hado, de gallardía y de burlas, de virtud y maldad’ (19). With this contrasting image of Cortés as a man capable of simultaneously inspiring pity and hatred, admiration and criticism, Fuentes challenges the over-emphasis of Cortés in Spanish historiography and his Manichean depictions.

In Fuentes's works, echoing Erasmus's and Machiavelli's postulates, Cortés's most defining feature is his awareness of being a Renaissance man: 'los conquistadores eran producto de esa campaña [Reconquista], pero también de un individualismo de orientación moderna y de estirpe maquiavélica común a toda Europa renacentista (Fuentes 2008: 182). In 'Los hijos', Martín 1 renders his father a self-made man whom 'se creó un destino propio y se lo creó, pródigo como era, dos veces: un destino de ascenso y otro de descenso' (73). Also echoing O'Gorman's 'invention of America', in the play Cortés presents himself to Marina as a new man, a product of the opportunities created by Columbus's arrival in the New World, which enables him to forge his future: 'el mundo nuevo fue inventado para nosotros, los que no somos nadie' (Fuentes 1971: 47).

The influence of Niccolò Machiavelli's ideas on Renaissance mentality is also perceived in Cortés's insistence on *voluntas*, rather than divine providence, to account for his life and enterprises: 'no era nadie; solo seré lo que haga y ejecute en estas tierras' (105). As such, Fuentes places the Conquest in the individual motivations of its soldiers rather than the official historiographical justifications of religious and political expansion. Indeed, Marina advises Cortés to bear the mask of Quetzalcoatl, imposed on him by the *Mexicas*, to conquer them and also to govern them under his precepts. Nevertheless, Cortés emphatically rejects this idea, due to this perception of self-creation. Furthermore, as the father of the 'first' creole and 'first' *mestizo*, and as representative of Spain, Cortés stands on a symbolic level as the father of Mexico.

In the light of the above, Malintzin mirrors the image of Cortés in both literary pieces and completes this foundational couple. Like Cortés, Malintzin is a controversial figure in Mexican cultural imaginary. Republican and early twentieth-century histories often depict her as a traitor to her nation for helping Cortés. Even today, La Malinche is blamed for the Conquest, and her name is often used as an insult. According to Octavio Paz, 'de ahí el éxito del adjetivo despectivo "malinchista", recientemente puesto en circulación [...] para denunciar a todos los contagiados por tendencias extranjerizantes' (Paz 2008: 95). Fuentes, aware of this cultural debate, offers a literary reassessment of this historical character that recognises her as a founding part of modern Mexico. In doing so, he also echoes twentieth-century revisionist trends on this figure. Indeed, rather than bluntly limiting her role as traitor and translator, Fuentes also explores her dimensions of mother and lover.

In *El naranjo*, Aguilar alludes to Cortés and Marina's sexual relationship as the reason for his displacement as a tongue. *Todos los gatos* contains a romanticisation of this relationship rendering Marina's love for Cortés somewhat motherly. Despite the sexual component, also present in the play, Cortés is often depicted sleeping on her lap, protected by her arms. As seen earlier, instead of Marina's victimisation by portraying her relationship to Cortés merely as a violation, Fuentes represented her help to the Spaniards as a matter of conviction. However, instead of love for Cortés and going beyond her motives of revenge, Fuentes associated her actions with the love and future hopes for her people: 'sé en verdad, la serpiente emplumada; devuelve, en verdad, la unión y la felicidad a este pueblo disgregado y sometido... no devastes este jardín' (Fuentes 1971: 82). As such, Fuentes's depiction of Marina's resolution contrasts with Octavio Paz's characterisation of 'la chingada' as a violation in *El laberinto de la soledad*: 'si la Chingada es una representación de la madre violada, no me parece forzado asociarla a la Conquista, que fue también una violación, no solamente en el sentido histórico, sino en la carne misma de las indias' (Paz: 94). In both accounts, Marina emerges as a tragic hero rather than a traitor as the defeat of Moctezuma only perpetuated the oppression of her people. Therefore, she becomes a victim of her own decisions.

A crucial aspect of Marina's construction in both texts is her role as mother. Indeed, she symbolises the mother of the new Mexicans and the indigenous component of Mexican identity. In 'Los hijos', Martín 2 presents a nostalgic and somewhat idealised image of his mother, who is more often *mentada* as whore in Mexico for helping Cortés. He recognises himself as *mestizo* and blesses Marina, thanking her for his indigenous heritage: 'yo te bendigo mamacita mía. Te agradezco mi piel morena, mis ojos líquidos [...] mis palabras contadas, mis diminutivos y mis mentadas' (Fuentes 2003: 114). This acknowledgment encompasses a revalorisation of the indigenous idiosyncrasy and physical features, which were often undermined since Colonial times. In *Todos los gatos*, Marina's motherhood is synthesised in the birth scene, which is accompanied by an extensive monologue. However, in the play, her son is not the result of rape, as it is she who tells Cortés: 'quiero un hijo tuyo, señor; un hijo de nuestras dos sangres' (Fuentes 1971:105). The baby to be born, presumably Martín Cortés, remains unnamed and symbolises the sons and daughters produced by the encounter of the worlds. Her speech expresses disenchantment towards the Spanish conquistadors, as her utopian hopes of cultural union were betrayed. As such, Marina emphasises that the territory once owned by Native Americans, and currently colonised by the Spaniards belonged to him, and instigates him to reclaim it. In the light of the contemporary

context of the play, she warns him of future colonisation by other powers, instructing him to fight subtlety and actively.

As such, Fuentes's literary portrayal of the conquistador Hernán Cortés and his indigenous lover Malintzin in *El naranjo* and *Todos los gatos* emphasises their problematic historical depiction. His literary construction of these characters seeks to examine their influence on Mexican history, problematizing their portrayal as merely villain or hero, victim or traitor. Besides, he puts forward a more rounded view of these characters and how their particular contexts and cultural mentalities influenced their encounter. In Fuentes's works, both Malintzin and Cortés (America and Spain) symbolise the original couple, representing the core of Mexican identity (*mestizaje*). His literary re-interpretation of these symbolical characters and their traumatic encounter encourages the recognition of the racial and cultural mixture that followed as foundations of modern Mexico. Thus, Fuentes situates the origin of *Mexicanness* in their encounter, not solely in its pre-Hispanic past as emphasised by Republican, post-revolutionary and *indigenista* historical currents.

Fuentes's hypothesis draws on José Vasconcelos's conception of 'raza cósmica', which stresses the cultural and racial mixture as the defining characteristics of Mexico. Scholars have criticised Vasconcelos's take on *mestizaje* due to its totalising and homogenising character. Indeed, Juan Carlos Grijalva identifies Vasconcelos's cultural hypothesis as 'una manera de borrar y desindianizar, de incorporación forzada de los sectores étnicos, antiestéticos, a la hegemonía de la cultura nacional emergente' (Grijalva 2004: 343). Moreover, this critic highlights that 'el discurso utópico del mestizaje afirmado por Vasconcelos borra las crueldades vividas en la historia del colonizado y trivializa el genocidio de la Conquista' (340). It is precisely in these aspects where Fuentes diverges from Vasconcelos in his notion of *mestizaje*. Instead of understating the trauma of the Conquest, he seeks to confront and understand it as an integral part of Mexican identity. Rather than exclusion, Fuentes's *mestizaje* underlined heterogeneity and the contributions of these cultures to *Mexicanness*. Indeed, in *En esto creo* (2002), his inclusive approach is seen in the idea of Indo-afro-ibero America. Fuentes saw the need of modern Mexicans to become reconciled with this past, to finally understand their plural origin and to overcome contemporary social, political and economic challenges.

### 2. 3. 3. **Martín Cortés or The First Generation of Mexicans**

In 'Los hijos', Fuentes explores the first generation of Mexicans through the homonymous sons of the conquistador, Martín Cortés. Despite having the same father, the different racial origin of their mothers determined their dissimilar places and rights in New Spain. These mirrored siblings are built in opposition to each other and represent the racial components of Novohispanic society and Mexican identity. In this *novella*, as a son of Hernán Cortés and Malintzin, Martín 2 embodies their racial and cultural union. Fuentes uses these characters to recreate the aftermath of the Conquest and the foundation of the new colonial society. Contextual features of the creole and *mestizo* mentalities compensate the scarcity of historical information available on both characters.

Martín Cortés Zúñiga, born in Cuernavaca in 1532, went to Spain with his father in 1540. In the Metropolis, he served Kings Carlos I and Felipe II of Spain and fought in the battle of Saint-Quentin (1557) against the Netherlands. He returned to New Spain in 1563 with the titles and honours of his father reinstated by Felipe II (Benítez 1953: 186). He was forced to go back to Spain in 1567 for his trial after the creole conspiracy failed. Banned from returning to the New World, he remained at the Spanish court until his death in 1589.

Fuentes follows Benítez's considerations closely on creole mentality to build Martín 1. In the *novella*, he is portrayed as a vain and selfish man who claims to inherit from his father 'el gusto por las cosas' (Fuentes 2003: 73). Unlike his self-made father, Martín 1's opulence from birth and fear of losing his privileges determines his actions. He refuses to comply with his father's dying wish of returning the land to the natives, considering that 'si lo cumplo me quedo sin nada' (68). His homonymous *mestizo*-brother summarises the creole's hesitant nature: 'le da miedo alzarse con la tierra' (94). According to Benítez, the conquistadors were action-driven people 'pero los criollos, educados en otro ambiente, habían perdido la capacidad de enfrentarse a la áspera realidad y solo heredaron [...] la fascinación por la palabra' (Benítez 1953: 212). Likewise, Martín 1's narration is imbued with nostalgia; he admits only taking pleasure in remembering his past glory (Fuentes 2003: 85). Martín 1 evokes the New Spain of the *república de blancos* (Gachupines and creoles), silencing the subjugated population. Thus, through this figure, Fuentes illustrates the partial perspective that pervaded creole and Republican histories, like Suárez's *Tratado*.

In contrast, Martín 2 presents a more realistic, practical and critical account of the conspiracy and his father's endeavours in New Spain. Benítez highlights that the *mestizo* Martín Cortés

(ca.1523-1595) had been taken away from Marina's custody at an early age and given to Juan de Altamirano. Like his creole brother, the *mestizo* lived in Spain where he was a page to Felipe II and joined the Orden de Santiago. Martín returned to New Spain with his half-brother, but was tortured on the rack and exiled on account of the conspiracy. Covadonga Prieto criticises Fuentes's use of the word *bastardo* to refer to Martín Cortés (*mestizo*), who had been legitimised by the Pope Clement VII. However, Benítez highlights that 'las consideraciones que la Europa de la Edad Media concedía a los hijos naturales, en México les eran negadas' (Benítez 1953: 188). This is also illustrated by the different judicial procedures applied on them for the conspiracy.

Prieto argues that Fuentes's *mestizo* is a historical imprecision given the discrepancy in the biographies of the historical and fictional figures. Indeed, Fuentes's Martín 2 is mainly a symbolical character that conveyed the oppressive situation of the natives and mestizos after the fall of Tenochtitlan, silenced in creole histories. This discursive segregation also evokes the spatial division of the colonial society in republics of *indios* and *blancos*. Thus, the literary Martín 2's perspective encompasses both republics. In addition, it is Martín 2 who instigates his brother to 'alzarse con la tierra' echoing his mother's resolution during the Conquest (Fuentes 2003: 93-94). He also envisions independence considering that 'México es un país nuevo, un país distinto, que no puede ser gobernado desde lejos y a trasmano, como quién no quiere la cosa' (99).

Through Martín 2, Fuentes also discusses the identity of *mestizos*, also drawing on the works of Ramos, Reyes and Paz. Indeed, Fuentes re-works in 'Los hijos' topics such as the inferiority complex and the sentiment of orphanhood that Ramos and Paz considered characteristic of Mexican idiosyncrasy. Martín 2's descriptions of the indigenous population emphasise the biological, cultural and social scars left by the Spanish Conquest and, at the same time, the forging of a new society and language: 'oyendo el nuevo lenguaje secreto que se fraguaba entre el náhuatl y el español, las mentadas de madre secretas, los secretos suspiros' (90). Indeed, Paz associates these linguistic inflexions with a form of resistance and protection of the natives against the colonisers: 'la desconfianza, el disimulo, la reserva cortés que cierra el paso al extraño, la ironía, todas, en fin, las oscilaciones psíquicas [...] son rasgos de gente dominada que teme y que finge ante el señor' (Paz 2008: 49).

Likewise, the absence of the father constitutes a literary trope in Mexican culture and symbolises the national sentiment of orphanhood generated by the Conquest: 'el mexicano no

quiere ser ni indio ni español. Tampoco quiere descender de ellos. Los niega. Y no se afirma en tanto que mestizo sino como abstracción: es un hombre' (Paz: 96). Indeed, Martín 2 reflects on his orphanhood 'preguntándome por mi propia sangre, mi propia ascendencia y mi descendencia' (Fuentes 2003: 91). The *mestizo's* cultural fragmentation frames his binary depiction of Cortés and his resentment towards his father, 'nos abandonó cuando cayó México y mi madre ya no le sirvió para conquistar, antes le estorbó para reinar' (66). If in Fuentes's depictions of the Conquest, Malintzin acquired to an extent the status of conqueror, to echo Alfredo Nava, her children identify themselves as 'hijos de la chingada' in consonance with Paz's dimension of *burla*: 'es verdad que ella se da voluntariamente al conquistador, pero éste, apenas deja de serle útil, la olvida' (Paz 2008: 94). However, in 'Los hijos' Fuentes extends the idea of orphanhood, traditionally associated with the mestizos, to the creoles: Indeed, Martín 1's jealousy of his brother's fictionalised relationship to Malintzin, and his conflictive relationship with his own mother Juana de Zúñiga emphasise his own sense of orphanhood. Thus, despite the privileges held by the creoles, the legal and social (racial) limitations imposed on them by the Crown, as well as the love for their land also fracture their relationship to the Metropolis (Spain). As such, through this symbolic construction of the first Mexicans, Fuentes places the emergence of *Mexicanness* and Mexican nationality in their ironically shared orphanhood.

#### **2. 3. 4. Hispanic and Indigenous Heritage in Mexico**

In sum, Carlos Fuentes's literary works on the Conquest illustrate how his methodological reworking of historical topics and sources, as well as his character-construction, are tied to a semantic revalorisation of this traumatic past. Overall, his literary historicist approach shows the continuities in his writing methodology and the evolution of his reflection on the Conquest as a defining historical event that shaped the contemporary Mexican psyche. The consistent inclusion of historical and cultural interpretations in his polyphonic literary writings illustrates the author's conscious interweaving of information and voices in his semantic re-configuration. His works can be considered an effort to confront and amend the discursive negation of the Hispanic and Indigenous heritages in America in the colonial and republican interpretations of the Conquest: 'la América independiente negó al pasado, indio, africano e ibérico, identificado con el retraso denunciado por la Ilustración (Fuentes 1997: 44). Moreover, if in his literary form Fuentes echoes Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* by juxtaposing diverse narrative voices, he also mirrors Vico's philosophy by analysing (modern) Mexico as the recipient of previous times and cultures, integrating them into his reflection on the past.

However, Fuentes's reassessment of the Hispanic heritage in Mexico, also extends this Vicchian diachronic analysis to medieval Spain, stressing its unique multi-ethnicity. Indeed, the evaluation of the Roman, Arabic and Jewish influence on Hispanic culture and its inheritance in Hispanic-America become a recurrent *motif* in his *oeuvre*. As seen in *Cervantes*, Fuentes's hypothesis was influenced by Américo Castro's (1885-1972) works *España en su historia*, *La realidad histórica de España* and *El pensamiento de Cervantes*. However, the convergent diverse voices, cultures and times in Fuentes's narrative reflect Hispanic American multi-ethnicity, and also echo the theories of Latin American writers like Borges and Carpentier. In particular, Fuentes's literary historicism mirrors Carpentier's notion of the *baroque* as the American writing style *per excellence*.

The complexity of the multi-ethnic background of Spain and by extension Mexico is synthesised by the poetic symbol of the orange tree, which binds the *novellas* in *El naranjo*. Indeed, the orange tree embodies the transplanting of products and customs of the Old World, into the New one. According to Raymond L. Williams in *Los escritos de Carlos Fuentes*, the orange tree is the symbol of Spanish nationality (Williams 2000: 73). Besides, in Bernal Díaz's 1632 edition of *Historia verdadera* he claims to have planted the first orange trees in America:

También quiero decir como yo sembré unas pepitas de naranjas [...] junto a aquella casa sembré siete u ocho pepitas de naranjas que había traído de Cuba, e nacieron muy bien. He traído aquí esto a la memoria para que se sepa que estos fueron los primeros naranjos de que se plantaron en la Nueva-España. (Díaz del Castillo 1985, 1: 105)

Fuentes used this *motif* in *El naranjo*, where the different characters of the *novellas* make a similar claim, and the tree becomes a recurrent image throughout the narration. In 'Las dos orillas', Aguilar states 'yo planté las semillas de un naranjo que venían, junto con un saco de trigo y una barrica de tinto, en el batel que nos arrojó a estas costas' (Fuentes 2003: 46-47). Although the orange tree could be perceived as a symbol of invasion, its Asian origin and introduction to Spain by the Arabs in the tenth century destabilise this association (Herrero 1953: 58). Instead, this tree could also be associated with the initial stage of a racial and cultural mixture (*mestizaje*) in the New World, which incorporates the mixed heritage of the Old World.

### 3. Alejo Carpentier's Literary Historicism in *La aprendiz de bruja* and *El arpa y la sombra*

The Conquest of Mexico and the encounter of the two worlds also emerge as central topics in the *oeuvre* of Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980). Like Fuentes, Carpentier offers a literary reinterpretation of these events and, in doing so, he comments on their historiographical depiction. The recurrence of this *trope* in the works of both authors underlines their use of literature as a vehicle for reflecting on historical themes, contributing to their revision from other writing genres. This chapter explores Carpentier's reflection on the Conquest in his play *La aprendiz de bruja* (1956) and the novel *El arpa y la sombra* (1979) by analysing his recourse to literary historicism in its methodological and semantic aspects. I complement this study by drawing on Carpentier's essayistic production.<sup>15</sup>

The play *La aprendiz* illustrates Carpentier's approach to the interpretation of the Mexican Conquest. From Marina's perspective, this drama stages the arrival of the Spaniards in the coast of Tabasco, their journey to Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the massacre of natives in Cholula, 'La noche triste', the death of Moctezuma, and the first years of colonial settlement after the fall of the Aztec empire. This play is one of Alejo Carpentier's less known works, and it was originally written in French in April 1956. In her prologue to the fourth volume of *Obras completas de Alejo Carpentier*, Graziella Pogolotti stresses that Carpentier wrote this dramatic piece 'en respuesta a la petición de algunos amigos' (Pogolotti in Carpentier 1983: 15). Indeed, Carmen Vásquez states that *La aprendiz* was written in French for the director Jean-Louis Barrault, with whom Carpentier had worked on the adaptation of Cervantes's *El cerco de Numancia* in 1937. Vásquez's 1983 Spanish translation of the play has been published as part of Carpentier's complete-works editions.

There is little literary criticism written on this play. Vásquez's writings on the piece are the closest to its publication date. Her 1986 article 'La aprendiz de bruja, drama en tres actos de Alejo Carpentier' is especially relevant to this analysis given her emphasis on the context in which the play was produced and the sources possibly consulted by Carpentier. The studies of Luisa Campuzano, Ilka Kressner and Bernat Garí are part of a recent wave of criticism on the play. These articles constitute succinct readings embedded in broader topics that compromise

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<sup>15</sup> Due to space constraints and the similarity with which Carpentier treats his historical sources, I will not analyse here *Concierto barroco*. However, I will incorporate aspects of its analysis into the discussion of *La aprendiz* and *El arpa*.

their depth of analysis on *La aprendiz*. Campuzano's 'La historia a contrapelo' is closer to the aims of this dissertation as it examines Carpentier's literary portrayal of the Conquest in his *oeuvre*. However, she focuses on analysing *Concierto barroco* and *El siglo de las luces*. As such, this chapter contributes to widening the critical scholarly production on this theatrical piece.

Published one year before Carpentier's death, *El arpa y la sombra* sums up his novelistic career and literary theories. In this novel, the Cuban author reflects on the initial encounter of the worlds in 1492 and its long-lasting effects through the figure of Christopher Columbus (ca. 1436-1506). The three parts that compose the novel ('El arpa', 'La mano', 'La sombra') explore the life, legacy and historical portrayal of 'El Gran Almirante'. 'El arpa' comprises the first process of beatification of Christopher Columbus initiated by the Pope Pius IX (Giovanni Mastai) during the 1870s. This part is narrated by a literary Mastai who also recalls his travels to South America after the independence of Chile. In 'La mano', a fictional Columbus recalls his past from his deathbed in Seville, which echoes the narrative perspective of Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. Indeed, while waiting for his last unction, the literary Columbus reflects on his life, deeds and writings on the New World. Finally, 'La sombra' portrays Columbus's fictional trial of canonisation, this time set in its second process opened by Leo XIII during the 1890s. The trial is witnessed by Columbus's spirit (El Invisible) and judged by a tribunal of ghostly contemporary and historical figures like Bartolomé de Las Casas, Leon Bloy, Antoine Roselly and Victor Hugo that deny his beatification. Through this novel and this symbolic tribunal, Carpentier discusses the different cultural constructions of this historical figure. Moreover, he emphasises topics like the problem of race and 'limpieza de sangre' in Spain and the institutionalisation of slavery in the Americas.

This chapter follows a similar analytical methodology to the one applied to Fuentes's works on the Conquest. It should be noted that, unlike Fuentes, Carpentier's historicist method appears better illustrated in his earlier productions. For this reason, this topic will be discussed in more depth with regards to the *trope* of Revolution.<sup>16</sup> To sum up, this chapter explores the methodological aspect of Carpentier's literary historicism in *La aprendiz* and *El arpa* by analysing the convergences and divergences with the historiography consulted. Similarly, I study Carpentier's fictional construction of historical figures and the interpretations on the

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<sup>16</sup> Most of Roberto González Echevarría's analyses on Carpentier's works focus on his earlier production. For this reason, the critic's studies are discussed in the second section of this thesis.

Conquest that they convey. The comparison of both authors' literary depictions of historical themes stresses the similarities and differences of their historicist approach, their narrative techniques, the symbolism embedded in their characters and their conception of history and historiography.

### **3. 1. Carpentier's Literary Historicism: the Baroque Style of *La aprendiz de bruja***

In her prologue, Pogolotti states that in *La aprendiz* 'la historia ha sido utilizada como un instrumento, como un sistema de referencias que permiten al espectador desentrañar críticamente el sentido que tiene el comportamiento de sus personajes' (Pogolotti 1983: 19). In contrast to the last statement in *La aprendiz*, history is not merely a background setting for the development of fictional characters and conflicts. Indeed, the reinterpretation of this historical *trope* in Carpentier's play is tied to his literary historicism, which entailed the research and incorporation of previous interpretations to convey a modern understanding of the historical episode. In doing so, Carpentier also highlights the importance of literature in the construction of collective historical memory.

In a similar way to Fuentes's works, in *La aprendiz* and *El arpa* it is possible to identify through explicit inter-textual allusions the majority of the written sources consulted for his literary constructions. Indeed, like in Fuentes's literature, Carpentier's historicist endeavour comprises the author's effort to base his literary accounts on historiographical sources, their inclusion into his writings and his remarks on their documentation. Additionally, Carpentier, like Fuentes, includes overt commentaries on history as a discipline. As such, Carpentier's historicist writing methodology resembles the one found in Fuentes. It is plausible to suggest that this convergence in the authors' approach is related to Carpentier's influence on Latin American writers like Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez.

The first similarity that emerges when contrasting both literary depictions is their use of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera* as their primary historical source of information. Carpentier also explicitly reveals to the readers his use of this chronicle through direct quotations and allusions to Bernal Díaz within the text and plot. Indeed, the description of the main characters in the prologue of *La aprendiz* includes seven citations from Díaz's account with regards to Marina: "fue gran principio para nuestra conquista, y así se nos hacían todas las cosas, loado sea Dios, muy prósperamente. He querido declarar esto porque sin ir doña Marina no podríamos entender la lengua de la Nueva España y México" (Díaz in Carpentier 1983: 28). The selected fragments suggest that Carpentier's main objective in the

play is to emphasise her importance in the Conquest of Mexico. The relationship to this history is confirmed in the third act, which portrays Marina's last dialogue with 'El cirujano' at the time of her death in the town of Oluta. Although he remains a lesser voice throughout the narration, this character is disclosed then as a chronicler, who was writing a history of the Conquest. As illustrated by the following passage the reference to *Historia verdadera* equates Carpentier's literary character with Bernal Díaz del Castillo:

Cirujano: Pienso, señora, que no es corriente que seres mortales como nosotros vivamos una epopeya semejante a la que nosotros hemos vivido. Aquí la gente no piensa más que en enriquecerse. Alguien como yo, que no tenga la disposición de otros quehaceres, tenía que pensar en escribir la *Verdadera historia de la conquista de la Nueva España*. Acepto, que, en este momento, me afano en hacerlo.

Marina: ¿Y relatáis... todo?

Cirujano: Todo lo que mis ojos contemplaron. Sí, señora. (Carpentier 1983: 130)

However, although both authors stress Bernal Díaz's history as their source, due to their consideration of Bernal as the first novelist of the Americas, the inter-textual relationship to his chronicle differs slightly in both accounts. In 'Las dos orillas', we see Fuentes's close paraphrasing of Bernal's history interwoven into his literary narration. Given the dialogical nature of the theatrical genre, in *La aprendiz* we find an active re-working of Bernal's prose. According to Carmen Vásquez, Carpentier could have chosen the theatrical genre 'porque con él podía utilizar más su conocimiento de la lengua [francesa] hablada que el de la escrita' (Vásquez 1986: 70). Nonetheless, Carpentier's play presents a complex mobilisation of diverse historical sources, similar to the one analysed in 'Los hijos'. In her article on *La aprendiz*, Carmen Vásquez points to the multiple sources used in his play:

Es pues indudable que entre las diversas fue[n]tes que sirvieron de documentación para la confección de *La Aprendiz de Bruja* se hayasen [sic] los antiguos códigos y el extraordinario recuento de Sahagún. Otros cronistas fueron también tomados en cuenta, como el propio Hernán Cortés, o como Francisco López de Gómara y Antonio de Solís. De fuente principal, sin embargo, sirvió *Historia de la conquista de Nueva España*, de Bernal Díaz del Castillo, hecho que Carpentier acepta públicamente al citar trozos del celebre cronista a manera de epígrafe y al hacer que éste sea uno de los personajes de su drama. (Vásquez: 56)

As seen in the previous fragment, despite noting Carpentier's use of diverse sources Vásquez argues that Carpentier had preferred to follow Bernal's chronicle on account of his status as a witness. However, Carpentier's conscious insertion of details from Solís's history cannot be overlooked. For this reason, I emphasise in this analysis the way in which Bernal Díaz's and Antonio Solís's accounts are incorporated into Carpentier's play.

Antonio Solís (1610-1686) wrote *Historia de la conquista de México* (1684) after he was named 'Cronista Real de indias' during Felipe IV's reign. Thus, his history can be considered a seventeenth-century official history of the Conquest of Mexico. Robert Brody in 'Bernal's

strategies' highlights Solís's criticism of Díaz's chronicle due to his negative portrayal of Hernán Cortés (Brody 1987: 323). Nonetheless, his historical account is based on the writings of Bernal Díaz, Hernán Cortés and López de Gómara. Solís's criticism can also be associated with Bernal's disapproval in *Historia verdadera* of cabinet historians, like Solís and Gómara, who never travelled to the Americas. According to Sonia Rose, Solís's portrayal of the glory of the Conquest is marked by the decline of the Spanish Empire and his use of history as *Magistra Vitae* (Rose in Chang-Rodríguez 2002: 257-258). Moreover, this Spanish writer was known for theatrical writings such as *Eurídice y Orfeo* (1642) and *La gitanilla de Madrid* (1656). In her analysis of Solís, Rose highlights that 'la conciencia historiográfica moderna niega a la obra de Solís su carácter de historia, aún cuando (o precisamente porque) el juicio sobre sus calidades literarias es positivo' (256).

In addition to Vasquez's considerations, Carpentier's knowledge of Solís's chronicle can be tied to his future short novel *Concierto barroco*, which discusses Vivaldi's opera *Moteczuma* (1733). Indeed, Vásquez's stresses the importance of Solís's history in eighteenth-century musical productions on the Americas: 'esta obra, que en el siglo XVIII había generado otras sobre el tema, volvería a hacerse sentir en *Concierto Barroco* [sic] a través de un importante libreto de ópera' (Vásquez 1991: 129). Moreover, Carpentier's interest in the convergence of literature and history, which he also saw in Bernal's text, might have influenced his decision to encompass this account in his literary representation. The inclusion of Solís's chronicle in *La aprendiz* can also be interpreted as the authors' recourse to concatenate Solís and Bernal's opposing versions, while stressing Bernal's emerging Americanist perspective by privileging his account. These Spanish versions are further contrasted with the vision of the vanquished also encompassed in Carpentier's play.

The four historical episodes of the Conquest enacted in *La aprendiz* mainly follow the information found in Bernal's depiction. Unlike Fuentes, Carpentier does not maintain the chronicler's wording. Instead, the Cuban author incorporates Bernal's general framing details and narrations from other sources, including Solís's history, as a way of representing the encounter of voices and mentalities in the Conquest. In the play, examples of the way in which the information on Bernal's and Solís's accounts is recreated and juxtaposed can be found in the narration of the Massacre of Cholula and Moctezuma's death. In this case, the interventions of the characters condense the information present in Bernal's text with regards to the Spaniards' arrival in Cholula and the discovery of the natives' plot against them. Indeed, Marina's reluctance to go through Cholula, Cortés's strategy in passing through this

city, the natives' growing indifference to the horses and their device of spiked traps to kill them, the atmosphere of tension perceived by the conquistadors, and the change of attitude of the indigenous population against the Spaniards, which were narrated by Bernal, are summarised in the following fragment of the play:

Cortés: Siento que nos amenazan por todos lados.

Aguilar: Doña Marina nos había aconsejado no pasar por Cholula.

Cortés : Aquí nadie mira de frente.

Sandoval: Hice desfilar la caballería por las calles... ¡Pues bien..! Por primera vez miraban todo eso con naturalidad, como quién viera pasar en Toledo la guardia de Carlos V.

Aguilar: Es que los caballos, por desgracia, cuando se ven todos los días, no tienen nada de asombroso.

Marina: Cholula es la plaza más peligrosa que podías encontrar en el camino de México.

Cortés: Por eso mismo quería pasar por aquí... no había que hacerles creer que nos amedrentaban con sus pirámides. (Carpentier 1983: 59-60)

Furthermore, the scene where Marina is approached by a Cholulan 'dama de alta condición' who reveals to her the plot against the conquistadors also appears in the historical and literary depictions. Vásquez considers that Carpentier had extracted this episode from Bernal's account. However, in his literary depiction, Carpentier also includes information from Solís's history when staging this meeting. In particular, Carpentier's theatrical piece stresses the dama's perception of Marina as a slave and her cunning attitude to extract information from this lady, which are also present in Solís's version:

Empezó a condolerse de su esclavitud y a persuadirla: que se apartase de aquellos extranjeros aborrecibles, y se fuese a su casa cuyo albergue le ofrecía como refugio de su libertad. Doña Marina, que tenía bastante sagacidad, confirió esta prevención con los demás indicios y fingiendo que venía oprimida y en contra de su voluntad entre aquella gente, facilitó la fuga [...] Doña Marina (dando a entender que se alegraba de lo bien que tenían dispuesta toda su empresa, y dejando caer algunas preguntas como quién celebraba lo que inquiría) se halló con noticia cabal de toda la conjuración. Fingió, que quería ir en su compañía y con pretexto de recoger sus joyas, y algunas preseas de su peculio hizo lugar para desviarse de ella sin desconfiarla. (Solís 1776: 186-187)

The depiction of Moctezuma's death in the play contains another insertion from Solís's description of the Aztec emperor and his attire into Carpentier's literary character. Indeed, the stage directions emphasise that 'Moctezuma [está] arropado con una túnica verde, con una diadema ciñéndole la frente, grande, majestuoso, casi irreal' (Carpentier: 95). While Bernal did not mention the Emperor's attire, Solís's description of the account emphasises: 'hizose adornar de las vestiduras reales, pidió la diadema y el manto imperial: no perdonó las joyas de los actos públicos' (Solís 1776: 343). However, if Carpentier adopts Solís's image of Moctezuma, he would diverge from the chronicler's portrayal of the Emperor's death. Following Bernal's account, Moctezuma is forced by the Spaniards to address his subjects from the balcony, instead of acting out of his initiative, as Solís refers. Moreover, Carpentier's

Moctezuma is a silent character ‘majestuoso’ or ‘casi irreal’, which contrasts with Fuentes’s criticism of this figure for his passive submission, and his positive depiction of Cuauhtemoc’s bravery in his defence against the Spanish army.

Thus, Carpentier’s *La aprendiz* gives way to the inclusion of other historiographical debates and sources. Such is the case of documents like the Crown’s *Requerimiento*, as well as Cortés’s *Cartas de relación* to Carlos V. Through the critical commentary that accompanies the inclusion of these documents, Carpentier problematizes the malleability of official discourses of legitimisation and the silences produced by them. Indeed, in Olmedo and Marina’s remembrance of Moctezuma, Carpentier incorporates part of this official text by which the conquistadors required the submission of the indigenous population. Moreover, Marina highlights that the Aztec emperor queried the Spanish doctrine as he considered that ‘con tales argumentos era bien fácil apoderarse de los imperios de otros...!’ (Carpentier 1983:105). In the final act of *La aprendiz*, Carpentier alludes to Cortés’s letters and the Crown’s manipulation of the official discourse. Marina hopes that their publication would restore Cortés’s glory and provide a historical justification for her actions. However, her hopes are shattered as the play ends with the reading of a Royal Decree that states: ‘por decreto Real, la lectura de las cartas de Hernán Cortés al Emperador Carlos V se prohíbe en todo el Reino. Todo poseedor de esta obra, cuya edición ha sido destruida, se expone a las más graves sanciones’ (Carpentier: 142). This censorship had been the Crown’s attempt to delegitimise Cortés’s image and avoid incentivising the claims of the first conquistadors of the colonies.

In addition, Biblical references appear recurrently across the play. Carpentier’s reflection on acculturation and the religious rhetoric behind the legitimisation of the Conquest contrasts the official discourse with the fictional individual *motifs* of the conquistadors. Thus, the author uses the religious trope to erect an ironical commentary on the subsequent enslavement of the natives through the *encomienda*. Through this cultural source and *Amadís de Gaula* the author explores the Spanish mentality of the epoch, as will be examined through the characters’ construction. In *La aprendiz*, the religious allusions, in the voice of Spanish characters, include references to the Divine Providence, theological doctrines, quotations of prayers, and official discourses adopted by the Church.

Carpentier underlines the religious *trope* through the prominence that he grants to the fictional Bartolomé de Olmedo, the Mercedarian friar in Cortés’s expedition. While Bernal Díaz

mentions this friar sporadically in his chronicle, Antonio Solís emphasises his role in the Conquest. Carpentier's use of Olmedo throughout the play seeks to enact Catholic rites and propel a discussion on the religious indoctrination of the natives, represented by Marina. In addition, the author's persistent identification of Cortés's as Josué and Marina as Rahab could have been triggered by Bernal's allusion to the biblical story in his account. Indeed, the chronicler alludes to the biblical narrative, when Marina returns to Oluta and forgives her mother and brother for selling her as a slave, noting: 'y esto me parece que quiere remedar a lo que acaeció con sus hermanos en Egipto a Josef, que vinieron a su poder cuando lo del trigo' (Díaz del Castillo 1985, 1: 159). In *La aprendiz*, Carpentier stresses the Christian mythology associated with Marina to illustrate the imposition of Western religious imaginaries on the indigenous population. As will be furthered in due course, I disagree with Carmen Vásquez's interpretation on this respect. She argues that Carpentier's recourse to this biblical myth is tied to his interpretation of Marina as a whore: 'es decir, si por voluntad propia Cortés es asociado con Josué y Marina con Rajab, entonces esta última, para utilizar el término bíblico, es una "ramera"' (Vásquez 1986: 60).

In *La aprendiz*, the incorporation of theological debates that followed the Conquest appears in Olmedo's equation of Quetzalcoatl to the Apostle Saint Thomas: 'ese rey tuyo expulsado por los malvados no es otro que el Apóstol Santo Tomás' (Carpentier 1983: 60). The Franciscan missionary Andrés de Olmos proposes this juxtaposition of pre-Hispanic Mexican mythology and Christian narrative in his *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios*. Their association was subsequently defended by the Franciscan order and incorporated into colonial (Sigüenza y Góngora) and republican (Servando Teresa de Mier) historiography. As Carpentier, through Olmedo refers 'es la tesis que defenderá la iglesia [...] El Apóstol había enseñado la verdadera fe pero, después de su partida, los indios volvieron a caer en manos del Demonio' (60). This syncretic hypothesis, which attempted to unite the two worlds by associating Christian figures to Aztec deities, became a standard technique of acculturation. Besides, the depiction of indians as pagans who had lost their way from Christianity also served political purposes. While in theory the natives had been recognised as humans and could not be enslaved, their re-indoctrination also fostered the paternalistic structure of the colonial society, legitimising Spanish power over the indigenous people and territories.

*La aprendiz* constitutes Carpentier's literary revision of Marina's relevance in the conquest, overshadowed by historical accounts and the cultural condemnation of 'Malinchismo'. Indeed, the title of the play and the quotations from Díaz's history place emphasis on

Marina's perception. Like Fuentes's play, the opening of *La aprendiz* on the shores of Tabasco portrays the expectations of the natives with regards to the unknown shining 'hives' on the ocean. 'El hombre del espejo' stresses that 'hace ya dos años que esas rocas en movimiento, esos castillos, esas colmenas, venidos de no se sabe dónde, aparecieron por primera vez' (32). Indeed, the first act is based on native accounts. Carpentier's descriptions echo the information and language found in indigenous depictions. Such is the case of the bearded beings and 'demonios negros' that inhabited the 'hives' or 'floating rocks', Cortés's association with Quetzalcoatl, Moctezuma's interrogation of sorcerers, merchants and fishermen, and of the omens of the 'columna de llamas' and the bird with the mirror. The original publication-date of *La aprendiz* suggests that Carpentier's account follows the works of Sahagún and Ángel María Garibay, rather than Portilla. Carpentier might have gained access to these sources in his travels to post-revolutionary Mexico and through his friends José Orozco and Diego Rivera (Vásquez 1986: 55). Indeed, the author constantly referenced Mexican pre-Hispanic art, mythology and heritage in his journalistic and essayistic works: 'las cosmogonías americanas, ahí está el *Popol Vuh*, ahí están los libros del *Chilam Balam*, ahí está todo lo que se ha descubierto, todo lo que se ha estudiado recientemente a través de los trabajos de Ángel Garibay, de Adrián Recinos' (Carpentier 2003: 77).

Carpentier's depiction of Marina demonstrates his knowledge of Mexican codices: 'en el segundo acto se envolverá con una ancha capa drapeada que le da mucha amplitud a sus movimientos, tal y como nos la presentan los códices mexicanos' (Carpentier, 1983: 29). The codices alluded in the stage-directions could be the Codices Mendoza and Códice Matritense, which the author referenced in 'El arte mexicano' in *Letra y Solfa*: 'creo haber sido el primero en hacer publicar por revistas francesas, páginas enteras del Códice Mendocino y del Códice Matritense' (Carpentier 1993: 35). Indeed, Carpentier's depiction of Marina concurs with the pictorial narrative in these codices, where her figure dominates the scenes, stressing her role and importance in the view of the native historian. Gordon Brotherston highlights that the indigenous sources written by allied tribes of Cortés, like the *Mapa de Tepetlán* (1551), place the emphasis on Marina since 'todo el encuentro se centra en el diálogo entre ella y Toltecatl, [son] las figuras más grandes en la escena y los únicos que tienen volutas verbales delante de la boca. Mientras tanto, sentado a un lado y con la cabeza vuelta a Malintzin, Cortés parece casi un observador' (Brotherston 1994:18).

As such, Carpentier's literary historicism in his portrayal of the Conquest is built from the amalgamation of information extracted from diverse sources. If his historical framework is

taken from Bernal, Carpentier includes other historical and cultural accounts to enrich his depiction and foster a modern critical interpretation of this historical event that encompassed contemporary and previous perspectives on the American/European encounter. Indeed, the Conquest depicted by Carpentier surpassed Cortés's journey and considered its consequences. The anachronisms in his literary reinterpretations were strategically used to reflect on these cumulative perspectives of the Conquest, echoing Vico's conception of history.

Moreover, like in Fuentes's play, Carpentier's depiction of the Conquest stresses the formation of the new society and hybrid imaginaries propelled by the encounter of the worlds and their mentalities, as synecdoche of the same phenomenon across the American continent. Indeed, the religious syncretism fostered by acculturation and the initial indoctrination practices are at the centre of Carpentier's theory on the Baroque as the definitive style of America. Although the Cuban writer highlights the presence of the Baroque in pre-Hispanic art, it was with the arrival in America of the Spaniards and the African slaves imported by them that the continent became the space of *mestizaje*. As noted by Vásquez, in *La aprendiz*, Carpentier underlines the presence of the African component through the character of the black jester Guidela who 'con su aspecto ridículo, simboliza la llegada de los negros en el recién descubierto continente' (Vásquez 1986: 59). It should be stressed that the play had initially been written specifically for the French public, which points to Carpentier's didactic aim. Indeed it could be suggested that he was interested in presenting an Americanist perspective, in contrast to the European renderings of American themes like Vivaldi's *Moctezuma*. Moreover, Carmén Vásquez stresses the ties between the topic of the play and the author's present context, claiming that in his theatrical depiction of the Conquest, he had aimed to draw a parallel between the Conquest in the Americas and the European war context of the mid-1940s.

### **3. 1. 1. Deviation from the Sources in *La aprendiz***

The previous examples illustrate how Carpentier juxtaposed *motifs* present in his historical sources in the creation of a more inclusive account of the Conquest. Therefore, the intertextuality established to these sources is used to convey the clashes and ironies of the encounter of both worlds that determined the baroque idiosyncrasy of America. However, like in Fuentes's interpretations, Carpentier's literary portrayal of Catalina Suárez's death also illustrates the writer's marked deviations from the historical narrative. As seen earlier, Suárez de Peralta attributed her death to 'mal de madre', while Bernal Díaz to 'asma'. In consonance with the historical narrative, Carpentier's play places her death soon after her arrival in New

Spain. Moreover, like Fuentes, Carpentier stresses the ambiguity of her death, to suggest it was a murder. Indeed, after Catalina is found dead in her bedchamber, Olmedo's commentaries plant the doubt in the reader:

Olmedo: Nuestro Te Deum será ahora un Requiem!

[bajando la voz]

¡Un trabajo excelente!

Sandoval: Pero.. ¿Quién?

Olmedo: ¡Nadie...! El corazón. Digamos: anemia. Estas altitudes no le convienen a todo el mundo, ¿No es verdad...? [...]

Olmedo: Mira Sandoval [...] Basta con aceptar algunos compromisos; se firma el pacto. No hay necesidad de pincharse la vena con la pluma de ganso. (Carpentier 1983: 126-127)

As seen in this fragment, Olmedo is determined to cover Catalina's murder due to the legal repercussions it could bring to Cortés, from his position of power as representative of the Church in Mexico.

Although the historical Cortés faced trial for this murder, given the accusations of Suárez's family against him, the Spanish court absolved him. Carpentier notes that the conquistador had been accused 'de cuantas fechorías sean posibles: malversación de entradas de la corona, mala administración, juicios arbitrarios, desobediencias de todo tipo' (136). Nonetheless, in *La aprendiz*, Carpentier postulates Marina as the culprit of this murder, a hypothesis that is not found in historical accounts of the event. Indeed, both Olmedo and Cortés accuse Marina of Catalina's death. For instance, Cortés tries to extract her confession through physical aggression:

Cortés: Dime la verdad...

Marina: ¿Quizás tu la conoces?

Cortes: ¿Tú...?

Marina: ¿Por qué...?

Cortés [Torciéndole la muñeca] ¡Confiesa!

Marina: [Prestándole la otra muñeca] : Puesto que estás en esas tuerce las dos.

Cortes: [soltándola]: ¡Confiesa!

Marina: ¡No tienes la fuerza de antes...! Has engordado.

Cortés: ¿Por qué merodeabas por al jardín hace un rato?

Marina: "Merodear"- otra palabra nueva que aprendo. Ahora que no sirvo para nada, "merodeo" por todas partes. Me cierran las puertas en las narices. Se desconfía de quienes merodean. [...]

Cortes: ¿Querías deshacerte de este personaje que tanto estorbaba...? ¿Volver a ser la mujer del Capitán...?

Marina: ¿No hubiese sido un trabajo inútil para quién se sabe malvendida a un valiente señor con el noble propósito de alejarla para siempre de aquí?

Cortes: No sabías nada hace un momento.

Marina: ¿Qué sabes tú? (Carpentier: 123)

Moreover, in the last scene that portrays Marina's death, Olmedo asks her persistently to confess her sin: 'no os dejéis llevar por vuestras propias palabras y contestadme: ¿Quién mató a Doña Catalina Juárez...?' (139). Indeed, Olmedo's insistence on her crime and Marina's deflections of his questions bring attention to this hypothesis. Although Carpentier's literary

version leaves the question of Suárez's murder open to the reader, it suggests an alternative version to the one found in historical sources, while also emphasising the natives' agency in history.

### **3. 1. 2. Carpentier's Literary Historicism in *El arpa y la sombra***

In *El arpa y la sombra*, Carpentier explores the encounter of the worlds through the historical character of Columbus and his arrival in America. Indeed, the author expressed the relevance of this historical juncture in 'La cultura de los pueblos que habitan en las tierras del mar Caribe' (1979), where he renders the encounter as 'el acontecimiento más importante de la historia. Porque existe en la historia universal un hombre anterior al descubrimiento de América y un hombre posterior al descubrimiento de América' (Carpentier 2003: 91). As suggested by this statement, Carpentier considers that Columbus's arrival in America had dramatically changed the understanding of the world for the European societies of the Renaissance, as well as shaping the future relationships between the newly found territories. If *La aprendiz* illustrates the author's engagement with historical sources at the beginning of his writing career, *El arpa* sums up the evolution of his literary historicist prose, emphasising his critical view on historical narratives.

Indeed, this novel goes beyond the portrayal of the historical event itself and builds a critical argument on the artifice behind historical discourses and depictions. According to Julio Zárate, 'Carpentier recupera el momento histórico del descubrimiento de América y al mismo tiempo plantea un cuestionamiento de la vida y los viajes de Cristóbal Colón' (Zárate 2015: 42). As such, through the contrast of Columbus's official documents and the historiography produced on him from the sixteenth century onwards, the novel proposes a literary revision of this historical tradition of interpretation. Moreover, due to the revisionist scope of his novel, Carpentier's use of and reference to previously written sources multiplies exponentially and features histories, biographies, literary and cultural works about Columbus or used by him. Therefore, I will only emphasise illustrative examples of the methodological re-working and incorporation in Carpentier's novel of his main sources, namely, the works of Paul Claudel, Antoine Roselly, León Bloy and Christopher Columbus. The construction of the figure of Columbus, which becomes central to the author's argument and shapes his historicist methodology, will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

In *El arpa*, the first characteristic of Carpentier's historicist method that strikes the reader is the clear introduction of sources in the form of direct quotations and references in the novel.

This inter-textual resource points to the abundance of bibliography consulted and mobilised into his literary depiction. Indeed, if in *La aprendiz* we see how the author conveys the information on the sources and rarely includes biblical quotations, in *El arpa* this overt direct inter-textuality becomes constant. The author uses italics to mark cited passages, underlining the change of voice to the readers. Such is the case of Carpentier's quotation in Latin from the nomination of Columbus for beatification to the Sacred Congregation of Rites: '*nullum profecto eventum extitit aut praeclarius, aut utilius incredibili ausu Januensis nautae Christophori Columbi, qui omnium primus inexplorata horrentiaque oceani aequora pertransiens*' (Carpentier 1979: 16). This technique is accompanied by Carpentier's increasing use of footnotes to include specific indications of his sources and translations of his citations. These narrative resources display his conscious use of historical sources, languages and narratives and the intricate way in which they were amalgamated in his literary writings. Moreover, his historicist methodology resembles Bakhtin's polyphony and *heteroglossia* stressing the pertinence of analysing his literature in view of the Russian theorist's postulates.

The French biographies written by Antoine Roselly de Lorgues (1805-1898), *Historia de Cristóbal Colón y de sus viajes* and León Bloy (1846-1917) *Le Révélateur du Globe* (1884), as well as Paul Claudel's drama *Le Livré de Christophe Colomb* (1935) become central in Carpentier's novel. These three documental sources on Columbus simultaneously structure *El arpa* and are meta-textually discussed by Carpentier. The two beatification processes on Columbus opened in the nineteenth century at the Vatican served as thematic and structural *motifs* in Carpentier's novel and are critically portrayed in the first and third parts of the story. Indeed, his use of Roselly's and Bloy's biographies is directly tied to their use as sources of historical authority in the trial of Columbus's sainthood. Moreover, Carpentier's revisionism on this historical figure is directed at their biased interpretation of the 'Gran Almirante', questioning the historical interpretation on Columbus, while stressing the use of history for political purposes. Julio Zárate considers that in 'El arpa' 'El juicio está abierto y Carpentier deja una pregunta implícita: ¿Pueden la historia o el historiador equivocarse?' (Zárate 2015: 45). Conversely, beyond a mere question, Carpentier's novel offers an argument using Columbus's figure on the malleability of history.

Indeed, in 'El arpa', Carpentier frames Pius's IX proposal to beatify Columbus as a political act as 'lo ideal [...] para compactar la fe Cristiana en el viejo y nuevo mundo, hallándose un antídoto contra las venenosas ideas filosóficas que demasiados adeptos tenían en América, sería un santo ecuménico' (Carpentier 1979: 43). Carpentier also renders Mastai's travels to

Chile, by invitation of the Republican Bernardo O'Higgins, as a political strategy to avoid a possible Spanish retaliation after independence (25). Moreover, the literary Mastai recalls having commissioned the Catholic writer Antoine Rosselly to write 'una verídica historia de Cristóbal Colón, a la luz de los más modernos documentos e investigaciones hechas acerca de su vida' (46). Indeed, Roselly's biography of Columbus includes the letters of Pope Pius IX, referred by Carpentier. In addition, 'La sombra' echoes León Bloy's work, which had also been written to support the Admiral's beatification. These characteristics set the ironic tone of *El arpa*, staging Columbus's literary portrayal against official versions.

Roselly's and Bloy's works are problematized through the recreation of the trial of beatification in 'La sombra'. As Roselly had 'muerto pocos años antes' (178), the merchant José Baldi becomes his postulator citing continuously Roselly's account: "*Colón fue un santo; un santo ofrecido allí donde el demonio era rey*" (194). Carpentier's fictional Bloy also defends Columbus's beatification, quoting from his book *Le révélateur*: "*pienso en Moisés, porque Colón es revelador de la Creación, reparte el mundo entre los reyes de la tierra, habla a Dios en la Tempestad y los resultados de sus plegarias son el patrimonio de todo el género humano*" (180). Bloy's and Roselly's biblical framing of Columbus is made clear in the former quotes, stressing their biased construction. Indeed, both biographies highlight Columbus's personal and historical merits such as his Christian devotion and measured character, as well as the service to the church in the Americas. Moreover, Baldi's (Roselly) voice is considered as a 'voz dulzona y conciliadora' (188). Conversely, Carpentier's parodic depiction of Bloy is characterised by his loud and hysterical interventions often accompanied by exclamation marks. Moreover, Carpentier's resort to verbs like *rugir*, *bufar* and *aullar* in his description of Bloy stresses his animal-behaviour to ridicule his arguments: 'ruge León Bloy en la selva de sus barbas' (184).

Klaus Müller-Bergh and Sonja Steckbauer study in detail the inter-textual relationship in Carpentier's text to Paul Claudel's theatrical drama on Columbus. Carpentier worked alongside Claudel in the production of a radio-phonic adaptation of *Le Livre de Christophe Colomb* in the 1930s (Müller-Bergh 1987: 171). Following these critics, it is possible to find *motifs* and topics in Carpentier's novel that echo Claudel's depiction. For instance, Steckbauer notes Claudel's unfolding of Columbus in two characters: 'el Colón uno llamado "Colomb sur la scène", quien es el personaje histórico, y el Colón dos "sur le proscenium" un Colón contemporáneo quien puede recontemplar sus actos y hasta discutirlos en la escena con el Colón uno desde un punto de vista actual' (Steckbauer 1999: 51). Although she stresses the

timelessness of Carpentier's character, it is clear that a dual dimension structures *El arpa*, as the three parts of the novel underscored the division between the historical character and his historiographical construction. Both perspectives converge in 'La sombra', which features the shade of Columbus witnessing and commenting on four hundred years of accumulative historiography on him.

Müller-Bergh also highlights the topical convergences between the literary accounts of both authors. Indeed, in 'La mano', Carpentier's follows Claudel's depiction by setting the biographical reflection of his literary Columbus on his deathbed while waiting for his last confession. Moreover, this critic stresses themes that are treated similarly in both accounts such as the attribution of slavery to Columbus (Müller-Bergh: 174), a discussion on cannibalism in the New World (177) and the 'portrayal of the discoverer as lacking in originality' (174). The latter refers to Columbus's alleged knowledge of worlds to the west of the Atlantic prior to his voyage. According to Müller-Bergh 'L'Ombre', a phantasmagorical character created by Claudel, corresponds in Carpentier's text to 'El Invisible' (178). These examples illustrate Carpentier's transposition of themes, techniques and characters from *Le Livre* into his revised interpretation to ultimately subvert Claudel's portrayal.

Carpentier's 'La mano' also features Columbus's writings, including his diaries, *relaciones*, personal correspondence and will. The inter-textual techniques, characteristic of Carpentier's literary historicism, are accompanied in this part by an increasing meta-textuality. Indeed, the confessional aspect of the episode is marked by the character's reflection on his writings 'y observándome a mí mismo a través de lo escrito hace años, noto mirando atrás cómo se va operando una diabólica mutación en mi ánimo' (Carpentier 1979: 144). Allusions to the presence of Columbus's texts under the character's pillow, and comments that underline the acts of writing or reading, critically stress the positionality behind these writings: 'vuelvo a tomar la pluma y sigo redactando mi Repertorio de Buenas Nuevas, mi Catálogo de relucientes pronósticos' (117). Columbus's writings also contain meta-textual reflections, whether inscribed by Las Casas, editor of his travel journal –'dice aquí el Almirante que no se quiso detener barloventeando la semana pasada' (Colón: 47)– or by Columbus himself '¿Quién creyera lo que yo aquí escribo?' (373). The former glosses point to the manipulation behind the written information, stressing the artifice of these accounts.

It is interesting to note that the study performed in this thesis, resembles, in a way, the author's textual analysis of Columbus's documents in *El arpa*, which features recurrent

remarks on their inter-textuality: ‘no solo he leído atentamente a Marco Polo, cuyos relatos de viaje he notado de mi puño y letra. Pero mucho he leído también a Juan de Monte Corvino’ (Carpentier 1979: 105). Carpentier also echoes Columbus’s disregard for geographers, and the credit given to the Holy Scriptures and prophecies for his discoveries in *El libro de las profecías*: ‘ya dije que para la ejecución de la empresa de las indias no me aprovechó razón ni matemática ni mapamundos: llenamente se cumplió lo que dijo Isaías’ (Colón 1892: 333). Columbus’s citations of Seneca’s verses in Medea become a recurrent prophetic *motif* in *El arpa*:

“*Venient annis  
Saecula seris quibus Oceanus  
vinculat rerum laxet et ingens  
Pateat tellus Tiphisque novos  
Detegat Orbes nec sit terries  
Ultima Tille*” (Seneca in Colón 1892: 341-342)

In addition, *El arpa* reflects on Columbus’s narration of the New World and the challenges of naming the unknown and underscores the overwhelming references to ‘gold’ in his writings: ‘y a partir de ese día la palabra ORO será la más repetida, como endemoniada obsesión, en mis Diarios, Relaciones y Cartas’ (Carpentier 1979: 113). These contrast with the limited biblical allusions in his account. In particular, Carpentier notes Columbus’s proclivity for referencing passages from the Old Testament –Solomon, Moses and Isaiah– to suggest his Jewish heritage and characterise him as a ‘marrano’: a converted Jew into Christianity. Both Fuentes and Carpentier stress Columbus’s Semitic origin in their fictional portrayals: a hypothesis that has been increasingly discussed since the mid-twentieth century. However, it is likely that Carpentier was following Salvador Madariaga’s conclusion on Columbus’s Sephardic origin. Carpentier’s reflections on Columbus’s written words are tied to his depiction as liar, emphasising the fictional construction of his persona from his writings. However, this will be analysed further in the next part of the chapter.

Finally, it is important to take into account in Carpentier’s later literary historicism the role of Carmen Vásquez as his ‘investigadora’ from the late 1970’s onwards. She describes this job as ‘mi nuevo oficio, lleno de luces, que iba a ser el de buscar en archivos, el de investigar, en la Biblioteca Nacional de París’ (Vásquez 2005: 243). Apart from the translation of *La aprendiz*, her critical works focus on the documental basis of Carpentier’s writings as seen in her article ‘Las ficciones carpenterianas y sus fuentes españolas’ (2005). Carpentier’s choice to hire a researcher in his later years stresses the author’s consistent historicism and sheds light on his methodology. A concrete example of documents given to Vásquez by Carpentier

is the following *folium* of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1978 included as an annex in ‘Las ficciones’, which details her investigation with regards to Tristan and Isolde. In particular, it is possible to underscore Carpentier’s specificity in his requests that show a prior knowledge of these sources, as well as hint to the expected outcome of this research and, thus, the objective behind this documentation: ‘en fin, rasgos que muestren cómo el idílico mito céltico se ha transformado, en España, en una novela apasionada, realista y brutal’. This document illustrates the practical aspect of Carpentier’s historicist approach at the end of his career, while stressing the need to verify the conveyed information.

ALEJO CARPENTIER

12 de Febrero- 78.

Carmen:  
BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL.

*Rivadensira* Ver si tienen la colección completa de los clásicos españoles de Ribaldeneira. U otra semejante.

Buscar el texto de una novela publicada en España entre 1520 y 28, que es versión española de la historia de "Tristán e Isolda".

El título debe ser: "El Caballero Tristán de Leonís y la blonda Iseo y el grande amor que se tuvieron", o algo así. O tambien "Iseo la Blonda".

Hay un romance, sobre este tema. Pero el romance no me interesa.

BUSCAR en la novela, pasajes crudamente realistas, como una carta de Iseo al Caballero en la cual, si bien recuerdo, lo agobia con los peores insultos, y creo que hasta lo amenaza con castrarlo.

En fin: rasgos que muestren cómo el idílico mito céltico se ha transformado, en España, en una novela apasionada, realista y brutal.

- - - - -

OTRA - Con motivo del Salon de Mayo de 1967 (o, a mas tardar, 1968), una foto que salió en "Le Nouvel Observateur", de gran tamaño (tres columnas) donde aparezo junto a Malraux, mostrándole una escultura cubana. ¿Podria tenerse de ella una buena reproducción?...Averiguar, tal vez quien fué el fotografo.

Figure 1: Vázquez, Carmen. ‘Appendix’ in ‘Las ficciones carpenterianas y sus fuentes bibliográficas españolas’, in *Alejo Carpentier y España*, 2005, p. 269.

In the reading of *La aprendiz* and *El arpa* above, I have identified some of the written sources used by Carpentier in the construction of his fictions. Moreover, I have demonstrated the methods used by him to re-work historical accounts into his literary depictions. Indeed, the methodological approach of both authors is comparable as it features the literal transposition of fragments and information taken from these sources into their fictional writings. In both authors, this recourse becomes an emulation of Bakhtin’s concept of *heteroglossia*. On the

one hand, in *La aprendiz* the amalgamation of diverse sources mirrors the syncretism of imaginaries that, in Carpentier's view, shape the baroque mentality of the Americas. On the other hand, his explicit polyphony in *El arpa* embodies the creation of a diachronic reflection that comprises four hundred years of historical interpretations on Columbus, which unites Bakhtin's and Vico's postulates on culture and history.

### **3. 2. Carpentier's Semantic Historicism: Reassessing Historical Characters**

Like in Fuentes's works, Carpentier's methodological historicism in his portrayal of the Conquest is tied to its semantic revaluation from twentieth-century contexts. Indeed, his arguments on this historical event and his significant divergence from historical sources can be illustrated through the construction of his characters. Given that both authors chose to portray similar events from the past, their depictions feature the creation of similar figures. Nonetheless, their viewpoints shape their understanding of the topic and the arguments they brought forward. Thus, I examine in this chapter Carpentier's literary figures *vis-à-vis* their historiographical depiction, and in comparison to Fuentes's portrayal. Firstly, I explore Carpentier's critical commentary on the artificial construction of the historical Columbus's through the subversion of historiographical accounts. Secondly, to continue with the analytic structure of mirrored characters, I assess Carpentier's argument on acculturation through Marina and Aguilar. Finally, I analyse Carpentier's portrayal of Cortés and Marina as symbols of the general defeat that the Conquest brought to natives and conquistadors (vanquished and victors), as well as the author's victimisation of Marina. The former portrayal contravenes the notion of the Spanish soldiers as victors, for the Spanish Crown had also subdued them.

#### **3. 2. 1. Christopher Columbus: the Conquistador-Descubierto and Descubridor-Conquistado**

In *El arpa*, Carpentier's historicism and *heteroglossia* are strategically used to build a literary argument that subverts the hagiographic depiction of Columbus in the French accounts of Claudel, Roselly and Bloy. It can be suggested that Carpentier echoes their perception of Columbus to debunk it by confronting the *black* and '*aurea*' legends on him through the portrayal of his beatification trial. Moreover, these binary trends are mediated by the inclusion of Columbus's self-representation through his writings, adding another discursive layer to his

fictional reinterpretation. Indeed, according to Julio Zárate ‘Carpentier presenta un doble juicio, personal e histórico, ambos implacables pero distintos en cuanto a su alcance y en cuanto a la forma en la que Colón es presentado’ (Zárate 2015: 42). Thus, in *El arpa* the main deviation from the sources is semantic, as the texts are incorporated to unveil the character’s mythical construction in these accounts, radically altering this official narrative promoted by the highest authorities of the Catholic Church.

Indeed, Carpentier’s character is built against the hagiographic discourse of the ‘impugnadores de la leyenda negra’ (186), through the parody of their mystification of Columbus. As mentioned earlier, José Baldi echoes Roselly’s arguments, which are described by El Invisible as a ‘cuadro de excelencias, de virtudes, de varonil piedad, de generosidades, de desprendimiento y de grandeza interior’ (Carpentier 1979: 179) that could award him sainthood. Moreover, Carpentier emphasises Roselly’s and Bloy’s comparison of the historical figure with biblical characters like Noah, Abraham and Moses ‘*otorgándole el supremo título de embajador de Dios*’ (180). The French writer’s manipulation of Columbus’s biography to comply with the requirements for his beatification is underlined by the miracles attributed to him. In agreement with Roselly, Baldi highlights ‘que los milagros de Colón fueron de *una índole distinta a los demás milagros. Digamos que no están ubicados; que son universales*’ (182). They stressed as part of Columbus’s miracles the discovery of the New World and the salvation of the natives’ souls by introducing the Christian message: ‘había arrancado a miles y miles de indios de las tinieblas de sus idolatrías’ (179). Moreover, Carpentier conveys Friedrich Schiller’s poetic depiction of Columbus to underscore his aptitudes for cosmography and to posit him as chosen by the Divine Providence to carry out his discovery: ‘*que si lo que buscas no ha sido creado aún, Dios lo hará surgir del mundo de la nada a fin de justificar tu audacia*’ (184).

Carpentier confronts these versions to the arguments set against Columbus by the creators of the *black legend* of the Conquest. During the fictional trial, the counter-arguments are guided by El Abogado del Diablo and mainly include the testimonies of Bartolomé de las Casas, Jules Verne and Victor Hugo. These characters built the case against Columbus’s sainthood on three main arguments. Firstly, the notion of ‘Discovery’ itself is questioned by Hugo and Verne who argue that ‘si Cristóbal Colón hubiese sido un buen cosmógrafo, jamás habría descubierto el Nuevo Mundo’ (184). The myth of the ‘huevo de colón’ referred by Girolamo Benzoni is also alluded in order to undermine the Admiral’s nautical achievements. However, the emphasis of the debate is placed on Bartolomé de las Casas’s testimony and the discussion

‘sobre el hecho que Colón *instituyó* la esclavitud en el Nuevo Mundo’ (185). El Invisible’s reaction to Las Casas’s name, reveals the impact that his testimony would have in the trial: ‘Ahora sí que me jodí’ (186). Indeed, the literary Las Casas highlights Columbus’s letters to his brother on this regards, adding ‘*tengo por seguro que [...] el hubiese acabado en muy poco tiempo de consumir a todos los pobladores de estas islas porque tenía determinado de cargar de ellos los navíos que le viniesen de Castilla y de las Azores, para que se vendieran como esclavos*’ (189).

The trial concludes with Alphonse de Lamartine’s biography of Columbus in regards to ‘sus malas costumbres y a su hijo bastardo’ (190). Indeed, the discussion on Columbus’s natural son with Beatriz, Fernando Colón, determines the refusal of his beatification and resumes the fictional trial ‘se retienen dos grandes cargos contra el postulado de Colón: uno, gravísimo, de concubinato [...] y otro no menos grave, de haber iniciado y alentado un incalificable comercio de esclavos, vendiendo en mercados públicos, varios centenares de indios capturados en el Nuevo Mundo’ (194). In agreement with the analysis of Zárte and Ezquerro, in Carpentier’s account the cause against Columbus resides in his slavery project: ‘el pecado imperdonable era el otro, formulado desde el inicio por Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, y que ningún ‘mestizo de dos mundos’ podría olvidar’ (Ezquerro 2012: 251-252). Nevertheless, the slavery impugned at the tribunal is that of American natives and not the black-slave trade, which stresses the hypocrisy of Las Casas’s testimony. Indeed, he had encouraged the African slave trade to the Americas, which marked the cultural and historical development of the continent. Moreover, the topic of slavery, the introduction of slaves from Africa and their cultural contributions in America are a central theme in Carpentier’s *oeuvre*. The trial in *El arpa* recalls the binary historiographical tradition on Columbus, to expose his cumulative artificial construction and the use of history as a legitimising discourse.

If the trial echoes the historical rendering of Columbus, Carpentier complements this critical argument on his persona and legacy through his literary character. The comments of El Invisible in ‘La sombra’ while witnessing his trial, stress the irony of these discourses by subverting their solemn character. Indeed, he is touched by Baldi’s description of his life, ‘ante la prueba de que poseía poderes sobrenaturales, de los cuales jamás hubiese tenido idea’ (Carpentier 1979: 179). Carpentier’s representation of the Admiral in ‘La mano’ constitutes the longest part of the novel and is built from Columbus’s writings, stressing the documental basis of his interpretation. In this section, Carpentier parodies the virtues attributed to the historical Columbus in the French accounts by building his figure against this portrayal,

characterising him as a sinner: ‘de los pecados capitales, uno solo me fue siempre ajeno: el de la pereza’ (55). Indeed, the hyperbolic depiction of these vices in *El arpa* contrasts with his hagiographic rendering.

The first vice that Carpentier’s Columbus acknowledges is being a liar, a characteristic that defines him in the novel: ‘por ello me resolví a recurrir a la mentira, al embuste, al perenne embuste en el que habría de vivir [...] desde el nueve de septiembre en el que acordé contar cada día menos leguas de las que andábamos porque si el viaje era luengo no se espantase ni se desmayase la gente’ (97). Carpentier’s literary *motif* is paraphrased from the entry of 9<sup>th</sup> September in Columbus’s *Diario de navegación*, where the editor describes the Admiral’s ruse of concealing the sailing distance to his crew (Colón 1892: 8). From this date onwards, this distortion appears insistently noted in his diary. Indeed, in the novel, Carpentier underscores the process of self-construction in Columbus’s writings, where the manipulation of information aimed to portray a favourable image of himself to the Spanish Crown and other European royal courts. As such, the biography of the Admiral is rendered as an intricate fictional creation that added to the historiographical distortion of this historical figure: ‘fui haciéndome de una mitología destinada a hacer olvidar la taverna de Savona [...] De repente me saqué de las mangas un tío almirante; me hice estudiante graduado de la Universidad de Pavia’ (85).

Another recurrent theme in the literary portrayal of Columbus is his Jewish heritage and greedy character, which Carpentier bases on contemporary historical hypotheses and his analysis of the Admiral’s writings. Columbus’s need of creating a respectable Christian *façade* to hide his Semitic origins becomes understandable, given the context of religious intolerance during the Spanish Reconquista. This hypothesis emphasises to the reader the distance between our perception of this figure and the historical persona. Moreover, his diverse religious affiliation and avarice stand in opposition to the claims of the ‘impugnadores de la leyenda negra’ who stressed his selflessness and attributed to his miracles the divine purpose of spreading the Catholic message and saving the natives’ souls. The very *motif* of canonisation of Columbus is ridiculed through this premise, as ironically instead of having the first ‘santo mariner’ (Carpentier: 172), the Church would have declared the first Jewish saint: ‘cuando muy rara vez me acuerdo que soy Cristiano, invoco a Dios y a Nuestro Señor de un modo que revela el verdadero fondo de una mente más nutrida del Antiguo Testamento que de los evangelios’ (126). Furthermore, Carpentier questions Columbus’s alleged humanism by emphasising his entrepreneurial spirit in the trade of human meat and lives,

given the lack of gold: 'pido licencia para la *mercaduría de esclavos*. Afirmo que los caníbales de estas islas *serán mejores que otros ningunos esclavos*' (145).

Finally, in *El arpa*, the depiction of a sexual relationship between the Queen Isabel and Columbus also constitutes a considerable deviation from the historical narrative. According to Carmen Vásquez: 'sobre este idilio Carpentier no tenía la más mínima duda porque, decía, una mujer sólo le entrega sus joyas al hombre de quién está profundamente enamorada' (Vásquez 2005 248). Müller-Bergh notes that the trope of courtly love is found in Claudel's theatrical script: 'the French author paints a highly idealized, platonic relationship between Columbus and the Queen, inspired by St. James the Apostle, while at the same time presenting a marvellous, idyllic, rose-coloured fairy tale' (Müller-Bergh 1987: 147). Thus, Carpentier inverts Claudel's *trope* by transforming the nature of such love and stressing its implications. In the light of this literary premise, the charge brought against him of 'concubinato' with Beatriz that denies him the beatification becomes a trivial matter in contrast to this illicit love, which comprised another historical figure nominated for beatification. As such, Beatriz is used as a euphemism of the royal 'concubinato' in the novel, once more scorning the historical attempts of his canonisation by the literary inversion of the historical discourse.

As such, in *El arpa*, Carpentier's character is represented as a multi-layered fiction, as we can add the author's literary construction to the other fictions gathered by him, which were written either by Columbus or subsequent writers. Indeed, in agreement with critics like Zárate and Müller-Bergh, Carpentier's representation of the literary Columbus is more human, when compared with the historical idealisation of this figure. However, Carpentier's portrayal is no less critical of his legacy in the New World and the institution of four hundred years of colonialism. Thus, by debunking the historiographical tradition of interpretation on Columbus, Carpentier emphasises the artificiality of his contemporary image. Ironically, by uncovering some of the masks that surround the historical figure, Carpentier imposes a literary one. Indeed, *El Invisible* stresses the futility of approaching the conquistador's image when reflecting with Andrea Doria on his memorial statues: 'y ninguna se parecerá a mí, porque salido del misterio volví al misterio sin dejar huella pintada o dibujada de mi humana figura' (202). This conclusion highlights the irony that lies behind one of the best-known names in the world, which still remains one of the least known figures.

### 3. 2. 2. Marina and Aguilar: Translation as Acculturation in *La aprendiz de bruja*

In *La aprendiz*, Alejo Carpentier discusses the importance of translation and acculturation in the unfolding of the Conquest of Mexico through his portrayal of Cortés's 'tongues': Marina and Aguilar. Carlos Fuentes builds his reflection on language, power and identity through the same figures in their roles as translators. Conversely, Carpentier's reflection is directed to the cultural dimension of translation and the acculturation of both characters. Indeed, in *La aprendiz*, instead of being mere translators of words, Marina and Aguilar become interpreters of cultures to one another. In this light, both characters can be read as examples of Serge Gruzinski's notion of acculturation, defined earlier in this argumentation. On the one hand, Marina embodies and symbolises the transformation of the native's imaginary in the New World. On the other, Jerónimo de Aguilar, as well as Gonzalo Guerrero may be considered examples of reversed acculturation.

Unlike Fuentes, who questions the transparency of translation during the initial encounter of the two worlds, Carpentier does not address this aspect extensively. In his play, neither character is portrayed in the act of translating. Throughout the play, translation is only emphatically mentioned with regards to Marina's oath to Cortés to 'traduci[r] fielmente mis palabras, aunque estas puedan parecerte peligrosas, provocativas o torpes' (Carpentier 1983: 55). Moreover, Olmedo recalls after Moctezuma's death his arguments with the Aztec ruler, stressing: 'de hecho vos sabeis. Erais quién traducía' (105).

In the play, through Marina's religious acculturation Carpentier underlines this historical process that followed the military conquest and the challenges it posed in the New World. The construction of Marina in *La aprendiz* is complex as she is the only character under constant evolution in the light of her acculturation. This transformation is symbolised by the change in Marina's outfit, which includes a 'túnica blanca', an indigenous 'capa drapeada' and the 'vestido español' (29). Marina experiences different stages of acculturation in the play by the side of Aguilar, Olmedo and Cortés who introduce her to the Spanish language and culture. Marina's baptism is the first act of imposed indoctrination performed by the fictional conquistadors when they arrive in the Mayan coast:

Olmedo: Yo te bautizo en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo. Desde hoy tu nombre es Marina.

Marina: ¿Por qué esta agua? ¿Qué es este signo? (40-42)

Moreover, the first act of *La aprendiz* portrays instances of Marina's interactions with Aguilar, who tells her 'has aprendido nuestra lengua con una facilidad que raya en el milagro'

(45). Although Aguilar's explanations on occasions touch upon religious concepts, his initial acculturation of Marina seems rather practical for he asks her 'no te llenes la memoria con palabras inútiles' (45). Instead, he encourages her to retain useful words, mainly associated with military weaponry like 'lombarda' or 'cañón'. This example illustrates the selective framing of Marina's instruction process. By extension Marina's experience suggests that the acculturation of the indigenous people was often limited by the needs of the conquistadors.

Although Aguilar remains present throughout the play, the friar Bartolomé de Olmedo becomes in charge of Marina's evangelisation. In fact, the second scene opens with Marina and Olmedo reciting the *Credo Te Deum*. Indeed, the majority of scenes between Olmedo and Marina involve the explanation of the Christian doctrine. Although these scenarios are Carpentier's fictional creation, they expose the challenges posed by the transmission and comprehension of the Christian message given their diverse cultural imaginaries. For instance, Marina infers from this prayer that Christ 'fue ofrecido como sacrificio' adding 'pero si el padre y el hijo son una misma persona, entonces el padre también fue crucificado' (60). Although Christ's crucifixion is understood as the sacrifice of God's son on behalf of humanity, Olmedo disregards the association and to avoid contradiction states: '¡Siempre con esa idea del sacrificio! Hija, los sacrificios no existen para nosotros. Cristo fue crucificado por gente de su misma raza porque... ¡Porque los hombres son ingratos y rehúsan, por naturaleza, aceptar lo que es justo y lo que es verdad...!' (60). Indeed, Fuentes and Carpentier emphasise the paradoxes of the Catholic doctrine, whose comprehension usually relied on faith. As such, both writers stress through their literary plots, the role that the effective mistranslation of the Catholic doctrine played in the acculturation process, shaping its hybrid outcome.

Carpentier's reflection on Marina's indoctrination into the Spanish imaginary is tied to his depiction of Aguilar, who stands as another example of acculturation. In the play, Aguilar's story is reconstructed through his dialogues with Marina, Cortés and Olmedo, which convey information given by Bernal Díaz's on the historical figure. Such is the case of the shipwreck of his vessel, his slavery among the Mayans and the story of Gonzalo Guerrero: 'yo te lo explicaré todo, Marina. Yo hablo tu lengua. Hace tiempo que vivo entre vosotros' (41). Ironically, Marina's first educator is someone whose Spanish identity in the play is constantly queried. Indeed, Carpentier's description of Aguilar in the prologue states that 'su estadía de ocho años entre los Mayas, como consecuencia de un naufragio, lo ha acriollado tanto en el aspecto como en el carácter. Aún vestido a la española se ve desaliñado, con el cabello sobre la frente, sin deshacerse de una argolla de oro que siempre lleva colgada en la oreja' (30). In

the play, Cortés and Sandoval constantly scold Aguilar for his unkempt appearance, underscoring his oddity among the Spanish crew: ‘Aguilar, no me gusta verte con esa indumentaria. Pareces un indio. Si desde ahora comenzamos a parecernos a los indios...!’(48). Cortés’s constant disapproval of Aguilar suggests that the time he spent among the natives had left a cultural imprint, which prevented him from re-joining the Spanish society.

As in Fuentes’s writings, in *La aprendiz*, Gonzalo Guerrero is another historical figure that represents counter-acculturation. Indeed, the existence of Guerrero becomes a haunting presence that threatens the Spanish campaign. Cortés’s recurrent allusions to Guerrero are often condemnatory of his decision to remain among the natives. Indeed, he initially feared that Marina would refuse to help them if she found out about Guerrero:

Cortés: ¿Le dijiste de tu compañero de cautiverio, ese Gonzalo Guerrero que con tanto gusto entregaría a la Inquisición, que prefirió quedarse allá en vez de acudir a mi llamado?

Aguilar: ¡Ah, eso sí que no, mi capitán! Se lo juro.

Cortés: Nunca le cuentes esa historia a Marina. Es necesario que no sepa que hay un renegado entre nosotros. (Carpentier: 49)

In fact, Guerrero’s ghost does impact Marina’s perception of the Spanish enterprise. During the Aztec siege of Moctezuma’s palace in Tenochtitlan Marina admits having doubted her decision to help the Spaniards, after finding about Guerrero: ‘presiento que me escondéis muchas cosas [...] Ese cristiano que prefirió permanecer con los Mayas, viviendo en un bohío, me ha hecho reflexionar mucho...’ (92). The centrality granted to Guerrero in Fuentes’s and Carpentier’s literary re-interpretations suggests their intention to rescue this historical figure and his symbolic importance from the historiographical oblivion imposed on him by Spanish accounts of the Conquest after Bernal Díaz.

As such, through the portrayal of Marina and Aguilar and their adaptation to foreign cultures, Carpentier points to the complexity of this cultural encounter and early acculturation processes that led to the formation of the American Baroque. Furthermore, by emphasising the indigenous cultural imaginaries, in conflict with the newly imposed beliefs, the author portrayed the cultural resistance that permitted the survival of pre-Hispanic cultures.

### **3. 2. 3 Cortés and Marina: the Strategist and the Victim**

In his play, Carpentier portrays the historical figures of Marina and Cortés as the quintessential couple identified with the Conquest of Mexico. As seen throughout this section both figures are characterised by their polemical historiographical depictions. Similarly to

Fuentes's writings, Carpentier's literary portrayal draws on and responds to Cortés's and Marina's historical constructions. In consonance with his interpretation of Columbus and diverging from their fossilised historiographical representations, Carpentier emphasises their human impulses. Like in *Todos los gatos*, *La aprendiz* reconstructs the mentalities of both characters from contextual information, stressing their personal motives behind the Conquest. Due to the dialogical nature of drama although their construction is based on historical premises it is complemented by fictional *motifs*. As such, in this play Carpentier depicts Cortés mainly as a Renaissance man torn between the medieval religious discourse and the affirmation of the individual through reason. Likewise, Carpentier discusses Marina's betrayal of her people in favour of the Spaniards through the depiction of her love-relationship with Cortés. Although in this play, Marina comes across as a victim of the conquistador, Carpentier stresses the irony behind the conquest and the trope of the conquistador-conquistado also present in his depiction of Columbus.

Like Fuentes's conquistador, the literary Hernán Cortés in *La aprendiz* also embodies the characteristics of a 'Renaissance man', discussed in the previous chapter. The play portrays Cortés as a Spanish middle-class adventurer and a cunning strategist, aware of his goals and the means to achieve them. The character's conflict between the religious cause and his ambition frequently emerges in the plot and reminds the reader of the theoretical background, and Erasmian doubt analysed with regards to Fuentes's conquistador. Indeed, Cortés's claims to represent Carlos V and defend Catholicism to legitimise his attack on the natives: 'porque estamos en el reino del demonio. Vuestros templos son mataderos; ¡vuestros sacerdotes, asesinos! Nunca pensé que existiera un lugar en este mundo donde se hiciera de la sodomía un rito, donde se adorara a la serpiente y al chacal' (Carpentier 1983: 54).

However, this image of Cortés as a warrior of God is constantly challenged in the play by scenes that question the sincerity of his religious justifications. For instance, Cortés's consultations with an astrologer during the Aztec siege of Tenochtitlan stress the paradoxes of his discourse (89). In addition, his strategic use of Catholicism for political purposes is emphasised when Olmedo and Aguilar question the successful transmission of the Christian message by planting crosses: '¡Gracias a ellas, rotas o no, pisoteadas o no, sois algo más que unos aventureros... combatientes...! Si no captáis la sutileza, peor para vosotros' (66). His response accentuates the political implications of this religious rhetoric for Cortés's power and appropriation of the gold, land and inhabitants of the New World, which Rolena Adorno identified as polemics of possession. Furthermore, Cortés's rhetorical manipulation in the

play aims to justify his campaign to the Crown, as he is aware of being an outlaw: ‘sabéis bien que emprendimos esta conquista sin la autorización de la Corte ni del Consejo de Indias [...] No tenía ni credenciales ni mandato imperial para venir hasta aquí’ (99). As such, the reader realises that instead of God or the King, fame, fortune and adventure were the primary motivations behind the campaign of Carpentier’s literary Cortés.

Fuentes and Carpentier emphasise the natives’ association of Cortés with Quetzalcoatl. Like in Fuentes’s play, in *La aprendiz* Cortés recurrently affirms that he would rather be considered as a mortal man and gain recognition as such: ‘prefiero el papel de Josué. Es más fácil de soportar... ¡La naturaleza divina que se me otorga aquí comienza a ser peligrosa! ¡Ya es hora que pase del plano de los dioses al de los Grandes Capitanes’ (51). However, he also admits having used Quetzalcoatl’s mask to his advantage: ‘dejamos que nos tomaran por dioses; así de útil nos fue esa estafa para la causa de la Iglesia’ (113).

In contrast, if Cortés is defined by his opportunism and practicality, Gonzálo de Sandoval represents the idealist conquistador influenced by chivalric romances: ‘¡Sueño con eso desde mi infancia, cuando deseaba convertirme en uno de los valientes caballeros del Rey Arturo! Por fin comienzo a vivir mi novela de caballería’ (52). Rather than fortune he joined the conquest expedition in search of adventure. As Aguilar remarks, Sandoval ‘quería imitar al caballero Amadís de Gaula. Quería combatir dragones. Pero, en lugar de dragones, encontró pulgas’ (90). While this association stresses the influence of the chivalry romances on the sixteenth-century imaginary, it also downgrades the epic renderings of such romances and of histories of the Conquest by underlining the soldiers’ quotidian struggles. Moreover, the use of parody to contrast the solemnity of such narratives evokes Cervantes’s *Don Quijote*, highlighting the influence of this writer on Fuentes’s and Carpentier’s literature. Although Carpentier emphasises the tale of Amadís, perhaps to avoid anachronisms, through Sandoval he also distinctly references Cervantes’s character: ‘¡El sol que vio los trigos de Castilla, donde se levantan molinos, con sus grandes sombreros de pico, como si fuesen gigantes...!’ (Carpentier: 91).

The notion of the conquistador-conquistado, present in *El arpa* and Fuentes’s literature, becomes central to Carpentier’s understanding of this historical figure. Indeed, the literary character is concerned by this possibility: ‘Ah, no sería la primera vez que eso sucediera. El Gran Almirante supo lo que era eso...!’ (109). Thus, *La aprendiz* underlines the irony behind Cortés’s sway from victor over Mexico-Tenochtitlan, to being a victim of the Crown, as his

political and economic aspirations were deceived. As such, it is possible to see the multiple convergences in Fuentes's and Carpentier's literary construction of this historical character, as both stressed that there had been no winners among those who fought in the Mexican conquest. In her article on *La aprendiz*, Carmen Vásquez states that the title and main literary *motif* of Carpentier's play echoed Goethe's ballad *Der Zauberlehrling* (1797) instead of Paul Dukás's *L'Apprenti sorcier* (1897). According to her, Carpentier's interpretation of this figure can be found in the chronicle 'Los aprendices de Brujo' (1951) in *El Nacional* where he mentions: "el Aprendiz de Brujo acaba por ser incapaz de detener las escobas que trasiegan el agua mágica en que acaba por ahogarse" (Carpentier in Vásquez 1986: 58). This statement eloquently evokes the individual's loss of control over his actions, once their consequences exceed his intended purposes. In the light of Carpentier's *trope* of conquistador-conquistado, it is also possible to stress that the outcome of the Conquest in the Americas had backfired on both Marina and Cortés.

Vásquez considered that 'Carpentier pudo dar el papel principal de su drama a la Malinche, porque al ésta convertirse en Aprendiz de Bruja, se convierte a su vez en responsable de lo acaecido contra su propio pueblo' (Vásquez 1986: 58). Thus, this critic suggested that Carpentier's interpretation of Malintzin was in line with the tradition of Malinchismo, which merely depicted her as a traitor. As mentioned earlier, she also argued that Carpentier's association of Marina's and Rahab intended to stress her status as a mistress or as whore of Cortés. I differ from Vásquez's reading of Carpentier's Marina merely as a whore. In contrast, I stress the status of victim that the literary figure acquires throughout the play. Indeed, Carpentier's choice of the name Marina to characterise her becomes meaningful in this context as it suggests his decision to avoid using the appellative 'Malinche' due to its negative connotations.

Perhaps the principal divergence between Fuentes's and Carpentier's interpretation of these historical figures lies in the construction of the character of Marina. Although their accounts highlight Marina's importance in the Conquest and problematize her adhesion to the conqueror's cause, the motives explored by both writers vary. As demonstrated earlier, Fuentes interprets Marina's actions as a result of conviction and self-determination. In contrast, Carpentier's Marina mainly acts out of fear or love, which emphasises her victimisation. His rendering of Marina also addresses the cultural debate around her historical depiction as a traitor, emphasising another perspective on the historical figure. Indeed, the first acts of the play underline Marina's conviction of Quetzalcoatl's return, and thus of

Cortés divine nature: ‘regresa quien nos enseñó el uso del fuego, el arte de construir y el valor del Cero: El maestro-de-los-oficios que enseñaba los beneficios de la paz’ (38). Moreover, her initial relationship to Cortés is built on fear as she tells Aguilar: ‘¡Temblo con solo verle..!’ (48). Indeed, it is Cortés who decides to set Marina straight about his human nature, fearing that she could turn against the Spaniards when she discovered that they were not deities: ‘es imprescindible que Marina se acostumbre poco a poco a mi realidad’ (51). Thus, Carpentier frames Marina’s initial allegiance to the conquistadors within a native mythological framework, and her belief in the return of the Toltec deity.

Nonetheless, Carpentier depicts Marina’s inner conflict and her conscious allegiance to the Spaniards in the episode of Cholula, where she decides to act in favour of the Spaniards, causing the slaughter of the natives. Carpentier’s play portrays the massacre *in crescendo* through Marina’s reactions as the battle develops off-scene. Vásquez argues that Carpentier ‘niega a Marina su destino de madre y de generadora’ (Vásquez 1986: 61). Nonetheless, this affirmation seems to contrast with the symbolic depiction of the massacre in the play. Indeed, whenever an attack is perpetrated against the indigenous population, Marina experiences a new level of distress and physical pain, emphasising that ‘¡Es como si recibiera esas balas en mi vientre!’ (72). Precisely, the pelvic pain is symbolic of her status as the mother of modern Mexico, also emphasised by Fuentes, and highlights the psychological mark of the Conquest on her descendants. Moreover, it is in this scene where Marina’s admits having acted out of ‘love for Cortés’:

Te amo. Lo que es peor. Nunca he caído tan bajo, ni cuando los mercaderes de esclavos mostraban mis senos, mi vientre a los compradores. Ah, puedes hablar del horror de los sacrificios humanos, ¡Ahora yo te ofrezco montones de cadáveres! Aún más, los sacerdotes hacían su oficio. Pero yo- ya bien me lo dijeron en la cara hace un momento- yo no soy otra cosa que una puta. (76)

In *La aprendiz*, Cholula becomes Marina’s turning point, realising the burden she will bear for aiding the Spaniards: ‘¿Qué puedo hacer ahora? Solamente seguimos hasta el final’ (74).

The massacre of Cholula also marks the start of Marina’s disenchantment with Cortés and with the Spanish cause. Despite having confessed to loving Cortés, from this scene onwards Marina feels deceived by him and starts criticising his actions. Indeed, the depiction of the Aztec siege emphasises Marina’s progressive bitterness towards the conquistadors:

Seguí esta empresa con los ojos vendados. Ahora que puedo mirar a mi alrededor, solo veo ruinas. En el lugar donde yacían los antiguos templos, construís iglesias. Están llenas de mendigos, entre los que solo me queda ir a extender la mano... Yo también... ¡Ay, Sí! ¡Cómo uno se compromete! ¡Cómo uno se compromete...! Uno piensa que formará parte de una fraternidad que hará un mundo mejor, que devolverá cada cosa a su justo lugar. Y un buen día uno se da cuenta de que nunca ha sabido para que sirvió: que fue el juguete de unos Altos

designios cuyo alcance se ignora, cuya verdad se aclara demasiado tarde, cuando todo ha sido destruido, triturado, aplastado por su poder. (121)

Her disillusionment is accompanied by an increasing resentment against Cortés, which is noticeable with regards to Catalina Suárez's trip to Mexico and Marina's marriage to Juan Xaramillo. Indeed, by suggesting that Marina was the assassin of Catalina, Carpentier rendered her as a jealous woman in love. Ultimately, the trope of love is resumed at the end of the novel when she asks El cirujano if he believed that Cortés had ever loved her (132). In contrast to Fuentes's depictions of Marina, in Carpentier's play Marina's love for Cortés stands as the reason behind her actions and blind fidelity to him.

Therefore, Marina's progressive disenchantment, paired to her naïve love, reveals another facet of Carpentier's interpretation of this character that differs from Vásquez's affirmations. Indeed, in *La aprendiz*, Marina instead of merely being the Conquistador's mistress is portrayed as a victim of Cortés. Marina's victimisation in the play echoes historiographical depictions of this character that appeal to Cortés's manipulation to lessen her responsibility in the Conquest, redeeming her from the cultural impugnation. Indeed, Sandra Messinger stresses that the rendering of Malintzin as victim of the conquistadors, was made popular in the paternalistic discourse of Mexican drama writers like Gorostiza and Usigli in the 1950s and 1960s who 'sumerge[n] todos los discursos polifónicos y crea una forma monológica que hace víctima a la Malinche; la presenta desde la perspectiva de su ideología patriarcal' (Messinger in Glantz 1994: 183). This rhetoric of the victim to which Carpentier seems to appeal in his reassessment of Marina is also finally problematic, as instead of coping with this traumatic past, it would be a way of deflecting it.

### **3. 2. 4. The American Baroque: a Reassessment of Latin American Identity**

Carpentier's literary portrayal of historical figures complements his interpretation of the Conquest and Encounter of the worlds. Indeed, the semantic aspect of the author's literary historicism is characterised by the diachronic exploration of acculturation and transculturation processes, derived from the military conquest. On the one hand, Carpentier highlights the imposing nature of the Spanish acculturation through Marina's progressive evangelisation. On the other hand, he reflects on the organic transculturation of indigenous customs through characters like Aguilar or Guerrero, as well as the conquistadors' strategic use of indigenous mythology in their favour. Moreover, Carpentier points to the African influence through the discussion of slavery and the constant presence of the jester Guidela in his accounts on the Conquest.

As such, his look to the colonial past contained a reflection on Latin American racial and cultural identity and the revaluation of the diverse elements that composed it. Indeed, in the light of Carpentier's theory of the baroque in Latin America, the Conquest becomes a symbolic moment of cultural encounters and hybridity. Vázquez states that Carpentier's 'acusación de la Malinche y del sistema implantado por Cortés es a la vez defensa de toda la cultura autóctona americana y de todo lo que ella representa para la América de nuestros días' (Vázquez 1986: 68). Nonetheless, her Manichean reading of *La aprendiz* as the author's denunciation of Marina and Cortés seems insufficient. Without denying Carpentier's exaltation of the American native cultures and his critical stance on colonialism, such affirmation would undermine his awareness of the cultural and historical complexity of Latin America on which he builds his literary theories.

Like in Fuentes's works, Carpentier's characters better illustrate his divergence from the historical sources. Through his literary figures the author stresses the debates that structured his critical re-interpretations. Indeed, Carpentier problematizes the distance between the historical figures and their historiographical rendering. As has been demonstrated, his last novel *El arpa* is a systematic reflection on the artificial image of Columbus created since the fifteenth century in historical and narrative accounts. His earlier depiction of the Conquest presents a similar approach, given the emphasis placed on Marina's interpretation as a response to the negative image exacerbated in nineteenth-century liberal historiography. In addition, Carpentier stresses their human impulses, to contravene the historical depictions where references to their sentiments are seldom found. As 'El cirujano' says 'el dejarse llevar por los sentimientos no se aviene a la grandeza de nuestro heroe' (Carpentier 1983: 132). Therefore, Carpentier's literary portrayal of the encounter of the worlds and the Conquest in *El arpa* and *La aprendiz* comprises the incorporation of the historiographical depiction of these historical events to question and subvert official discourses.

### **3. 3 Further Considerations: the Conquest in the Works of Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier**

Throughout this section, I have analysed the different methodological and semantic elements that characterised Carlos Fuentes's and Alejo Carpentier's literary historical reassessment of the Conquest. In consonance with twentieth-century currents of self-interpretation in Latin

America, in the works of both authors, this thematic *motif* defines Latin American identities. Their analogous conception of the historical times and the convergence of past and future in the present, tie their reassessment of this historical event to the development of twentieth-century political and warfare contexts. In particular, both authors stress the colonial aims of the United States and its conflictive political relation with Latin America. Moreover, the structural socio-political continuities of colonial regimes in the twentieth-century with regards to racial and socioeconomic inequality reveal the pertinence that they saw in re-addressing this past. Indeed, in the accounts of both authors, the Conquest symbolises a founding moment in the creation of a *mestizo* Latin America. However, if Carpentier's hypothesis of cultural convergence, or American baroque, includes the African, American and European races, Fuentes extends this prerogative and adds to the Hispanic American heritage the Spanish mixture of races and cultures before the Encounter.

Moreover, the literary reassessment of both authors illustrates analogous methodological approaches in the research and re-working of historiographical and cultural sources into their literary depictions. While I have stressed Carpentier's influence on Fuentes in these regards, it is also important to highlight that the works of both authors can be read under a similar theoretical framework. Indeed, the notions of history, polyphony and *heteroglossia*, present in the works of Vico and Bakhtin, respectively, resonate through the writings of both Latin American authors. Moreover, these aspects become patterns in their literary style that aim to convey the plurality of voices and times encompassed into their depictions, which often include a critical reflection on such tradition of interpretation. The use of similar historical sources and their predisposition for Bernal Díaz del Castillo's account is revealing of their inclination towards the Cronistas de Indias, whose accounts were characterised by the ambiguity of the frontier between literature and history. Indeed, both authors stress the novelistic features of Bernal's account. Carpentier not only situates the Conquest as pivotal for the development of the Latin American Baroque, but he also identified in Bernal and Columbus's descriptions of America the emergence of elements proper of *lo real maravilloso*: 'no hay que olvidarlo los conquistadores vieron muy claramente el aspecto real maravilloso en las costas de América' (Carpentier 2003: 83).

Although the historicist methodology converges in the work of both authors, their literary pieces and the reflections on the topic and its historical actors also differ. For instance, although *mestizaje* is portrayed in both accounts as the quintessential characteristic of Mexico and Latin America, the way in which the two authors construct this symbolism varies. In his

literary portrayals of the Conquest, Fuentes places the cultural roots of Mexico in the union of races by focusing on the symbolic *mestizo*: Martín Cortés. In contrast, although Carpentier stresses the importance of the ethnic mixture in his theoretical and essayistic works, in his literary depictions of the Conquest the author emphasises the cultural hybridity and religious syncretism that resulted from processes of acculturation.

Moreover, their literary revision of historical figures can also diverge considerably, as is the case of the construction of the character of Malintzin. As has been demonstrated, both authors underline her importance in the Conquest. However, their interpretations of Malintzin's decisions and treason were placed on different motivations. While Carpentier's portrayal of the love-trope and relationship with Cortés renders her as a somewhat passive victim of the conquistador, Fuentes emphasises her initiative and the political contexts of the Mexican indigenous tribes at the time. The inclusion of indigenous accounts in their literary interpretations to offer a more comprehensive view of this historical event, also illustrates the role they adjudicated to the natives in the Conquest. Indeed, in Fuentes's works, the participation of the indigenous tribes in the military assault on Tenochtitlan is stressed throughout the plots. However, in *La aprendiz* apart from Marina's centrality, the natives' presence and agency fades after the first scene. Perhaps the difference in the development of the indigenous trope in the works of both authors is related to their contextual concerns. Indeed, Carpentier stresses the African presence and the slavery trope in America from its Conquest given the importance that these would have in the development of the Caribbean and throughout Latin America. In contrast, Fuentes's Mexican gaze grants prominence to the indigenous element in the formation of Mexican nationality.

## **Second Section: Critical Literary Interpretations of Latin American Revolutions in Carlos Fuentes's and Alejo Carpentier's Writings**

### **4. Revolution in the Americas**

Revolution in its social and political expressions is inherent to the history and identity of American Republics. Their foundation as sovereign territories followed the struggles of Independence against the British, French and Spanish Empires from the eighteenth century onwards. According to Hannah Arendt, the American Revolution (1775-1783) was the most successful revolution of the continent due to its transformation of social and political structures in the British-American colonies. Although the American Independence preceded other revolutionary movements, 'it was the French and not the American Revolution that set the world on fire, and it was consequently from the course of the French Revolution [...] that our present use of the word "Revolution" received its connotations' (Arendt 1990: 55). Indeed, the nineteenth-century revolutions of independence that sprung in Latin America against the Spanish Metropolis stemmed from French revolutionary ideals and were triggered by Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Spain (1808). Moreover, in Latin America, the revolutionary outbreaks as means for social and political change were recurrent during the twentieth century and often tied to dictatorships.

The historical, literary and artistic production of the continent has been impacted by this phenomenon, given its importance in Latin American republican history. Indeed, in the nineteenth-century, the cultural creations of these republics were closely tied to their foundation: 'the writers were encouraged both by the need to fill in a history that would help to establish the legitimacy of the emerging nation and by the opportunity to direct that history towards the future' (Sommer 1991: 7). Whether directed from literature or history these writings sought to justify the armed insurrection against the European Metropolises,

legitimise the newly instituted political bodies, and build new imagined communities to use Benedict Anderson's notion. In the twentieth century, the trope of Revolution remained a central literary and historiographical *motif*. Together with the independence struggles, these writings featured the unfolding of new revolutionary social movements, their challenges and aftermaths.

Indeed, the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions stemmed from specific dictatorships but were also the result of the failure of Republican governments to transform colonial structures. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 gave way to the development of literary and artistic currents such as 'La novela de la revolución Mexicana' and Muralism, which focused on its promotion and critical evaluation. Similarly, the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 was followed by the state's control over cultural productions. In his 1961 discourse, Fidel Castro summarised the Gobierno Revolucionario's stance on artistic freedom: 'dentro de la Revolución, todo; contra la Revolución, nada. Contra la Revolución nada, porque la Revolución tiene también sus derechos; y el primer derecho de la Revolución es el derecho a existir' (Castro 1961). This Revolution radically transformed the social structure of the island and influenced the development of global political contexts given its affiliation to communism and the Soviet Union. The Cuban experience became an inspiration for Latin American intellectuals, who placed their hopes in this alternative regime for the solution of Latin American problems like social disparity, foreign interventionism and political corruption. As such, both revolutions framed the imaginary and political context of the continent in the twentieth century. According to Rafael Rojas in 'Carlos Fuentes entre dos revoluciones', 'Gran parte de la poética literaria e histórica de Fuentes y de la política intelectual que desplegó por más de cinco décadas, [...] tuvo que ver con una comparación y a la vez un discernimiento entre esas dos revoluciones, que marcan de principio a fin la experiencia de América Latina en el siglo XX' (Rojas 2017: 140).

This is also the case of Latin American writers Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier, whose *oeuvres* recurrently portray historical revolutionary outbreaks and elaborate on the notion of Revolution. Their works include depictions of the French Revolution, the Revolutions of Independence in Haiti and Latin America, and the twentieth-century Mexican and Cuban Revolutions. Given the variety of revolutionary processes depicted in their writings, as well as the ample historiographical corpus on these events, this section analyses the semantic aspect of the authors' literary historicism. As such, I will study the stylistic and thematic patterns across their literary representations of these historical phenomena. However, I will emphasise

inter-textual relationships with cultural and historiographical sources when these are intrinsic to their semantic construction, giving continuity to the methodological analysis. This section encompasses a deeper discussion with regards to Carpentier's historicist methodology in his Revolution cycle. The fourth chapter of this thesis studies Fuentes's narrative-cycle on the Mexican Revolution, which comprises *La región más transparente* (1958), *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), *Agua quemada* (1967), *Gringo viejo* (1985) and *Los años con Laura Díaz* (1999). Moreover, the Revolutions of Independence in Latin America and the French Revolution (1789-1799) are analysed in *La campaña* (1990) and *Federico en su balcón* (2012). The fifth chapter concludes by analysing Alejo Carpentier's novels, *El reino de este mundo* (1949), *El siglo de las luces* (1962) and *La consagración de la primavera* (1978), which depict the Revolution of Independence in Haiti, the French Revolution and the Cuban Revolution.

#### **4. 1. The Notion of Revolution**

Before analysing the impact of this historical phenomenon in Fuentes's and Carpentier's writings, it is necessary to address the notion of Revolution. The definition of Revolution that guides the following analysis stemmed from the works of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and Peter Calvert (1936 –). In her book *On Revolution* (1963), Arendt explores the modern meaning of this concept through a diachronic analysis of the French, American and Russian Revolutions and their characteristics. Likewise, in *Revolution* (1970), Calvert writes a history of this idea from ancient to modern times.

Calvert traces the political sense of Revolution, as an organic and often violent change of government, to the Greek concepts *Metabolaí* and *politeíon anakúklosis* in the works of Plato, Aristotle and Polybius: 'for Aristotle, revolution was a political concept, not a social one; a phenomenon affecting rule and authority within states, and only secondarily the social composition' (Calvert 1970: 42). Plato attributes a cyclical nature to political change due to the proclivity towards corruption of any form of regime. According to Calvert 'the Timocratic state, Plato believed, would tend [...] to evolve into oligarchy, thence to democracy and ultimately to tyranny' (32). These political changes could be violent or strategically violent as understood by Polybius: 'the course appointed in nature in which constitutions change, disappear and finally return to the point from which they started' (44). Calvert also studies the evolution of these political analyses through Christian thought, the works of St Thomas Aquinas (1225- 1274) and Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, respectively. Moreover, he underlines the secularisation of the idea of political

revolt, which ‘was previously inextricably associated with divine authority’ (63), since the Reformation, through the works of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564).

Arendt identifies the emergence of the social question in political revolutions in the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). This *philosophe* influenced the ideals of the French Revolution, which became the ideological model of subsequent revolutionary outbreaks. In addition, both authors analyse the nineteenth-and-twentieth century revision of the concept in Karl Marx’s (1818-1883) and Lenin’s (1870-1924) theories on Revolution. Arendt situates the coinage of the word Revolution as a political term in 1660’s England ‘after the overthrow of the Rump Parliament and at the occasion of the restoration of the Monarchy’ (Arendt 1990: 43). In contrast, Calvert emphasises the use of the term *rivoluzioni* in the Renaissance Italian city-states where ‘swift changes of government accompanied by violence were the rule rather than the exception’ (Calvert 1970: 57). However, both authors highlight the astronomical origin of the term:

The word “revolution” was originally an astronomical term, which gained increasing importance in the natural sciences through Copernicus’s *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. In this scientific usage it retained its precise Latin meaning, designating the regular, lawfully revolving motion of the stars, which, since it was known to be beyond the influence of man and hence irresistible, was certainly characterized neither by newness nor by violence. (Arendt: 42)

Furthermore, Arendt and Calvert indicate that the original meaning of the notion Revolution designated the restoration of a previous form of government, noting that its modern conceptualisation stands far from its original sense:

In the seventeenth century, where we find the word for the first time as a political term, the metaphoric content was even closer to the original meaning of the word, for it was used for a movement of revolving back to some pre-established point and, by implication, of swinging back to a preordained order. (Arendt: 42-43)

Both thinkers associate the modern sense of Revolution with a political change of governments, characterised by violence. For Arendt, all revolutions were accompanied or preceded by wars, although not all wars became revolutions. Nevertheless, according to her ‘their reciprocation and mutual dependence, has steadily grown, and that the emphasis in the relationship has shifted more and more from war to revolution’ (17). Their differentiation rests in the objective of freedom and liberation from oppressive regimes, as ‘the only cause which could possibly justify it [war] is the revolutionary cause of freedom’ (Arendt: 17). The author understands freedom as ‘political freedom, not a political phenomenon, but, on the contrary, the more or less free range non-political activities which a given body politic will permit and guarantee to those who constitute it’ (30).

Furthermore, Arendt associates revolutions with novelty in the sense that their aim should comprise a complete change of the political and social orders (42). As such, '*coups d'état* and palace revolutions where the power change hands from one man to another' (34-35) cannot be considered revolutions, as they do not entail a profound transformation of the political structure. Moreover, revolutions also imply what Arendt refers to as the 'social question': 'poverty is more than deprivation, it is a state of constant want and acute misery whose ignominy consists in its dehumanizing force' (60). This idea, according to Arendt, also linked revolutions to the pursuit of happiness and solidarity for it focused on protecting the rights of the most vulnerable population. Therefore, revolutions are also associated with mass movements as they are often carried out by the majority of the society who is under the oppression of any political regime and poverty.

Finally, both Arendt and Calvert address the tendency for revolutionary outbreaks to fail, and their association with Saturn for devouring its children. For Arendt, the organic unfolding of the French Revolution meant that 'none of its actors could control the course of events, that this course took a direction which had little if anything to do with the wilful aims and purposes of the anonymous force of revolution' (51). Indeed, Robespierre's institutionalisation of the revolution led to the unfolding of a Reign of Terror, which paradoxically curtailed the civil liberties proclaimed by revolutionary ideals. Moreover, the disagreement between the revolutionary parties and the violent repression of dissenters led to an internal war that would mark the failure of the revolutionary movement. The previous characterisation frames the understanding of the notion of Revolution in this section.

#### **4. 2. The Mexican Revolution in Carlos Fuentes's Revolution Cycle**

In *La edad del tiempo*, the Mexican Revolution becomes another historical trope recurrently depicted by Carlos Fuentes. It could be argued that his works contain a cycle on the Mexican Revolution due to the number of fictional, critical and essayistic writings that revolve around it. Fuentes's Revolution cycle acquires unity through the literary figures that appear across different novels such as Artemio Cruz and Jaime Ceballos. Despite its late appearance, Fuentes's cycle can be inscribed in the literary current known as 'La novela de la Revolución Mexicana', which emerged almost simultaneously to the armed conflict in 1910.<sup>17</sup> According to Renato Prada in *La narrativa de la Revolución Mexicana*, there is 'una tercera "reflexión" que desde la narrativa realizan ciertas obras de Rulfo y Fuentes [...] del estado de cosas en las

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<sup>17</sup> Popular songs like 'Corridos' that narrated the event are also part of the cultural production that developed parallel to the Mexican Revolution.

cuales todavía se siente la presencia de los anhelos, traicionados las más de las veces, de esa magna gesta revolucionaria' (Prada 2007: 35). Apart from the epic or critical perspective that the Revolution acquires in this narrative, the importance of Carlos Fuentes's literary cycle resides in its particularity, diversity and informed reflection.

The author was interested in underlining the profound impact of the Revolution in Mexico's history and society, as well as in its development during the twentieth century and its projection into the future. Indeed, Fuentes's narrative cycle offers a comprehensive panorama of this historical event by juxtaposing diverse experiences, characters, places and periods of the Revolution. This multiplicity of perspectives associated with the conception of history appears condensed in *Los años con Laura Díaz* when the protagonist asks her lover Harry '¿Y no es "la historia verdadera" solo la suma de las historias personales?' (Fuentes 1999: 524).

In succinct terms, the Mexican Revolution was an armed conflict that flared up in 1910 against Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship (1876-1911), initially led by Francisco Madero. Although historians disagree on its duration, Alan Knight extends it until the 1940s and divides it into three phases. For Knight, the armed stage of the conflict lingers until the 1920s. This decade was characterised by political instability and violent upheavals from various revolutionary factions, which had initially united to overthrow Díaz. This phase comprises the mandates and assassinations of Francisco Madero (1911-1913), Victoriano Huerta (1913-1914) and Venustiano Carranza (1914-1920). Knight identifies the second stage as the institutionalisation of the Revolution under the 'The Sonoran dynasty', which lasted until 1934. During the presidencies of Sonoran Álvaro Obregón (1920-1924) and Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928), the country underwent a forced pacification and the creation of revolutionary institutions within the government. The assassination of the revolutionary leaders Francisco Villa (1878-1923) and Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919) also took place during this time. The third period corresponds to the government of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), who can be considered the implementer of the revolutionary programme for his agrarian reform, nationalisation of oil and minerals and protectionist economic policies. Knight underlines the shift to the left of Mexican politics in the 1930s as a response to the Great Depression (1929).

As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter comprises a transversal and diachronic study of the thematic and stylistic patterns in Fuentes's narrative cycle on the Mexican Revolution. These patterns build a critical assessment of the historical event and form the semantic aspect

of the author's literary historicism.<sup>18</sup> Firstly, I underline Fuentes's recourse to polyphony through the incorporation of varied sources into his writings, in the creation of more inclusive accounts that counterpoise mainstream histories. In particular, I emphasise the inter-textuality established with Octavio Paz and 'la filosofía de lo Mexicano' in the interpretation of this revolution.

Secondly, I analyse the recurrent topical discussions of the massacres of Cananea (1906) and Río Blanco (1907) as part of his interpretation of the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath. Furthermore, through the plots and characters of his narrative cycle, Fuentes stresses the proletarian sector as an active third actor in the Mexican Revolution, expanding its traditional bilateral interpretations as agrarian and bourgeois. As such, Fuentes's cycle is characterised by its identification and remedy of historiographical silences, building a more comprehensive assessment of this revolution. Thirdly, I discuss the tension between solidarity and individuality in the betrayal of this revolution through the literary revolutionary figures and their relation to labour movements. Finally, I argue that Fuentes gives an overview and evaluation of the Mexican Revolution and its impact in shaping Mexico's development during the twentieth century through the depiction of family generations. These patterns in Fuentes's portrayal of the Mexican Revolution illustrate an evolution in his comprehension of the historical event, stressing his use of literature to integrate its different cultural interpretations.

#### **4. 2. 1. The Influence of Octavio Paz and Alfonso Reyes**

Although in Fuentes's depictions of the Mexican Revolution the connections to historical sources are harder to trace, the collage style of his novels, the juxtaposition of writing registers and weaving of passages from his sources remain constant. As such, Fuentes's open inter-textuality and *heteroglossia* emerge as an overall pattern throughout his narrative, stressing a methodological continuity with my analysis on the Conquest. To avoid repetition in this chapter, I focus only in analysing the influence of Octavio Paz, Alfonso Reyes and 'la filosofía de lo mexicano' in his assessment of the revolution through his character Manuel Zamacona in *La región*.

Linda Egan, Maarten Van Delden, Julio Ortega, Steven Boldy and Raymond L. Williams have stressed Alfonso Reyes's influence in Fuentes's intellectual journey: 'Reyes ejerció una influencia importante sobre Fuentes: Reyes creía firmemente en el valor que tiene la tradición

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<sup>18</sup> This chapter does not analyse exhaustively each of Fuentes's works on the Mexican Revolution and focuses on highlighting aspects that appear recurrently across his literary depictions of this topic.

cultural en todas las sociedades y, primero él y más tarde Fuentes, trabajaron en la búsqueda de una definición de tales valores culturales en la sociedad indoafroiberoamericana' (Williams 2000: 35). With regards to *La región*, Egan underlines the direct reference in Fuentes's title to Reyes's *Visión de Anahuac*, and highlights its irony as the novel depicted the rapid change of Mexico City:

Ese mismo tráfico ya comenzaba a opacar el aire de la ciudad, hoy la más contaminada del mundo, pero el título nostálgico-irónico nos recuerda el lindo ensayo histórico de Alfonso Reyes, a quién tanto Paz en *El laberinto*, como Fuentes implícitamente aquí y explícitamente en otra parte rinden homenaje al incluir sus ideas en su teorización sobre México. (Egan 2012: 137)

Perhaps the most elaborate inter-textual discussion established by Fuentes in this text is built on the character of Manuel Zamacona<sup>19</sup>. In the novel, Ixca Cienfuegos propels the encounter between Federico Robles and Manuel Zamacona. Father and son, as we find at the end of the novel, engage in a discussion on Mexico, its past, future and the Mexican Revolution. This scene confronts the opposing views on the Revolution held by two generations: the makers of the Revolution and their descendants, inheritors of their legacy, whose view on its unfolding was very critical.

Moreover, these critics, as well as Ute Seylden and Georgina García Gutiérrez, stress the presence of Octavio Paz's postulates in *El laberinto de la soledad* in Zamacona's assessment of Mexican history and Revolution. For instance, in 'Máscaras Mexicanas en *La región más transparente*' Maarten Van Delden stresses their similarity:

Utilizando a Zamacona como su portavoz, el autor describe a México como un país que no ha logrado desarrollar un proyecto histórico coherente. El principal problema, según Zamacona, ha sido la contradicción entre la sustancia cultural del país y los esquemas ideológicos, casi siempre importados del exterior, con que los dirigentes políticos han tratado de moldear la realidad de México [...] Aquí, Zamacona repite el diagnóstico de Octavio Paz, quien había observado en *El laberinto de la soledad* que una y otra vez en la historia del país "las ideas enmascaran a la realidad en vez de desnudarla o expresarla." (Paz:131) La única fase en la historia en que el país logró romper con la tradición de la "mentira e inautenticidad" (p.145) fue la revolución, un hecho que, según Paz, "irrumpe en nuestra historia como una verdadera revelación de nuestro ser". (Van Delden 2012: 150)

García Gutiérrez goes beyond Paz and argues that through Zamacona, Fuentes discusses philosophical currents like 'La filosofía de lo Mexicano' and other writers such as Samuel Ramos, Alfonso Reyes and Salvador Novo. As such, Fuentes condenses the voices of different thinkers of Mexico and *Mexicanness* in this character, which could reveal the formation of his personal critical understanding of the Revolution.

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<sup>19</sup> Manuel de Zamacona was also the name of a Mexican diplomat during the regimes of Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz.

Indeed, from the perspective of his present, Mexico in the 1950s, Zamacona reviews the political course of Mexican politics since the nineteenth century. He highlights, echoing Paz, the fallacies imbued in the imposition of foreign models of development and legislations in Mexico, in its fast-pace towards the modernisation of the republic. Like Paz, Zamacona emphasises that the Revolution's main accomplishment was that it 'nos obligó a darnos cuenta que todo el pasado de México era presente, y que, si recordarlo era doloroso no lograríamos suprimir su vigencia' (Fuentes 1999: 396). Zamacona also advocates for the need to find intrinsic political and economic models that stem from Mexico's reality.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, Fuentes also discusses the failure of the Revolution in its unfolding through this figure for 'si la Revolución nos descubre la totalidad de la historia de México, no asegura que la comprendamos o la superemos' (395). Indeed, he highlights, using terminology of the French Revolution, that despite the realisation of Mexico's singularities brought by the Revolution, its revolutionaries had fallen into the same patterns in their personal struggle for progress: 'a veces, se me ocurre pensar que México vive un prolongado Directorio, una fórmula de estabilización que, a la vez que procura una notable paz interna, impide el desarrollo cabal de lo que la Revolución se propuso en su origen' (395).

As such, instead of merely considering Zamacona as an alter ego of Octavio Paz, we could understand this character as symbol of the mentality of a critical post-revolutionary generation who sought to comprehend Mexico in the light of its recent and long history. Thirty-six years after *La región* a similar statement reappears in Fuentes's analysis of the nineteenth-century liberal projects and the Revolution in *Nuevo tiempo mexicano* (1994). In his 1994 balance of the Mexican Revolution, although he continued criticising the modernisation models, Fuentes also identifies the long-term failure of the Revolution's model in its stagnation. The Revolution's initial successful policies, implemented by Cárdenas, become anachronistic over the course of the years in the fast-changing country: 'el éxito mayor del sistema, pronto se volvió contra el sistema, a medida que las limitaciones del mismo, la usura del tiempo y la autocomplacencia de los gobernantes, propició el declive de lo que, sin asomo de cinismo, se llamó el "milagro mexicano"' (Fuentes 1994: 70).

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<sup>20</sup> Zamacona's ideas also mirror those proposed by Simón Bolívar in *La carta de Jamaica*, and José Martí's *Nuestra América*.

#### **4. 2. 2. The Mexican Revolution Through the Working-Class: Río Blanco and Cananea as Precedents of the Mexican Revolution**

On the first of June of 1906, the workers of the copper mine *Oversight* of the Cananea Consolidated Copper Company (CCCC) in Sonora, owned by the American William C. Greene, called a strike in reaction to the Company's change in the contract regulations (Peláez 2010: 2). According to the historian, Jesús Silva Herzog in *Breve historia de la Revolución Mexicana* the strikers' demanded a minimum wage of five pesos, an eight-hour working day, promotion by merit, benevolent treatment and a ratio of 75% Mexican and 25% foreign employees in the mine. (Silva 1972: 53) Greene's negative response to these demands triggered a demonstration of about 2000 workers and the expansion of the strike to nearby mines. Peláez and Silva underline the violent repression of the strikers, initially at the hands of the American guards, for 'los obreros fueron recibidos a balazos por los pistoleros de la empresa y empleados gringos armados' (Peláez 2010: 3). The strikers responded with further violence killing the Metcalf brothers and plundering the Company's 'tiendas de raya'. In the following days, the strike was heavily repressed and its union leaders incarcerated by the national military and American rangers commanded by Thomas Rynning: 'en Junio de 1908 los líderes de la huelga fueron sentenciados a 15 años de prisión y trabajos forzados, que en Agosto de 1909 pasaron a cumplir en el fuerte de San Juan de Ulúa' (4).

In the following year, the workers of the textile factories called a strike in several Mexican states 'en 30,000 se calculó entonces el número de huelgistas: 5,000 en Puebla, 3,000 en Tlaxcala, 10,000 en Orizaba, 2,000 en Jalapa; casi todo el Distrito Federal, Oaxaca y parte de Jalisco completaban la cifra' (González Navarro 1957: 517). According to Moisés González Navarro in his article 'La huelga de Río Blanco' (1957) and Luis González in his essay on the liberal reforms in *Historia general de México* (Colmex) the strike of Río Blanco was part of this general movement convened by 'El círculo de obreros libres'. These workers demanded better salaries, the elimination of the 'tiendas de raya', working days of less than 16 hours and accident compensation (González Navarro 1957: 513). Porfirio Díaz mediated the negotiations between the parts and an agreement was reached on January 4<sup>th</sup> when most factories resumed work except for Río Blanco in Veracruz. González Navarro underlines two versions of the massacre that followed the event. The first one stressed the violent reaction of the workers on the 7<sup>th</sup> when weavers were turned away. The second highlighted that the assassination of a worker by the administrators of Garcín's 'tienda de raya' ignited the attack on the store:

Mientras unos intentaban poner fuego a la fábrica, otros se llevaban la caja de caudales de Garcín, y otros más libertaban a los presos de la cárcel y cortaban los alambres de la energía eléctrica. A las 9 de la mañana se presentó una fracción del 13º batallón; según un diario católico, dispararon hasta que los obreros “con insolencia inaudita” mostraron su resolución a hacerles frente. (521)

According to this writer, Garcín denied saying: ‘a esos hambrientos no se les daba ni agua’ (521). This statement is echoed in Fuentes’s description of the massacre in *La región*, included below. González Navarro notes that ‘según datos oficiales, fueron cerca de 200 los obreros fusilados durante los tres primeros días del motín, y 400 los presos’ (524). This historian also confronts the different versions of the massacre that appeared in the press of the time but highlights that ‘la prensa metropolitana recibió instrucciones del gobierno de no informar sobre la gravedad de los hechos’ (524).

Except for *Gringo viejo* and *Agua quemada*, Fuentes’s novels on the Mexican Revolution contain recurrent references to the strikes and repression of the copper mine at Cananea (1906) and the textile factory at Río Blanco (1907). These allusions become thematic patterns in the author’s depiction of the Mexican Revolution. In *La muerte*, when the Teniente Aparicio, commander of Artemio’s revolutionary faction, finds the civilians hanged by the Federals, he says: ‘igual mataron a los trabajadores de Río Blanco y Cananea, porque no querían morir de hambre’ (Fuentes 2001: 118). Although this is the only direct allusion of the pre-revolutionary strikes in the novel, it is echoed by the revolutionary acts of the General, who ‘averiguaba las condiciones de trabajo y expedía decretos reduciendo la jornada a ocho horas y repartiendo las tierras entre los campesinos. Si había una hacienda en el lugar, mandaba quemar la tienda de raya. Si había prestamistas [...] declaraba nulas todas las deudas’ (103).

In *La región* and *Los años*, Fuentes engages in a deeper portrayal of the ‘huelga de Río Blanco’. Indeed, when talking to Ixca Cienfuegos about his past, Federico Robles remembers that his cousin Froilán Reyero talked ‘del valle nacional, de donde nadie salía con vida, y de los huelguistas de Cananea. Y también había estado en Río Blanco’ (Fuentes 1999: 230). Froilán and Gervasio Pola had been executed in the prison of Belén during Victoriano Huerta’s regime. He claimed to have witnessed this massacre when he was in Río Blanco for the funeral of his *compadre*’s son. Apart from some poetic hyperboles and the anecdote of the dead child that intensify the atmosphere of despair, Fuentes coincides with González’s and List’s historical accounts, which were published prior to *La región*. Like these historians, Fuentes stresses the wider-context of strikes around Río Blanco, the organisation of the workers by the incipient union of the *Círculo de Obreros*, and their exploitation through the

‘tienda de raya’ where they were forced to spend their wages. This is illustrated by Froilán’s narration:

Por eso cuando vino la huelga textil en Puebla, los de Río Blanco hicieron a duras penas una colecta y se la mandaron a los de Puebla. La empresa se enteró y mandó a cerrar la fábrica. Entonces vino la huelga y todos sabían que iban a cerrar la tienda y no iba a haber que comer [...] Entonces se dirigieron los huelguistas a don Porfirio para pedirle que tuviera clemencia y prometieron cumplir con lo que él dijera [...] A esos perros no les damos ni agua, dijeron entonces los capataces [...] los seis mil trabajadores se metieron a la tienda de raya y sacaron todo lo que había y luego la incendiaron y también la fábrica [...] Entonces fue cuando entraron las tropas de Rosalío Martínez, echándose sus descargas una tras otra, sin parar, mientras todos caían muertos en las calles, sin poder siquiera gritar, sin tener para donde voltear del ruido y el polvo que levantaba esa metralla [...] Después nomás se vio como salían las plataformas de ferrocarril repletas de cadáveres y a veces nomás de piernas y cabezas. Los fueron a echar al mar en Veracruz, y a los del Círculo de Obreros que quedaban en Río Blanco luego, luego los ahorcaron allí mismo. (Fuentes 1999: 231-233)

In *Los años*, Fuentes revisits the strike of Río Blanco, complementing his narration in *La región*. Indeed, Laura’s grandfather mentions the massacres of workers:

Luego vinieron las malas noticias, hubo una huelga de mineros en Cananea, otra en la fábrica textil de Río Blanco, aquí mismo en el estado de Veracruz, los cadáveres de los huelguistas reprimidos por el ejército federal pasaron de Orizaba al mar en furgones abiertos, para que todo el mundo los pudiera ver y se escarmentara. (Fuentes 1999: 57)

Her half-brother, Santiago, also tells her ‘mira los rieles, aquí mismo llegaron los furgones cargados de cadáveres, los obreros de Río Blanco asesinados por órdenes de Don Porfirio por declarar la huelga y aguantarla con valentía, aquí los trajeron y los echaron al mar’ (77). Fuentes’s reason for portraying more insistently the strike in the textile factory of Veracruz is perhaps related to the fact that his family was from this State.

Nevertheless, it is through Juan Francisco López Greene<sup>21</sup>, syndicalist of the working class and Laura’s husband, that these historical events are tied explicitly to Fuentes’s interpretation of the Revolution. López Greene describes these strikes to his son Dantón as the foundational moments of the workers’ movement in Mexico and precursors of the revolutionary outbreak in 1910:

Ya ves, hijo el Obreroismo mexicano no nació apenas ayer [...] El congreso llegó a tener ochenta mil miembros, ¿te das cuenta? De qué enorgullecerse. Con razón Díaz empezó a reprimir, culminando con la terrible represión contra los miembros de Cananea. Don Porfirio comenzó a reprimir allí porque los grupos americanos que dominaban a la compañía de cobre enviaron desde Arizona casi cien hombres armados, los rangers, a proteger la vida y la propiedad americana [...] Los mineros también querían lo de siempre, jornada de ocho horas, salarios, techo, escuelas. Ellos también querían tener vida y propiedad. Los masacraron pero la dictadura se cuarteó allí mismo para siempre [...] A Juan Francisco le encantaba tener un escucha atento, su propio hijo, para recordar estas historias heroicas del obrerismo Mexicano, culminando con la huelga textil de Río Blanco en 1907, donde el ministro de hacienda de Díaz, Yves Limantour, apoyó a los patrones franceses a fin de prohibir libros no

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<sup>21</sup> This character’s surname alludes in an ironic way to the owner of the factory of Cananea, whose surname was also Greene.

censurados y requerir pasaportes de entrada y salida de la fábrica [...] Otra vez fue una mujer, de nombre Margarita Romero, la que encabezó la marcha a la tienda de raya y le prendió fuego. El ejército entró y asesinó doscientos trabajadores. (381-382)

Juan Francisco's recounting of these historical events complements the depictions that appear in other novels. Indeed, in *Los años*, Fuentes includes a narration of the massacre at Cananea and expands on details on Río Blanco such as the introduction of passports in the factories and the participation of women in the strikes.<sup>22</sup> More importantly, by incorporating these strikes in his narrative cycle, Fuentes's de-centres the depiction of the Mexican Revolution from the armed conflict and explores topics and actors that were generally silenced in official accounts.

#### **4. 2. 3. The Proletarian Revolution: a Silenced Actor of the Mexican Revolution**

Despite having occurred during the Porfirian dictatorship, Fuentes's persistent references to these labour massacres in his Revolution Cycle suggests a direct connection between them and his understanding of the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, in Fuentes's works, Cananea and Río Blanco represent the consolidation of a Mexican working class and the labour movement as by-products of the Porfirian positivist programme (Fuentes 1999: 381).

Moreover, through characters like Juan Francisco and Jorge Icaza in *Los años*, Fuentes stresses the active participation of the labour movement in the Revolution. Icaza extending the comparison to the Xalapan society, asks '¿Qué eran los rebeldes de las fábricas de Río Blanco y las minas de Cananea, los primeros que se levantaron contra la dictadura, qué eran sino obreros? (Fuentes 1999: 133). Moreover, Juan Francisco considers that 'los campesinos eran reaccionarios y los obreros de la ciudad eran los verdaderos revolucionarios' (137).

The former suggestion is complemented by Fuentes's use of his plots and characters to feature the working class and labour unions. Indeed, syndicalist figures such as the mentioned Froilán Reyero, Gervasio Pola and López Greene, as well as Feliciano Sánchez, in *La muerte* and Ezequiel Zuno in *Las buenas conciencias* become central in Fuentes's depiction of the Mexican Revolution. Through these characters, Fuentes underlines the effective participation of the working class in the armed revolution and its influence in the post-revolutionary society. In *Los años*, Juan Francisco not only underscores the proletarian origins of the Mexican Revolution but also integrates the proletariat in the revolutionary experience:

La gente creía que la revolución era sólo una élite criolla seguida de guerrilleros campesinos, se olvidaba que todo empezó en las fábricas y en las minas también; en Río Blanco y en

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<sup>22</sup> Fuentes refers to Margarita Martínez as Margarita Romero.

Cananea; los obreros organizaron los batallones rojos que salieron a luchar contra la dictadura de Huerta y fundaron la Casa del Obrero Mundial en el palacio de los azulejos en la Ciudad de México, en el antiguo jockey club de la aristocracia. (Fuentes: 136)

Indeed, Fuentes's revolution cycle portrays the proletarian sector as an inherent third actor of the Revolution, shaping a different interpretation of this event beyond its mainstream bilateral accounts as agrarian (Villa and Zapata) and Middle Class (Madero, Carranza, Calles, Obregón).

My argument on Fuentes's conception of the working class in his understanding of the Revolution can be supported further when exploring *Nuevo tiempo mexicano* (1994). In this essay, Fuentes analyses the Revolution to assess Mexico's context and the popular insurrection in Chiapas at the turn of the twentieth century. The author states that the Mexican Revolution of 1910 was, in fact, the union of the agrarian revolution, the national revolution and the proletarian revolution. Fuentes regards the agrarian revolution as the most 'fija en la iconografía popular' (Fuentes 1994: 41). He identifies this revolution with the movement led by caudillos like Villa and Zapata. In Fuentes's view, these revolutionaries promoted a communal and autonomous democracy that aimed, like the General Arroyo in *Gringo viejo*, to 'restituir los derechos de las comunidades sobre tierras, bosques y aguas' (Fuentes 1995: 41). As such, Fuentes characterises this stream of the revolution as conservative for it aimed to restore colonial or even pre-Columbian rights of land-ownership.

As part of the national revolution, which in Fuentes's view was 'menos nítida en íconos de la memoria' (Fuentes 1994: 41), the author classifies those caudillos that attained the national government and the control of the Revolution. Madero, Carranza, Calles and Obregón were the representatives of this revolution that had a modernising and centralist purpose: 'crear un estado nacional moderno, capaz de fijarse metas de beneficio colectivo mientras promovía la prosperidad privada' (41). For Fuentes, this is the revolution that prevailed over the others, establishing the institutions that were to characterise modern Mexico between 1920 and 1940.

Finally, Fuentes identifies the incipient proletarian revolution as the third one, noting that it had been 'definitivamente imperceptible en la memoria colectiva' (41-42). In *Nuevo tiempo*, he situates the emerging working class precisely during the Porfirian regime and the strikes of Río Blanco and Cananea: 'la naciente clase trabajadora llevó a cabo los dos más grandes desafíos contra la dictadura de Porfirio Díaz: la huelga de los trabajadores textiles de Río Blanco en 1906 y, pocos meses después la huelga de los mineros de Cananea' (42). Furthermore, Fuentes highlights the further participation of the proletariat in the Revolution

through its ‘batallones rojos’ as allies of Carranza and Obregón. According to him, ‘los trabajadores consideraban a los campesinos como gente primitiva y reaccionaria’ (42). The depiction and construction of this revolution in *Nuevo tiempo* echoes the analysis carried throughout this chapter.

This argument can be further supported if analysed in the light of general historiographical trends on the Mexican Revolution. In general terms, the analyses of Cananea and Río Blanco, the history of the working class in Mexico and its participation in the Revolution become a thematic historiographical trend from the late 1950s onwards. Indeed, few historical accounts published before the 1960s include the depiction of these events, and their analyses are fleeting and scarce. María Guadalupe Mendoza notes two main historiographical currents in her study of official history in Mexico. According to her, Mexican historiography produced during the government of Lázaro Cárdenas was regarded as ‘socialista’, giving the application of Karl Marx’s theory on Historical Materialism to historical analyses (Mendoza 2009: 57-58). The second current developed in view of the Second World War and comprised the revision of history programmes and textbooks to create a unified version of history, that at the same time fostered ideas of national solidarity (61). She identifies as part of this current the works of Alfonso Teja Zabre, Armando y Germán List Arzubide, José Bravo Ugarte, José Bonilla, Alfonso Toro and Luis Chávez Orozco, among others.

Nonetheless, a reading of history textbooks from both currents shows that in most cases these texts do not mention the strikes or the Revolution, emphasising Mexico’s Pre-hispanic past instead. Although José Bonilla includes *El porfiriato*, he does not mention the development of the working class during Díaz’s regime or the strikes of Cananea and Río Blanco. In contrast, Germán and Armando List Arzubides’ booklet, *Huelga de Río Blanco* (1935), constitutes the only early account of this event and could have been one of Fuentes’s sources. Indeed, from a Marxist approach, their account contains a detailed narration of the strike at Río Blanco, which sought to highlight the importance of the workers’ movement in Mexican politics. Likewise, *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana* (1958) and the novel *Frontera junto al mar* (1953), by the communist politician José Mancisidor, also focus on the proletarian participation in the Revolution. It is important to stress that Lists’ and Mancisidor’s works are exceptions in the mainstream historiography produced on this historical event. Moreover, although Mancisidor’s works could have influenced Fuentes’s development of this topic throughout his career, it is relevant to note that *La región* and *Historia de la Revolución* were published in the same year. As such, it could be argued that since Fuentes’s earliest works the

proletarian sector in revolutionary and mostly post-revolutionary Mexico was a primary concern, which he developed further throughout his career along with other contemporaries.

Moreover, early histories of the Revolution written by Jesús Silva Herzog and Alfonso Teja Zabre tend to feature the failure of the promised democratic elections in 1910 and Madero's exile as the immediate triggers of the armed confrontation, initially against the dictatorship and afterwards between the revolutionaries. Two other significant figures in the historical narrative of the Mexican Revolution in the north and the south were Pancho Villa (Doroteo Arango, 1878-1923) and Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919), respectively. These *agrarista* revolutionaries became legends in the imaginary of the Revolution due to their class-origins and the importance of their revolutionary factions in the outcome of the armed insurrection. In Fuentes's novels, these historical figures appear only tangentially to the revolutionary experience and are often deemed by characters such as Juan Francisco, as secondary actors of the armed conflict: 'los obreros hicieron la revolución. Los campesinos, Villa y Zapata, fueron un lastre necesario, el lastre reaccionario y clerical del negro pasado colonial de México' (Fuentes 1999: 151).

An analysis of the representation of both topics, the labour strikes and the working class, in the histories produced after the revolution points to the existence of historiographical silences. As such, it could be suggested that Fuentes's literary historicism in his Revolution cycle was directed to address these silences in official or mainstream histories. Indeed, Fuentes's depiction of the working class in Mexico could be considered an attempt to fill these voids by highlighting its importance in the Revolution and its aftermath. Thus, even though Fuentes might not have depicted an utterly unknown event, it could be argued that it had been barely incorporated into Mexican historiography and the author in his assessment of the Revolution was granting it visibility.

#### **4. 2. 4. The Betrayal of the Revolution: Social Solidarity versus Individual Success**

To frame Fuentes's literary discussion on solidarity and public happiness, I use Hannah Arendt's theoretical analyses on Revolutions. In her study of the French Revolution, Arendt argued that both political emancipation and freedom from need and poverty had been undertaken, driven by the revolutionaries' compassion for the poor:

A special effort was required of the representatives, an effort of solidarization which Robespierre called virtue [...] Virtue meant to have the welfare of the people in mind, to identify one's own will with the will of the people- il faut une volonté UNE- and this effort was directed primarily toward the happiness of the many. (Arendt 1990:76)

According to Arendt, Rousseau introduced the idea of compassion into political theory, but it was ‘Robespierre who brought it on to the market-place with the vehemence of his great revolutionary oratory’ (81). For Arendt, only need could arouse compassion, which is defined as an emotion that could transform into the sentiment of pity or the principle of solidarity (89). In contrast with pity, Arendt defines solidarity as a rational expression of compassion as it provoked action to confront poverty:

It is out of pity that men are attracted towards les ‘hommes faibles’, but it is out of solidarity that they establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited [...] For solidarity, because it partakes of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only a multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually mankind. (Arendt 1990: 74)

Moreover, she remarks upon the principle of selflessness as characteristic of the revolutionaries: ‘what counted here, in this great effort of a general human solidarization, was selflessness, the capacity to lose oneself in the sufferings of others, rather than active goodness’ (81).

Arendt’s discussion on public happiness enlightens the analysis of Fuentes’s understanding of solidarity in the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, Arendt also places the unfolding of the French and American Revolutions in the tension between public welfare (public happiness) and individual development (private welfare). In ‘The Pursuit of Happiness’, she analyses the shift of the initial collective meaning of ‘public freedom and happiness’ for the *philosophes* into an individual endeavour (127). Arendt concludes that, even if it acquired different expressions, this conflict was essential to the development of any Revolution. It had been during the American Revolution where the ambiguity of the term ‘pursuit of happiness’ to define both participation in the public realm and private welfare had first appeared. Nonetheless, ‘the rapidity with which the second meaning was forgotten and the term used and understood without its original qualifying adjective may be the standard by which to measure, in America no less than in France, the loss of the original meaning and the oblivion of the spirit that had been manifest in the revolution’ (132).

Even if not explicitly linked to Arendt’s text Fuentes’s Revolution cycle contains a similar approach to these concepts. Fuentes’s assessment of the Mexican Revolution also rests on an idea of solidarity as selflessness, and the capacity to direct the compassion felt for others into political action. Moreover, the tension between public happiness and private welfare is inherent to his portrayal of the Revolution.

#### 4. 2. 5. Fuentes's Mirrored Construction of Revolutionary Characters

In Fuentes's narrative, syndicalism becomes centrally integrated to the Revolution through characters who had partaken in the revolutionary struggle and were linked to the rising Mexican 'movimiento obrero'. This is the case of Federico Robles, Jorge Ibarra, Roberto Regules, Feliciano Sánchez, Gervasio Pola and Froilán Reyero (*La región*); Andrés Aparicio and Ureñita (*Agua quemada*); Artemio Cruz, Gonzalo Bernal, Lorenzo Cruz and Padilla (*La muerte*); and Santiago Díaz, Armonía Aznar, Javier Icaza and Juan Francisco López Greene (*Los años*). Through these literary figures, Fuentes discusses the constant tension between solidarity, public happiness and private welfare in the unfolding of the Mexican Revolution. Moreover, through their patterned construction, Fuentes situates the main betrayal of the Mexican Revolution in the dislodgment of the idea of social solidarity in favour of individual success, which ironically paved the way for the construction of modern Mexico. Indeed, the experiences of the revolution, explored in a set of 'hijos de la revolución', create a typology of revolutionaries comprised of the martyrs and the survivors of the Revolution.

As noted by Steven Boldy, Fuentes's mirroring technique emerges as a generational pattern that permeates his construction of characters. In *The Narrative of Carlos Fuentes*, Boldy stresses a tendency in Fuentes's families to double, mirror, or contrast the destinies and characteristics of other characters: 'in *La región más transparente* the main vehicle which Fuentes uses to articulate, resolve and re-propose the contradictions and splits hinted at there is the family, in the complex dynamics of the inheritance of such dilemmas over the generations' (Boldy 2002: 14). A first level of mirroring among the characters can be found in the antagonism between the survivor revolutionaries and the martyrs who died during the Revolution. When compared, the reader can notice a similar pattern in their background and individual paths during and after the revolutionary outbreak. Characters like Gonzalo Bernal, Santiago Díaz/Díaz-Ayub, Tomás Arroyo, Froilán Reyero, Lorenzo Cruz and Feliciano Sánchez emerge as martyrs of the Revolution. Fuentes's narrative cycle portrays them as heroes, who by dying during the armed-struggle could not compromise their ideals in its aftermath. Indeed, according to Artemio, Catalina's brother Gonzalo Bernal 'tenía ganas de ser mártir. No quiso salvarse' (Fuentes 2000: 163). Moreover, their untimely deaths leave a pervading uncertainty recalled throughout Fuentes's cycle about their possible actions in the aftermath of the Revolution. Indeed, in *La región*, Ixca Cienfuegos queries Federico Robles: 'es lo que nos preguntamos todos. ¿Qué habrían hecho los llamados "revolucionarios puros" ahora?' (Fuentes 1999: 233).

Predominantly, Fuentes places the martyrs' social extraction among the educated classes, joining the Revolution out of conviction and imbued by revolutionary theories. Marxism and anarcho-syndicalism influenced Santiago Díaz's participation in the conflict. Similarly, Gonzalo Bernal reveals the influence of Russian anarchist thinkers to Artemio in the prison of Perales: 'mírame a mí. Toda la vida leyendo a Kropotkin, a Bakunin, al viejo Plejanov, con mis libros desde chamaco' (Fuentes 2000: 281). Nonetheless, Bernal had been sacrificed by his faction for questioning Carranza's view of the Revolution: 'se le metió en la cabeza que más le valía un héroe muerto que un traidor vivo' (281).

Among the syndicalists, Froilán Reyero and Gervasio Pola became martyrs when killed by Huerta's army in the prison of Belén. Nonetheless, before the revolutionary outbreak, they disseminated anarcho-syndicalist ideas in Río Blanco and Cananea. Moreover, the syndicalist Feliciano Sánchez was a labour leader who also promoted working-class consciousness in the aftermath of the Revolution. His assassination is reconstructed through Librado Ibarra and Federico Robles. According to Ibarra 'a Feliciano lo mataron un 15 de septiembre: la ley fuga. Por andar de bochinchero en el interior' (Fuentes 1999: 308).<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Feliciano had been murdered at the instigation of the banker Federico Robles, who considered him a threat for his businesses: 'si se le corta por lo sano, ni quién levante un dedo. Los que vienen detrás de él están dispuestos al compromiso, y preferirían dejar las cosas en paz con tal de asegurarse en sus puestos' (481). Robles's assassination of Feliciano Sánchez reiterates Zamacona's analyses of this event and condenses his betrayal of the Revolution.

In contrast to these martyrs stand the revolutionary survivors who re-defined México after the armed conflict and portray the tension between public and private welfare. Among them, we can find some of Fuentes's main characters: Federico Robles, Vicente Vergara, Artemio Cruz and Juan Francisco López Greene. These revolutionaries become paradoxical figures as they embody, simultaneously, the betrayal of the Revolution and the construction of modern Mexico. They had taken a direct part in the armed struggle becoming notable soldiers of their military factions. In particular, Fuentes tends to portray their performances in the battle of Celaya between Francisco Villa's army (División del norte) and Álvaro Obregón's constitutionalist troops on April of 1915.<sup>24</sup> When the war came to term, under the revolutionary government in turn, these soldiers effectively paved their own roles in the

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<sup>23</sup> Feliciano dies during the anniversary of the Mexican Independence, 15th September.

<sup>24</sup> Fuentes's Revolution cycle narrates recurrently the Battle of Celaya. Nonetheless, the depiction of the battle itself will not be addressed here and perhaps constitutes a topic for future research.

development of Mexico: ‘yo tuve la suerte de pelear primero y construir después’ (Fuentes 1999: 233).

In Fuentes’s works, the survivor revolutionaries stem from poor-rural classes and are often *mestizos* and ‘hijos de la chingada’. Indeed, Tomás Arroyo<sup>25</sup>, Juan Francisco López Greene and Artemio Cruz were the product of rapes committed by local *hacendados* or *caciques*. Although Federico Robles is born into a poor-family in Michoacán and goes to live with the local-town priest, his mother is ‘lazada’ after his father dies from diphtheria (234). In this case, the ‘pernada’ could symbolise the lingering of colonial social practices of oppression into the Republic. As such, these revolutionaries share a sentiment of orphanhood, which, as has been seen, constitutes a literary trope in Mexican culture, symbolising the national trauma propelled by the Spanish Conquest. As Steven Boldy points out, their paternal orphanhood is compensated by an alternative father. Robles and López Greene find fatherly figures in the priests Agustín Zamacona and Elzevir Almonte, whereas the ‘maestro Sebastián’ becomes Artemio Cruz’s second father.<sup>26</sup> These paternal figures not only took on their education, but in López Greene’s and Artemio’s cases they also enrolled them in the Revolution: ‘el maestro Sebastián le pidió que hiciera lo que los viejos ya no podían: ir al norte, tomar las armas y liberar al país’ (Fuentes 2000: 103).

Indeed, contrary to the martyrs, the survivor-revolutionaries join the revolution either organically or instigated by others. For instance, Federico Robles admits that ‘yo nunca supe de dónde surgió, pero una vez que estuvo allí, había que entrarle al toro. Después algunos, como yo, encontramos las justificaciones’ (Fuentes 1999: 234). Indeed, he not only joined the Revolution without ideological affiliations but also considered that it had begun ‘sin táctica ni pensamiento revolucionario auténticos’ (473).

Precisely, ‘el cambio de chaquetas’ during the Revolution becomes characteristic of Fuentes’s survivor revolutionaries, whose subsistence depended on their political flexibility: ‘pero nosotros seguiremos, seguiremos siempre, porque hemos aprendido a sobrevivir siempre’ (62). Indeed, Vicente Vergara’s memory of the Revolution is enclosed in his photos with every caudillo: ‘se le veía acompañando a todos los caudillos de la revolución, pues anduvo con todos y a todos sirvió por turnos’ (Fuentes 1995: 48). Vergara is not an exception, as

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<sup>25</sup> Tomás Arroyo lies between martyrdom and betrayal. As Harriet Winslow points out he died as a hero before betraying the revolution. However, his attachment to the Miranda’s hacienda highlights his individualistic tendencies.

<sup>26</sup> Artemio’s *mulato* uncle Lunero was his fatherly figure during his childhood.

Artemio takes pride in that he ‘siempre había escogido bien al gran chingón, al caudillo emergente contra el caudillo en ocaso’(Fuentes 2000: 200). Despite these changes of faction, Fuentes places the betrayal of the revolution in their choice between personal and collective welfare.

#### **4. 2. 6. The Collective and the Individual**

Steven Boldy argues that the tension between the individual (personal) and the collective (communal) becomes a pattern in Fuentes’s narrative. His analysis of characters (individual) in their families (collective) stresses the existence of inherited fates, usually crossed by this dichotomy. For Boldy, Federico Robles and Gervasio Pola ‘are marked or defined even in their relation with others by a basic duality in their origin, or at the origin of their power. In the case of Pola, communality and individualism, usually posted by the words *solo* and *juntos*’ (Boldy 2002: 15). Moreover, Boldy suggests that this dichotomy enclosed a meta-literary reflection underlined by the Christian question on the impossibility of achieving something purely individual (55). Fuentes also explores the trope of Christian solidarity in *Las buenas conciencias* (1984) with regards to the syndicalist Ezequiel Zuno: ‘both the priest and Christ himself tell Jaime that Christianity can only be communal, never individual [...] the same terms are used in the context of political action’ (Boldy: 55).

The antagonistic terms *solo* and *juntos* (Yo/Otro) echo Paz’s analysis of Mexican idiosyncrasy, where solitude is identified as essential to Mexican identity and constructed in opposition to ‘others’ (Paz 2008: 22). This self-definition by rupture and difference highlights the fragmentation between the individual and the collective, problematized by Fuentes and Paz. For both writers, this social fragmentation had been historically inherited, since the Conquest, and contained the strengths and problems of modern Mexico.

As Boldy highlights, in Fuentes’s characters the topic of solidarity is often resolved in the dichotomy of the individual versus the collective, the reconciliation of *solo* and *juntos*. However, the Revolution is betrayed by the choice of these survivor revolutionaries of private welfare. Indeed, Fuentes places the failure of the Mexican Revolution in this loss of collective solidarity synthesised by the conflictive interaction between the survivor revolutionaries and syndicalists: ‘en ti mismo se cumple esa lucha moral, que es suficiente que pienses y en tu fuero interno te sientas solidario de otros hombres para que participes en todo’ (Fuentes 2000: 269). In Fuentes’s cycle, the martyrs of the revolution, often associated with syndicalism, embody the idea of solidarity. These characters stand out for their selfless sacrifices, which

exceed 'pity', as Gonzalo Bernal dies for his hopes in the common wellbeing: 'hay deberes que es necesario cumplir aunque se sepa de antemano que se va al fracaso' (282).

In Fuentes's cycle, the outbreak of the Revolution appears as a critical moment of solidarity in Mexico. The Mexican Revolution marked the union of different fractions of the country around a single cause, but most importantly was a moment of recognition of the national 'others'. Fuentes conveys this interpretation through Manuel Zamacona in *La región*, through the evocative mirror scene of anagnorisis of the self and others in *Gringo viejo*, and in his essayistic texts *Nuevo tiempo mexicano* and *El espejo enterrado*. If, according to Zamacona, the Revolution succeeded in making visible the people and problems of Mexico, it failed in incorporating them, given its fast-changing character and the personal interpretation of its caudillos. For Fuentes, the predicament of the Revolution was the oblivion of this recognition and the subsequent loss of the solidarity initially achieved. This dichotomy in the understanding of the pursuit of happiness (public vs. private welfare) in the Mexican Revolution, mirrors those exposed by Arendt on the American and French Revolutions. Indeed, the dilemma faced by the Mexican Revolution lied in its aspirations to implement a socialist revolution with a capitalist modernisation programme. As Federico Robles summarises, 'queremos construir una economía capitalista y al mismo tiempo una legislación protectora de la clase obrera' (Fuentes 1999: 233).

Fuentes's survivor revolutionaries become successful businessmen after the armed conflict, building monopolies (land ownership, banks, press, construction, fabrics) favoured by the caudillos. Thus, they renounced the Revolution by prioritising their social and economic success. As analysed in detail by Boldy, Feliciano Sánchez's assassination by Robles's instigation symbolises his rupture with the collective in his way to private power. Thus, the betrayal of the Revolution is further explored in the power-relationship wielded by the survivor revolutionaries on the syndicalists and working classes. In *Agua quemada*, the cacique Mariano Carreón orders his Gavilanes to infiltrate a student protest, presumably Corpus Christi (1971). On his deathbed, Artemio Cruz recalls using his press against the ferrocarrileros and the movement of 'depuración sindical'. Furthermore, on their way to power, General Vergara, Federico Robles and Artemio Cruz often act as "hombres de paja" for North American companies, contrary to the nationalist spirit of the revolution.

Perhaps the clearest traitor of this type is Juan Francisco López Greene in *Los años*, given the centrality of syndicalism in the novel. Laura Díaz's husband had fought in the "batallones

rojos” under Carranza, becoming a labour representative for CROM (Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana) in Mexico City after the Revolution. In the novel, the contradiction between his proclaimed ideals and his actions is magnified through the empty repetition of the same revolutionary discourse. As Laura concludes, ‘el discurso del padre había perdido el sueño. Era un discurso insomne’ (Fuentes 1999: 180). Juan Francisco’s betrayal of syndicalism and solidarity is progressive, and its earliest manifestation is the Ford car given to him by Luis Napoleón Morones, leader of the CROM, ‘en reconocimiento de sus méritos sindicales durante la Revolución’ (151). However, in Laura’s eyes, his betrayal is sealed by his denouncing of the nun (Carmela) Gloria Soriano to the authorities, who had conspired against president Álvaro Obregón, seeking political recognition.

The government’s centralisation of power through the co-optation of ‘centrales obreras’, later coined as *charrismo*, is problematised in *Los años*. As stated by Peter Smith in ‘Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime’:

This established a pattern since known by the opprobrious epithet of *charrismo*: docile labour leadership would sell out the interests of its membership and receive, in return, political backing (and financial benefits) from the state and/or management. Labour would thus be controlled through the co-optation of its leadership, and the consequent arrangements would permit and facilitate the pursuit of capitalist growth via industrialization. (Smith in Bethell 1991: 344)

Although *charrismo* became a wide phenomenon since the 1940s, Fuentes identifies it as a political pattern since Carranza’s presidency in *Los años*. Indeed, Juan Francisco’s cooperation with Morones is shown in his change of political allegiances and his will to compromise the syndicalist premises in pursuit of a pact with the government. This oscillation is observed in his initial support of the re-election of president Obregón, despite being considered ‘el principio intocable de la Revolución’ (Fuentes 1999: 174). Juan Francisco’s confession of betrayal to Laura reveals the progressive corruption of the revolutionary ideals of solidarity:

Todos luchamos por la Revolución y contra la injusticia, pero también contra la fatalidad, Laura, no queríamos seguir siendo pobres, humillados, sin derechos [...] Calles era un pobre maestro rural, Morones un telefonista, ahora este Fidel Velásquez un lechero y los demás líderes eran campesinos, carpinteros, electricistas, ferrocarrileros ¿Cómo no quieres que se aprovechen y cojan la oportunidad por el rabo? (305)

Fuentes’s displacement of historical revolutionaries, in favour of common figures, shifts the perspective of the Revolution to the middle and bourgeois classes. Through these characters that represented the working and middle classes, Fuentes explores the betrayal of the Revolution and discusses topics such as power, solidarity and repression. Nonetheless, while

these survivor revolutionaries embody its betrayal, they also emerge as the builders of modern Mexico.

#### **4. 2. 7. Saturn's Children and *Longue durée* History in Fuentes's Diachronic**

##### **Assessment of the Revolution**

Fuentes's literary historicism is built around this generational approach and his diachronic reassessment of the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath. Fuentes reflects on the proletarian participation in the Revolution, its institutionalisation and progressive betrayal, and the tension between solidarity and private welfare through his literary revolutionaries and their family generations. Indeed, across Fuentes's revolution-cycle there tends to be a revolutionary father (grandfather) who fought during the armed struggle and used its outcome to climb socially. Robles, Cruz, Vergara and López Greene are examples of the social mobility catalysed by the Mexican Revolution and the establishment of a new political caste. Vergara's nostalgic view of his revolutionary past is contrasted by Federico Robles, Artemio Cruz and López Greene who use the Revolution as a rhetorical legitimisation of the capitalist order fostered by them. In the novels, the comparison of these characters with Porfirio Díaz could be Fuentes's metaphor for indicating the progressive stagnation of the revolutionary policies and their increasing dependence on repression to maintain power.

Having been educated in the myth of the Revolution created by revolutionary governments and official historiography, the youngest members of these families tend to idealise this event. Boldy highlights their relationship to the Revolution in the mirroring destinies of family members. Characters like Plutarco Vergara, Santiago Díaz Ayub, Lorenzo Cruz and Manuel Zamacona belong to this generation. Plutarco Vergara and Lorenzo Cruz wanted to emulate their (grand) parent's heroic revolutionary past. In contrast, Manuel Zamacona represents the most critical approach to the Revolution, echoing the voices of a generation of Mexican thinkers such as Octavio Paz, Samuel Ramos and Fuentes himself. Zamacona's political and theoretical discussion with Robles portrays a generational change in the perception of this historical process. In *Los años*, Santiago Díaz Ayub rebels against his father Dantón's corrupt capitalism and becomes a political activist in the 1968 student protests that ended in the massacre of Tlatelolco.

The progressive disenchantment with the implementation of the Mexican Revolution, portrayed through these family-generations is condensed in *Nuevo tiempo mexicano*. According to Fuentes, the initial project of the Revolution enclosed in the 1917 constitution

was progressively lost. It had failed in integrating economic and political modernisation, achieving democracy and equality simultaneously: ‘existía una seria contradicción en lo que se enseñaba en las escuelas -desarrollo con justicia y democracia- y lo que sucedía en la práctica -desarrollo sin justicia ni democracia’ (Fuentes 1994: 73). As such, in Fuentes’s works, the generational perspective constitutes a retrospective assessment of the discourse and unfolding of the Mexican Revolution, as well as a criticism to its official rendering.

The student massacre of 1968 ordered by president Díaz Ordaz had a profound impact on Fuentes’s literary writings and assessment of the Mexican Revolution. The violent State repression at Tlatelolco evinced the corruption of the governing revolutionary formula by the PRI (former PNR), the stagnation of the Revolution and the disintegration of its social solidarity. Indeed, for Fuentes ‘La Noche de Tlatelolco, el 2 de octubre de 1968, es el parteaguas de la conciencia contemporánea de México’ (73). Later works such as *La voluntad y la fortuna* (2008) and *Nuevo tiempo* reflect on the Mexican Revolution in view of the development of the century and the economic tendency to global integration:

Un estado revolucionario se legitima a sí mismo. Washington, Lincoln, Lenin, Mao, Castro, Madero, Carranza, Obregón, Calles, Cárdenas. Hasta Tlatelolco y la deslegitimación por vía del crimen contra el puro y simple movimiento que debe acompañar al estado revolucionario para acreditarlo como tal. (Fuentes 2008: 345)

Fuentes’s post-1968 writings contain a disenchanted vision of the Revolution. If Federico Robles and Artemio Cruz found a possibility for redemption, in Fuentes’s plots after Tlatelolco the characters’ reconciliation with the past becomes impossible.

Fuentes’s diachronic assessment of the Revolution through his literary cycle and explicitly in *Nuevo tiempo* highlights the long duration of two political patterns in Mexican history: *caciquismo* and *caudillaje*. According to Fuentes, the Crown’s ineffective government during colonial times provoked the rise of local *caciques*, who ‘gobernaban de hecho al México profundo imponiendo su capricho personal por encima de las instituciones públicas y las leyes’ (Fuentes 1994: 59). This personal embodiment of power was present throughout the Revolution both perpetrated and suffered by revolutionary agents and governments. This dichotomy is present in characters like Andrés Aparicio and Librado Ibarra whose implementation of the Revolution is violently resisted by the local *caciques*. On the contrary, Artemio Cruz and Mariano Carreón built their economic power through the violent coercion of rural population.

Moreover, the individual power of these local *caciques* is also echoed in the national government by *caudillos*. These were usually ideological, political or military leaders who

often held political power in Mexico, and Latin America, since the nineteenth century. Although not every *caudillo* became a political leader, it is possible to see this trend since Mexican independence from Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753-1811) to Lázaro Cárdenas (1895-1970). Furthermore, until Calles these caudillos had come to power often by violent means overthrowing previous regimes or leaders.

Thus, Fuentes's portrayal of the dynamics of *caudillaje* during the Mexican Revolution mirror Pierre Vergniaud's memorable phrase on the French Revolution: 'Citoyens, il est à craindre que la révolution, comme Saturne, ne dévore successivement tous ses enfants et n'engendre enfin le despotisme' (Vergniaud 1793). The violent historical succession of the caudillos of the Mexican Revolution is emphasised by Fuentes in *La voluntad y la fortuna*, where Antigua Concepción recalls: 'en 1913, Huerta mandó matar a Madero. En 1919, Carranza mandó matar a Zapata. En 1920, Obregón mandó matar a Carranza. En 1928 Calles se hizo el distraído mientras asesinaban a Obregón' (Fuentes 2008: 170). Indeed, during the Mexican Revolution, as problematized by Fuentes's characters, it was the death and assassination of the 'caudillo en ocaso', which marked the succession of the next *caudillo*.

This metaphor of Revolution can also be extended to a broader context in Fuentes's plots. Indeed, survivor revolutionaries like Federico Robles, Artemio Cruz and Juan Francisco López Greene emulate this political carnage at a lower level. In this case, their will to political and acquisitive power, drives them away from social solidarity, instead, oppressing the lower classes for their private welfare. Nonetheless, despite the circularity contained in the French quotation, in Fuentes's cycle, Revolution is not necessarily seen as a circular phenomenon. The author argues through his literary re-interpretations and in *Nuevo tiempo* that the Mexican Revolution, quoting Francisco Florescano, categorises it as such due to its impact on social and political traditional structures: "no es una ilusión ideológica de cambio, es un cambio real que revoluciona al estado, desplaza violentamente la antigua oligarquía dominante, promueve el ascenso de nuevos actores políticos" (Fuentes 1994: 64)

In conclusion, Fuentes's works focus on the aftermath of the Revolution, instead of its armed phase, emphasising the implementation and betrayal of the revolutionary ideals during the rise of modern Mexico. Fuentes's generational approach allows him to explore the social and political manifestations in Mexican history of *longue durée* historical continuities, to use Fernand Braudel's notion. Such is the case of the struggle for political and economic power through *caciquismo* and *caudillaje*, which also deviated social solidarity into the pursuit of

private welfare, marking the failure of the social aim of the Revolution. The persistence of violent repressions perpetrated by the government against any opposition that ranges from Cananea and Río Blanco to Tlatelolco stand as another continuity. Likewise, Fuentes acknowledges the violent characterisation of the revolutionary process. As such, Fuentes's Revolution cycle shows a progressive disenchantment in the understanding of the Mexican revolutionary process through the different generations. Thus, his literary historicism not only constitutes a retrospective assessment of the Revolution but sets this event as a pivotal moment to understand any historical process undergone in Mexico during the twentieth and twentieth-first century.

#### **4. 3. International Experiences of Revolution in Fuentes's *La campaña* (1990) and *Federico en su balcón* (2012)**

In *La campaña* (1990) and *Federico en su balcón* (2012), Carlos Fuentes addresses the Spanish American Revolutions of Independence (1810-1820) and the French Revolution (1789). By doing so, Fuentes directs his reflection outwards in space to international experiences of Revolution, backwards in time to historical antecedents of the phenomenon. Both of Fuentes's novels contain philosophical and theoretical reflections on these historical processes. Raymond L. Williams notes in *Los escritos de Carlos Fuentes* that in *La campaña* 'los personajes tienden a representar ideas' (Williams 2000: 163). Nevertheless, the substance of the novel resides in their discussion and in the cultural debates that marked post-colonial Spanish America in the nineteenth century. Thus, furthering William's statement, *La campaña* can be considered a philosophic-historical novel that reassesses the foundation of the Hispanic American republics from Fuentes's twentieth-century perspective. Likewise, *Federico* portrays a fictional Friedrich Nietzsche and the discussion of his philosophical postulates. Moreover, this novel comprises a philosophic-theoretical exploration of the notion of Revolution, summing up Fuentes's reflection on this concept throughout *La edad del tiempo*.

This subchapter analyses the stylistic and thematic patterns that permeate Fuentes's literary historicism on the Revolutions of Independence and the French Revolution in these novels. Firstly, I examine Fuentes's use of *Historia de Belgrano y de la independencia argentina* (1886) by Bartolomé Mitre in *La campaña* to emphasise the historicist methodology in his later writings. I also analyse Fuentes's critical assessment of the Revolutions of Independence

namely their uncritical adoption of foreign ideological models, which comprises the dilemma between tradition and modernity. Moreover, I establish the historical substratum of *Federico en su balcón* and its connection to the French Revolution. Finally, I conclude Fuentes's exploration of these historical phenomena highlighting the philosophical reflection on Revolution encompassed in this novel, framed through the writings of Hannah Arendt and Friedrich Nietzsche.

#### **4. 3. 1. Bartolomé Mitre's *Historia de Belgrano* in *La campaña***

*La campaña* (1990) reconstructs Manuel Varela, Xavier Dorrego and Baltasar Bustos's experience of the Argentinian Revolution of Independence. Manuel Varela, the narrator, recounts Baltasar's revolutionary campaign across the Independence struggles of the Spanish American colonies in search of his utopian love Ofelia Salamanca. The novel covers an extensive time and space, ranging from the 25<sup>th</sup> May of 1810 in Buenos Aires to Veracruz in 1820. Likewise, Baltasar's journey encompasses the depiction of numerous historical events such as the guerrilla campaigns of the 'republiquetas' in el Alto Perú, the resistance of the royalist court of Lima, San Martín's crossing of the Andes and Battle of Chacabuco in Chile, Simón Bolívar's victories in New Granada, Pablo Morillo's *Reconquista* in Venezuela, and the royalist executions of the 'Virgen Guadalupe' in Veracruz.

Maarten Van Delden stresses the two-fold campaign in the novel: 'on the one hand, [Baltasar Bustos] is driven by a vision of a better society; on the other hand, he wishes merely to impress the woman he loves, Ofelia Salamanca, wife to the Marquis de Cabra' (Van Delden 1993: 335). Indeed, Baltasar's participation in the revolutionary struggle stems from his decision to enact his Rousseauian ideology of equality and justice by kidnapping 'al hijo recién nacido de la presidenta y en su lugar [poniendo] en la cuna a un niño negro, hijo de una prostituta azotada del puerto de Buenos Aires' (Fuentes 1994: 9). Nonetheless, his travels are shaped by Ofelia Salamanca's movement and the guilt he feels towards her, following her son's disappearance and the accidental incineration of the black baby in the fire of Buenos Aires.

The critical studies of Zsuzsanna Csikós, Magdalena Perkowska-Álvarez, Daniel Chavéz, and María José Bustos inscribe *La campaña* in the literary current of the 'new historical novel' using the theories of Jean Genette, Seymour Menton, Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Georg Lukács. Nonetheless, Carlos Alonso, Perkowska and Csikós disregard the presence of

history in *La campaña*, concluding that it is merely the *locus* of the sentimental plot (Perkowska 2000: 96). In Alonso's words:

The result of the conflation achieved in the novel between the military campaign for independence of Baltasar's lovelorn quest is that the familiar historical events depicted in the text- the montoneras in Argentina, the Andean battles of San Martín, the Mexican guerrilla priest and his revolutionary crusade- are all there merely as a backdrop to the story of guilt, love and incomplete redemption enacted in the novel. (Alonso 1994: 264)

Conversely, I seek to demonstrate the centrality of history in this novel and Fuentes's use of the love story as Ariadne's thread to explore the Latin American revolutionary outbreaks throughout this decade of Independence struggles.

Perkowska and Alonso underline the explicit references to over forty historical characters and events associated with these revolutions in the novel. Moreover, Florence Olivier and Daniel Chávez identify the inter-textuality established to the *Philosophes*: Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire, as well as to Plato, Karl Marx and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Nonetheless, underneath *La campaña* lie concrete inter-textual relationships to Latin American histories on the Revolutions of Independence like *Historia de Belgrano y de la Independencia Argentina* (1886), which have passed unnoticed by these critics.<sup>27</sup> This account was written by Bartolomé Mitre, President of Argentina between 1862 and 1868, and has been considered foundational of Argentinian historiography. Its publication in the late-nineteenth century explains the incorporation of cultural debates that unfolded after the emancipation movements. Moreover, Mitre's political affiliation to the Unitarian faction during the Argentinian civil wars between Federalists and Unitarians biased his account of the independence. For this reason, his history has been object of historiographical revisionist efforts since the 1970s.

From the title, *La campaña* appears rooted in nineteenth-century historiography of the south cone, where this word was used to refer to the wars of independence. Likewise, the epistolary basis of the novel mirrors the construction of this historiography. Mitre, for instance, used Belgrano's personal and official correspondence to document Argentina's Independence. In *La campaña*, as stressed by Perkowska, the letters between 'los ciudadanos' are used to 'situar en un contexto y redondear [...] el relato escrito por Bustos en las cartas. Citadas, mencionadas, o parafraseadas numerosas veces en los capítulos centrales' (Perkowska 2000:

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<sup>27</sup> In this chapter, I will only explore the inter-textuality established by Fuentes to *Historia de Belgrano* due to space constraints. However, Fuentes historicism in this novel can include the following histories: Bartolomé Mitre's, *Historia de San Martín* (1887-1890); Diego Barros Arana's, *Historia general de la independencia de Chile* (1854-1858); Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna's, *La independencia en el Perú* (1860), Servando Teresa de Mier's, *Historia de la revolución de Nueva España* (1813) and José María Paz's, *Memorias póstumas* (1855).

99). Even the fictional Café de Malcos where Bustos, Varela and Dorrego gather to discuss the independence, echoes the real Café de Marco in Buenos Aires. According to Mitre the members of the *sociedad patriótica*, followers of Manuel Moreno ‘se reunían públicamente en número considerable en el café conocido por de Marco, llevando por divisa un lazo de cintas azules y rojas’ (Mitre 1887, I: 418). Moreover, part of the itinerary of Baltasar’s campaign in search of Ofelia Salamanca resembles Belgrano’s journey during the independence campaigns through Buenos Aires, El Alto Perú, Lima and Chile that appears in Mitre’s history.

Fuentes establishes multi-layered connections between the literary characters and their historical counterparts through the double and triad mirroring structure. Besides the ideological identification of the three main characters – Bustos, Varela and Dorrego – with the French philosophers – Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire – overtly emphasised by the critics, they mirror different historical figures. As noted by Florence Olivier in *Carlos Fuentes o la imaginación del otro* ‘los nombres de estos personajes se inspiran con claridad en personajes de la historia argentina’ (Olivier 2007: 105). Indeed, Bustos’s surname evokes the historical Juan Bautista Bustos (1779-1830), a criollo patriot from Córdoba, close to the General Manuel Belgrano due to his military performance in El Ejército del Norte around 1815. Bustos became a federalist caudillo in his province and supported Artigas’s ‘Liga federal’ (in Uruguay) and Facundo Quiroga, against the Unitarian (centralist) political tendency of Bernardino Rivadavia (1780-1845). Bustos’s political connection to Quiroga is meaningful given Sarmiento’s denunciation of Rosas’s tyranny, the caudillos’ power in the provinces and the debate between *civilización* and *barbarie* through his biography. Bustos also supported the Federalist *porteño* Manuel Dorrego, who replaced Rivadavia as Head of Government.

Fuentes’s Voltairian Xavier Dorrego mirrors the historical Manuel Dorrego (1787-1828). The former was governor of the province of Buenos Aires (1820; 1827-1828) and was actively involved in the Revolution of Independence and the Argentinian civil wars. In his history, Mitre underscores Belgrano’s fondness for Dorrego and condemns his indiscipline arguing it had led to his dismissal from Belgrano and San Martín’s army. Given his brother’s partnership to Juan Manuel de Rosas, Manuel Dorrego actively supported this Federal caudillo against Rivadavia from his journal *El Argentino*. Dorrego’s execution by Juan Lavalle in 1828 triggered a long-lasting civil war between these political factions.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Sarmiento’s *Facundo* includes Lavalle’s statement of responsibility for Dorrego’s death.

Florence Olivier identifies the writers Florencio Varela (1807-1848) or his brother Juan Cruz Varela (1794-1839) as the historical inspirations behind Fuentes's narrator Manuel Varela. However, I argue that Fuentes's narrator could also be related to Felipe Varela (1821-1870) who featured on the Argentinian civil wars between Federalists and Unitarians. Son to the federal caudillo Javier Varela, he fought against Rosas's *Mazorca* in his youth, moving to Chile in political exile. Upon his return to Argentina, he partook in 'La revolución de los colorados' under the motto 'Libertad o Muerte' against the Unitarian presidency of Bartolomé Mitre, author of *Historia de Belgrano*. Moreover, Varela's nickname 'El Quijote de los Andes' clearly echoes Baltasar's nickname 'El Quijote de las luces' (Fuentes 1994: 26).

While San Martín, Bolívar, Belgrano, Castelli and Moreno appear in *La campaña*, Fuentes's emphasis on less historicised figures becomes a consistent methodological pattern of his literary historicism. Indeed, Bustos, Dorrego and Florencio Varela only appear fleetingly in Mitre's *Historia de Belgrano* given that his narration of the Independence follows Belgrano's biography. Although the biographies of the fictional characters and their historical counterparts diverge, the relationship between the literary and historical figures points to an underlying debate in *La campaña*. Apart from their participation in the independence campaigns, these characters are better known for their involvement in the Argentinian political civil wars between Federalists and Unitarians. Indeed, the historical Bustos, Dorrego and Felipe Varela are bound by their Federalist affiliation against the Unitarian governments of Rivadavia, Mitre and Sarmiento.

Furthermore, given that Unitarian presidents authored the majority of canonical Republican Histories, Juan Bautista Bustos, Manuel Dorrego and Felipe Varela became pariahs of the official Argentinian historiography. For instance, the contemptuous attitude towards these figures in Mitre's history illustrates his political bias. Fuentes's juxtaposition of these particular historical figures *vis-à-vis* Mitre's history becomes meaningful when taking into account the historical conflict behind them. Indeed, Fuentes's literary exercise went hand in hand with the Southern-Cone Revisionist Historiographical current that emerged in the 1940s and consolidated during the 1970s. This trend proposed revising foundational histories of the Argentinian Republic, such as Mitre's and Sarmiento's, which were influenced by their political agendas. Additionally, Fuentes's choice of characters points to the politics behind history writing and his effort to examine the independence struggles in the light of problems like the rise of *caudillaje* and the fratricide civil wars that derived from them. In *La campaña*,

a fictional San Martín expresses this concern: ‘si no creamos instituciones, si no logramos unidad entre los americanos iremos de división, en rencilla, en guerra fratricida’ (Fuentes 1994: 172). As such, *La campaña* articulates a more profound historical reflection that goes beyond the setting of the love story.

Like *Historia de Belgrano*, which follows Belgrano’s journey in the independence campaigns, *La campaña* follows Baltasar’s expeditions. Given the ample time and space encompassed in *La campaña*, Baltasar Bustos mirrors different historical revolutionary figures of the Latin American Independences. It is possible to suggest a methodological similitude in *La campaña* and *Terra nostra* (1975). Indeed in this ‘novela total’ Fuentes fuses in the figure of El Señor the biographies of the Spanish Monarchs Carlos V, Felipe II and Carlos II. Firstly, Belgrano’s concern for the dissemination of education and Castelli’s concern for the freedom of the indigenous population converge in Baltasar’s personality. Indeed, Bustos’s proclaim of *The Rights of Man* in El Alto Perú portrays Castelli’s deeds in these republiquetas, as well as Belgrano’s declaration of the revolutionary rights to the natives of Misiones for ‘los igualaba civil y políticamente a los demás ciudadanos’ (Mitre 1887, II: 385). Moreover, like Cornelio Saavedra who finds himself chased by the patriot and Royalist armies, Baltasar Bustos is also persecuted by both factions for belonging to the patriotic army and for deserting Miguel Lanza’s guerrilla.

Ofelia Salamanca also personifies multiple women tied to the revolutionary cause of Independence across Hispanic America. Even though she is portrayed as a royalist supporter, who used her sexuality to murder patriot revolutionaries, Quintana debunks these rumours at the end of the novel:

Ofelia Salamanca ha sido el agente más fiel de la revolución de independencia en la América [...] ha mantenido viva nuestra lucha mediante la comunicación que tan difícil nos resulta en este continente. Si yo he estado en contacto con San Martín y Bolívar ha sido gracias a ella. Gracias a ella hemos sabido a tiempo que refuerzos españoles salían de El Callao a Acapulco o de Maracaibo a Veracruz. Es una heroína, Baltasar [...] Un día se escribirá su historia. Qué ingeniosa fue a veces: usó una red de canciones que recorrieron América con más velocidad que un rayo, aprovechando unos supuestos amores suyos con el oficialillo criollo de Buenos Aires, para mandarnos noticias. (Fuentes 1994: 249)

This sudden change of perception shifts the emphasis of the novel from Baltasar to Ofelia’s role in the independence. Fuentes’s recognition of the active participation of women through Ofelia Salamanca counteracted their limited appearances in *Historia de Belgrano*.

Ofelia Salamanca also becomes a metonymy of revolutionary women that shaped the independence, such as Juana de Azurduy and María Remedios del Valle, known as ‘la madre

de la patria' (Mitre 1887, II: 251). These two women appear merely mentioned in Mitre's history: 'acompañábale en sus correrías su esposa doña Juana de Azurduy, que llegó a hacerse tan famosa como su marido por su valor, sus hazañas y por su ascendiente sobre los naturales' (565). However, historical studies on these female revolutionaries and their deeds in the Independence struggles have increased in the last decades. The most common role of these revolutionary women was that of informants or spies, as portrayed by Ofelia Salamanca, mirroring Gertrudis Bocanegra who 'pasó varios años curando a los heridos y consiguiendo víveres y medicinas, sirviendo de correo entre los grupos armados insurgentes; para ello armó una red de comunicaciones en la región Pátzcuaro – Tacámbaro, de forma que sus informaciones salvaron en diversas ocasiones la vida de muchos patriotas, entre ellos, varios caudillos' (García 2013: 176). Moreover, like Juana de Azurduy who ruled the 'Republiqueta de La Laguna', Ofelia was actively involved with the war 'para mancharse con la sangre de traidores que pasaban por insurgentes' (Fuentes 1994: 248). Indeed, by shifting the attention to Ofelia's journey and her importance in these struggles, Fuentes points to a historiographical silence on the 'heroína[s] ignorada[s] de las guerras de independencia' (Fuentes 1994: 258).

In *La campaña*, the two major literary twists from the historical narrative are also rooted in Mitre's history. The outbreak of Fuentes's fictional revolution is marked by the fire in the Palacio de la Audiencia, which is not mentioned in historical accounts of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of May in 1810. However, it can be argued that Mitre's metaphorical description of the Revolution as a fire set by the revolutionaries that took over the city of Buenos Aires, becomes a literal fire in Fuentes's fictional account: 'organizados los jóvenes bajo la denominación de *chisperos* [...] ellos eran los encargados de propagar el incendio revolucionario [...] con tal disposición por parte del pueblo y con tales combustibles, el incendio se propagó rápidamente por toda la ciudad' (Mitre 1887, I: 335-336). Furthermore, in Mitre's history, it is also possible to find echoes of the initial mover of the plot, Bustos's kidnapping of Ofelia's son. Indeed, Belgrano's and Bernardino Rivadavia's trip to London sought to negotiate the instauration of a Monarchy in Argentina. Given the Queen María Luisa's refusal to allow the voyage to America of the Infante Francisco de Paula, Sarratea informs Belgrano and Rivadavia about his plan to kidnap (and effectively steal) the prince and send him as King to Argentina. Indeed, Mitre's appendix includes an official letter where the plan is mentioned and documented, but the historian highlights that it was never carried out (Mitre 1887, II: 759-774). In the light of the above, it is possible to suggest that this documented plan turned into a literary *motif* of Fuentes in *La campaña*.

#### 4. 3. 2. *La campaña*: a Critical Portrayal of the Spanish American Revolutions of Independence

Fuentes's critical assessment of the Revolutions of Independence in Spanish America can be traced to *La región*. In this novel, Zamacona and Robles discredit these revolutions for their uncritical implementation of foreign models of modernisation without considering local socio-political contexts: 'durante el siglo pasado, se pensó que con darnos leyes parecidas a las de los EE.UU. o Inglaterra, bastaba' (Fuentes 1999: 392). *La campaña* constitutes Fuentes's literary exploration of the former criticism of the processes of Independence, which was later readdressed in *El espejo enterrado* (1992), *Nuevo tiempo mexicano* (1994) and *En esto creo* (2002).

*La campaña* questions the epic interpretations of the independence movements fostered by Republican Historiography, which depicted them as profound liberation revolutions from the tyranny of Spain, radically altering the former colonial societies. According to the historian Germán Colmenares 'los historiadores hispanoamericanos del siglo XIX recogieron la tradición intelectual de un lenguaje cuyo radicalismo postulaba una ruptura absoluta con el pasado colonial' (Colmenares 1997: xviii). Fuentes's criticism of these revolutions revolves around two central arguments: their creole nature and their uncritical adoption of French ideological models. In *La campaña* and *El espejo enterrado*, Fuentes stresses that the creole origins, aims and effective direction of the Revolutions raised contradictions between the French ideals and the Spanish American realities. Indeed, despite proclaiming the social ideals of the French *Philosophes*, the criollos resisted losing their privileges: 'los militares criollos prometían proteger los intereses de las clases altas e impedir que las razas malditas, indios, negros, zambos, mulatos, cambujos, cuarterones y tentenelaires, se apoderasen del gobierno' (Fuentes 1994: 209).

Maarten Van Delden identifies the 'mismatch in Latin America between the "real" nation and the "legal" nation' (Van Delden 1998: 169) as a recurrent theme in Fuentes's writings. In particular, he explores Fuentes's critical position in *La campaña*, vis-à-vis the Latin American tradition of thought that problematized the blind imposition of foreign models on the continent since its independence. Indeed, as demonstrated by Van Delden, Fuentes's view echoes Simón Bolívar's 'Discurso de Angostura' (1819), Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* (1845) and José Martí's *Nuestra América* (1891) who also stressed the dangers of transposing such models:

The historical experience of Latin America in the nineteenth century, in particular the failure of the liberal model in politics and economics to produce the same results in Latin America as Europe and the United States, seemed to justify the fears expressed forcefully by Bolívar and intermittently by Sarmiento concerning the distortions that would result from an uncritical adherence of Latin Americans to foreign models of any kind. (Van Delden 2000: 171)

It is also possible to find a similar attitude in Juan Bautista Alberdi's *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (1852), which analysed the influence of the American and French Revolutions in the centralist and federalist tendencies of Latin American Republics:

A fuerza de vivir por tantos años en el terreno de la copia y del plagio de las teorías constitucionales de la Revolución francesa y de las constituciones de Norte América, nos hemos familiarizado de tal modo con la utopía, que la hemos llegado a creer un hecho normal y práctico. Paradojal y utopista es el propósito de realizar las concepciones audaces de Siéyes y las doctrinas puritanas de Massachusetts, con nuestros peones y gauchos que apenas aventajan a los indígenas [...] Es tiempo ya de que aspiremos a cosas más positivas y prácticas, y a reconocer que el camino en que hemos andado hasta hoy es el camino de la utopía. (Alberdi 1915: 213-214)

Indeed, his comparison aimed to 'prevenir la imitación errónea de esos grandes modelos, a que todavía nos inclinamos los americanos del Sud' (41). However, Van Delden also underlines the paradoxical situation of these intellectuals, who simultaneously criticised and advocated for European models of civilisation. In addition, Carlos Fuentes's considerations in *La campaña* were influenced by Octavio Paz's analysis on the development of Mexico in *El laberinto*. According to Van Delden, Paz situates the origins of this problem: 'in the disjunction between the ideology mobilised by the Spanish American Revolutionaries in their struggle for independence and the actual political and economic interests they represented' (Van Delden 2000: 171-172).

To consolidate his criticism in *La campaña*, Fuentes illustrates the problematic transposition of foreign ideologies into heterogeneous Spanish American societies by observing the influence of philosophers of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution in their independences. According to him, 'la inspiración ideológica mayor vino de los filósofos franceses de la Ilustración [...] en vez de Tomás de Aquino, Tomás Paine y Tomás Jefferson. En vez de San Agustín, el santoral civil, Montesquieu, Voltaire y Rousseau' (Fuentes 2008: 348). The three main characters of *La campaña*, who call themselves 'los ciudadanos', embody these ideologies. Manuel Varela, Baltasar Bustos and Xavier Dorrego, mirror the philosophical ideals of Denis Diderot (1713-1784), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Voltaire (1694-1778), respectively. In *La campaña*, these philosophers symbolise the ideals of modernity, government and society of the revolutionary times:

Dorrego es Voltairiano, cree en la razón, pero solo se la concede a una minoría iluminada capaz de conducir a la masa a la felicidad; Bustos es Rousseauiano cree en la pasión que nos

lleva a recuperar la verdad natural y a reunir como en un haz las leyes de la naturaleza y las de la Revolución. Son dos caras del siglo XVIII. Hay una más, la mía, la de Manuel Varela, impresor, que es la máscara sonriente de Diderot, la convicción de que todo cambia constantemente y nos ofrece, en cada momento de la existencia un repertorio de donde escoger. (Fuentes 1994: 25)

According to Maarten Van Delden, ‘in the debate between these three figures Fuentes’s sympathies lie with Diderot. After all, Varela is the narrator, and so it is Diderot’s voice that occupies center stage in the novel’ (Van Delden 1993: 337). Nonetheless, Rousseau’s ideas gain centrality since the narrative emphasis of the novel is placed on Baltasar’s journey through Spanish America. Fuentes considers that ‘Rousseau es quizás el escritor que mayor influencia ha ejercido jamás sobre la historia, la sensibilidad y la literatura de la América española’ (Fuentes 2008: 348).

Indeed, the novel is permeated by mentions of Rousseau’s *Émile ou De l’éducation* (1762) and *Du contrat social* (1762) and to his sociopolitical ideas of freedom and justice, *une volonté*, the natural goodness of men and nature, the sovereignty of the people and the good savage. However, Baltasar’s revolutionary quest also constitutes a learning journey in which his ideology and, by extension, Rousseau’s postulates are continuously confronted by the diverse realities and necessities of the American continent. Likewise, the mottoes of the French Revolution *Freedom, Equality* and *Fraternity* are equally questioned and debunked through Baltasar’s campaign. Like with regards to *El naranjo*, Florence Olivier’s reading of *La campaña* stresses its Bakhtinian parodic inversion in the conflictive encounters between the Enlightened discourse and the creoles’ aspirations: ‘se representa con ironía el conflictivo reconocimiento de los indígenas por parte de los criollos para la aplicación de la doctrina de la igualdad republicana’ (Olivier 2007: 217). Van Delden’s analysis of this novel is similar, arguing that ‘*La campaña* is on one level a satire of the attempt to apply Enlightenment ideals to the specific conditions of Spanish America in the early nineteenth century’ (Van Delden 2000:187).

In *La campaña*, Fuentes illustrates how in the revolutionary discourse ‘freedom’ solely signified the political liberation from Spanish tyranny. Although social freedom was stated *de iure* it was not implemented *de facto*, stressing the continuity in the republic of the colonial maxim ‘se obedece pero no se cumple’. José Antonio Bustos points out to Baltasar the contradiction in the liberal regime of the Junta of Buenos Aires, criticising the selective freedom implicit in the law of ‘libertad de vientres’, which ‘declara[ba] libres a todos los hijos de esclavos nacidos de ahora en adelante’ (Fuentes 1994: 64). He stresses that the former

slaves would remain in bonded labour and condemns its paternalistic justification in *La Gazeta de Buenos Ayres*:

“Los negros deben seguir sirviendo porque la esclavitud, por injusta que haya sido, les dio mentalidad de esclavos. Una vez esclavos, siempre esclavos”, dice el diario. Y lo dice para atacar las leyes españolas de la esclavitud, esto es lo más irónico: ¡confórmense!, ¡les daremos la libertad poco a poco!, ¡La costumbre de la esclavitud los ha marcado para siempre, no les permite ser libres, sino con cuentagotas! Vientres libres, pero solo a partir de *nosotros*. (64)

Indeed, before joining the patriotic army, Baltasar realises that ‘la república criolla se iba a desentender de la esclavitud de hecho; solo iba a reformarla en derecho [...] Va a haber libertad, pero no igualdad’ (65). This conclusion is reasserted throughout his ten-year journey across the continent. Indeed, Baltasar underlines the escalating fears amongst the criollos of a pardocracia when crossing through Venezuela: ‘pronto se dio cuenta de la realidad de las guerras de independencia: todos querían libertad para sí, pero nadie quería igualdad con los negros’ (185). As such, the creole idea of freedom did not include the diverse society that inhabited these republics, illustrating at the same time contradictions in the ideas of fraternity and equality in the creole mentality.

Justice and equality are two of Baltasar’s significant concerns throughout the novel, for him ‘la igualdad y la justicia eran el problema de la revolución’ (28). In fact, the novel starts when Bustos emulating Rousseau’s postulates ‘llevó a la práctica las ideas revolucionarias’ (24) by exchanging the babies. Nevertheless, Baltasar’s hopes for equality are ironically negated by chance through the subsequent death of the black baby and the disappearance of Ofelia’s son. Although, the political independence from Spain encompassed a process of self-definition across Spanish America, the predominance of the creole interests translated into the exclusion of its heterogeneous inhabitants and cultures. This is the case of Sarmiento’s *Facundo* (1845), which in its criticism of Juan Manuel de Rosas’s dictatorship portrayed the Argentinian society in the dichotomy of *civilización* and *barbarie*. *Civilización* was equated to Europe and the Argentinian cities as recipients of European culture; conversely, *barbarie* denoted the rural ‘pampa’ and its nomadic mestizo inhabitants known as ‘Gauchos’. Paradoxically, Baltasar, the fictional incarnation of Rousseau’s philosophy, experiences a constant conflict between his ideology and his attitudes towards his national others: indigenous, blacks and gauchos. In close inter-textuality with *Facundo*, Baltasar

veía en el gauchaje algo similar a una horda de mongoles. Cada uno era un Gengis Khan portador de una historia pasada hecha de violencias, supersticiones y estupideces, que Voltaire había condenado para siempre. Baltasar no imaginaba, simplemente, un futuro con gauchos. Le echaban a perder su visión idílica de la naturaleza. (Fuentes 1994: 44)

Despite his disdain for the gauchos, Baltasar oscillates between these cultural identities. Ironically, his rural creole ascendance, his physical transformation and change of costumes while fighting in the patriotic armies blur the differences between him and the gauchos (120).

Additionally, Fuentes problematises Rousseau's idea of the good savage *vis-à-vis* the indigenous situation in Spanish America in the light of Sarmiento's Manichean dichotomy. Although *barbarism* denoted the gauchos, in practice this association was extended to the natives and slaves. In *El espejo enterrado*, Fuentes argues that despite Sarmiento's dismissal of Rosas's regime as *barbaric*, his alleged civilised presidential policies had enforced the extermination of the native communities: 'la verdadera "barbarie" de esta ideología "civilizada" consistió en que excluía de la noción de civilización a todos los modelos alternativos de existencia, indios, negros, comunitarios, así cómo toda relación de propiedad que no fuese la consagrada por la economía liberal' (Fuentes 2008: 424). Through this paradox, Fuentes denounced the barbaric methods used against Native American populations, legitimised under the rhetoric of civilisation and their effective exclusion from the newly imagined republics. In the novel, Baltasar looks upon the natives as incarnations of the Rousseauian good savage as they 'está[ba]n más cerca de la naturaleza que nosotros' (Fuentes 1994: 84). However, his decree of racial equality in El Alto Perú is contrasted by the abuse of the indigenous population during the Independence wars where 'las bestias de carga en los tres casos, eran los indios' (77). The contradiction in Baltasar's ideals, actions and looks denotes the failed transferral of European ideas into Latin American contexts, leading to the Republican persecution of racial and cultural others.

Baltasar's time in Castelli's Ejército del Norte, 'para mantener la integridad de la república contra las fuerzas realistas' (67) becomes a recognition of the continent that challenges Rousseau's precept of *une volonté* and social contract. Rousseau's postulates advocate the sovereignty of the people, their freedom, equal participation in the *Res Publica*, and agreement on a political contract. *La campaña*'s narrator emphasises the division, regarding the political path of the republic, of the leaders of the 'Junta Porteña' Cornelio Saavedra, Juan José Castelli and Mariano Moreno (27-28). Following independence, the lack of unity between the patriots evolved into civil wars between centralists and federalists across the continent. In addition, the racial and cultural diversity of the continent furthered the political fragmentation of the Revolution as shown by the secessionist 'Republiquetas' of El Alto Perú, where 'los demás caudillos locales no le daban entrada al discurso revolucionario de Baltasar' (80).

Indeed, Baltasar's decree to 'liberar de la servidumbre a los indios del altiplano' (83) eloquently summarises the distance between the enlightened revolutionary discourse and the

indigenous colonial realities. In Ayopaya, stronghold of the montoneros led by the priest Ildefonso de las Muñecas, Bustos declares on horseback: ‘se suprimen los abusos, se libera a los indios del tributo, se les reparten las tierras, se establecen escuelas y se declara al indio el igual de cualquier otro nacional argentino y americano’ (83). Ironically, to be acknowledged by the local population Baltasar has to assert his superiority by riding a horse, symbol of the Spanish Conquest. Moreover, the popular consent for the Revolution seems undermined by the fact that the indigenous population does not speak Spanish. This dilemma between the personal and public realms, experienced by Baltasar, mirrors the historical creole imposition of ‘La revolución porteña’ across other South American provinces and republics.

Finally, the continental scope in *La campaña* extends these criticisms to the Independence processes across Spanish America. Zsuzsanna Csikós states that ‘al escribir la novela, Fuentes, recrea el sueño Bolivariano de una América hispánica unida’ (Csikós 2011: 107). Nonetheless, despite shared cultural elements, Bustos’s journey emphasises the impossibility of a continental unity and, instead, poses diversity as defining of Latin America. Indeed, like Van Delden points out in his article ‘Carlos Fuentes: From Identity to Alternativity’ in *La campaña* the Rousseauian political dream identified with a unified identity gives way to a more inclusive version in alternativity: the acceptance and inclusion of diversity (Van Delden 1993: 344).

As such Baltasar’s direct experience of the revolutions across Spanish America illustrates the diverse nature of these societies asserting the permanence of colonial social structures despite independence. In *La campaña*, the failed implementation of the French revolutionary ideals, specifically those of freedom, equality, justice and fraternity challenges August Comte’s theory of development by stages. This belief encouraged the adoption of foreign legal apparatuses by the revolutionary governments in the hopes for modernisation. Fuentes criticises that the pursuit of these foreign ideals meant in practice the negation and, occasional, annihilation of racial and cultural others that constitute Spanish American societies. As such, Fuentes’s counter argument to these ideas stages the independence in Latin America as a political project based on exclusion, rather than inclusion. Indeed, the Mexican revolutionary priest Anselmo Quintana, at the end of *La campaña*, stresses to Baltasar ‘usted es blanco, y yo soy bien moreno. ¿Qué me importa su libertad si no incluye mi igualdad?’ (Fuentes 1994: 112) highlighting that the Spanish American republics needed to integrate the other, recognise their realities and assess them equally to attain modernisation.

This discussion also exemplifies Fuentes's exploration of the dilemma between tradition and modernity in Republican Latin America, centred on the evaluation of the Hispanic heritage in these republics. Fuentes underlines that by the time of the independence, institutions like the Church and political traditions bequeathed from Spain were deeply rooted in Spanish American idiosyncrasies. According to Fuentes, in emulating modern French ideals, the creole revolutionaries opted for negating these central elements of Spanish American identity. Along his revolutionary journey, Bustos encounters revolutionary priests like Ildefonso de las Muñecas, a guerrilla leader of the republiqueta del Inquisiví in El Alto Perú; Francisco Arias a patriot revolutionary in San Martín's army; and Anselmo Quintana, a Mexican priest who joined the revolutionary cause due to the 'ley de fueros' established by Carlos III of Spain. These fictional revolutionary-priests mirror historical characters such as Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811) and José María Morelos (1765-1815) in Mexico, and Ildefonso de las Muñecas (1776-1816) leader of the Republiqueta of Larecaja. Fuentes's emphasis on these religious revolutionaries and their importance in *La campaña* underlines the singularity of this phenomenon in the emancipation of Latin America. Moreover, through these characters, the author shows that religion and modernisation were not mutually exclusive and that the Catholic faith was deeply ingrained in Latin American idiosyncrasy positing its elision as problematic.

Indeed, these characters' vision of the Revolution converges, offering similar reflections around the debate between tradition and modernisation, and about the pursuit of alien development models in Latin America. De las Muñecas, Rodríguez and Quintana urge Baltasar to accept and embrace his Hispanic and indigenous cultural heritage in equal measures, instead of denying it, if he aimed for the inclusive development of his society. At the end of the novel, Anselmo Quintana eloquently summarises this position:

Sí, que bueno hubiera sido ser fundados por Montescú, en vez de Torquemada. Pues nomás no. ¿Queremos ahora ser europeos, modernos, ricos, regidos por el espíritu de las leyes y de los derechos universales del hombre? Pues yo te digo que nomás no se va a poder si no cargamos con el muertito de nuestro pasado. Lo que te estoy pidiendo es que no sacrifiquemos nada, m'ijo, ni la magia de los indios, ni la teología de los cristianos, ni la razón de los europeos nuestros contemporáneos; mejor vamos recobrando toditito lo que somos para seguir siendo y ser finalmente algo mejor. (Fuentes 1994: 243-244).

This fragment sums up Fuentes's recurrent stance of an inclusive progress that seeks modernisation with awareness to tradition in his criticism of the independence and Mexican Revolutions. It is relevant to highlight the influence of José Martí's *Nuestra América* (1891) in Fuentes's argument. Indeed, De las Muñecas and Quintana echo Martí's considerations:

El buen gobernante en América no es el que sabe cómo se gobierna el alemán o el francés, sino el que sabe con qué elementos está hecho su país, y cómo puede ir guiándolos en junto, para llegar por métodos e instituciones nacidas del país mismo, a aquel estado apetecible

donde cada hombre se conoce y ejerce, y disfrutan todos de la abundancia que la Naturaleza puso para todos en el pueblo que fecundan con su trabajo y defienden con sus vidas. (Martí 2005: 33)

Hence, Fuentes's critical portrayal of the processes of Independence in *La campaña* identifies the paradoxes in the political constitution of Latin American republics and points to the need of avoiding their perpetuation in contemporary neoliberal models of development.

#### **4. 3. 3. *Federico en su balcón*: from the National to the Universal**

In his posthumous novel, *Federico en su balcón* (2012), Fuentes builds a general reflection on this historical phenomenon. The book takes a dialogical form, as the stories of the revolution and its characters are re-constructed through the dialogue between a literary Federico Nietzsche and his metamorphic interlocutor during a long-lasting day. The identity of the latter is kept ambiguous throughout the novel. According to Steven Boldy, 'el autor se desdobra en sus personajes y en su interlocutor Friedrich Nietzsche' (Boldy 2016:122). Although, this character can be considered a literary alter ego of Carlos Fuentes, it is also identified at times with characters like Dante Loredano in 'Federico (10)' and 'Niña Elisa'.

'De la paz el Arcángel divino' introduces the characters, while the core-plot of the novel develops from 'Y retiemble en sus centros la tierra' portraying the story of a failed revolution in an unnamed Republic.<sup>29</sup> The narration is subdivided in numbered fragments that correspond to Federico's dialogue or to the characters, which create a superposition of times and spaces in the story. This kaleidoscopic structure is central to Fuentes's literary historicism and reminds the reader of *La región* or *Agua quemada* where intertwined stories form a panoramic view of the topic. Likewise, allusions to twentieth-century political warfare contexts and technological development allow the reader to place the plot within this time frame: 'Andrea y sus hombres impidieron que saliese el vuelo al Medio Oriente' (Fuentes 2012:109). Moreover, the anonymity of the republic and the varied nationalities of the characters stress the universality of the plot and characterisation of the fictional revolution.

The revolution unfolds in a republic whose President, Solibor, is merely the puppet of a group of entrepreneurs and their economic interests. Thus, Leonardo Loredano, who mediates the negotiations between the bourgeois groups of the Republic, holds its political power. Although the discontent of the citizens with the government propels the revolution, Dante Loredano, Aarón Azar, Saúl Mendes and Andrea del Sargo become its political leaders, as

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<sup>29</sup> The section-titles of *Federico* are verses of the Mexican National Anthem.

seen in the fragments entitled 'El jardín de Epicuro' where they gather to plan the revolution. As stressed by Boldy, the triad of revolutionary characters (Dante, Saúl, Aarón) resembles that of *La campaña* emphasising Fuentes's narrative pattern of mirroring characters.

Unlike Fuentes's novels on the Mexican or Latin American Revolutions, in *Federico* the historical connection is blurred. However, a closer reading of Fuentes's fictional revolution and its main characters reveals underlying traces to the French Revolution. This analysis emphasises the general convergences between the historical and fictional revolutions and illustrates a different example of Fuentes's method of literary historicism, given that the historiographical sources in Fuentes's depiction are less transparent.

The French Revolution connotes the political and civil turmoil in France during 1789-1795 when the different estates of the French Kingdom underwent an armed rebellion against the Reign of Louis XVI (1754-1793) and Marie Antoinette (1755-1793). The instauration of the French Republic (1792) and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* (1789) influenced by the ideas of the *philosophes* constitute a turning point from the *Ancien Régime*. The Revolution was propelled by a convergence of factors including the Seven Years War with England (1755-1764), the French support of the American Revolution, the famine of 1788 caused by wheat scarcity, and the unequal distribution of wealth in the tripartite-social structure of the French Kingdom: Nobility, Clergy and Third Estate (composed by bankers, peasants, traders, artisans, servants).

The novel's connection to the French Revolution is insinuated by the affirmation 'la revolución, como Saturno, devora a sus propios hijos, dijo Saint-Just en el clamor de la revolución francesa' (166). Although Fuentes attributes this comparison to Saint Just (1767-1794), the association of the revolution to Saturn is originally found in the Girondin Pierre Verginaud's (1753-1793) speech at the Revolutionary tribunal on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1793. Fuentes's inaccurate reference can be considered a slip, given that this metaphor has become iconic in French historiography, culture and modern theories of Revolution such as Arendt's and Calvert's.

Fuentes deflects the comparison between the fictional and historical revolutions by their diverse temporal contexts and the fact that the literary conflict is not set against a monarchical regime but a democratic republic. Moreover, the early development of both revolutions sets them apart. In *Federico*, the triad of intellectuals plans the political upheaval from the start as

the only vehicle capable of altering the socio-economic structure of the Republic. In contrast, the French Revolution was not planned and initially took the form of a Palace Revolution as defined by Calvert. Indeed, the aristocracy asked the King to convene the *Estates General* to alleviate the economic crisis. At most, the group of aristocrats led by Jacques Necker (1732-1804) saw the assembly as an opportunity to install a Constitutional Monarchy to control the King's expenses and power.

Despite these differences, the historical and fictional revolutions are tied by their numerous similarities. Firstly, both revolutions are immersed in international warfare contexts that trigger the social upheaval. Lefebvre claims that 'the immediate cause of the revolution was a financial crisis originating with the war in America. Necker had financed the war by borrowing, and his successor, Calonne, had used the same method to pay off arrears' (Lefebvre 2001: 93). Likewise, in *Federico*, the economy of the republic is centred on warfare and weapon production. Indeed, to maintain the economic stability of the entrepreneurs, Solibor's government stages on-going foreign wars in African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries fuelled with national soldiers: 'Gebhart y Quesnay creían que un conflicto externo era indispensable para producir lo que la guerra necesitaba, de uniformes a jeeps, de botas a municiones, de motores a burócratas, sobre todo, de militares' (Fuentes 2012: 272).

This political context underlines the participation of the military forces in both revolutions. The French National Guard joined the popular protests, defending the mob from the attack of other military forces: 'the cavalry undertook to make them disperse and charged the crowd at the Palace Louis XVI. The French Guards in return attacked the cavalry' (Lefebvre 2001: 119). Moreover, the historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874) considers that the National Guards joined the revolutionaries for as members of the Third Estate they could relate to their struggles. In *Federico*, echoing the historical event, the military plays an essential role in the sparking, unfolding and ending of the fictional revolution. In the novel, the uprising is triggered and taken to the streets by the military forces, under Del Sargo's command: 'marcharon por las calles. Nadie los supo detener. La policía se amedrentó viendo marchar soldados armados. Muchos se unieron a ellos' (Fuentes 2012: 109).

The development of both revolutions stresses their convergences. The French Revolution began with the Royal calling of the *Estates General* in Versailles. However, it was the attitude from the First and Second Estates against the delegates of the Third Estate that led to what Georges Lefebvre calls the Bourgeois Revolution and to the instauration of the National

Assembly on 17<sup>th</sup> June of 1789. As stated by Mallet du Pan in January 1789 “King, despotism, and constitution have become secondary questions. Now it is war between the Third Estate and the other two orders” (Mallet in Lefebvre 2001: 98). On 20<sup>th</sup> June the *Communes* of the National Assembly found their meeting venue closed under the pretext of refurbishment. Thus, they occupied an indoor tennis court in Versailles and swore ‘to remain united until a constitution was established’ (Lefebvre 2001: 108). In *Federico*, the fictional Constitutional Assembly parodies its French counterpart, portraying the clashing of values and social behaviour when diverse parts of the society are forced to coexist in a confined space.

According to Lefebvre, the Parisian Revolution unfolded on 14<sup>th</sup> July when a popular riot broke out in the city in search for ammunition, and culminated with the storming of the Bastille and the Hotel de Ville, centre of the government. The Governor, Marquis Bernard De Launey (1740-1789), and the Provost, Jacques de Flesselles (1730-1789) were killed by the crowd and ‘their heads were paraded through the city on pikes’ (Lefebvre 2001: 120). Fuentes’s fictional revolution echoes the Storming of the Bastille. Indeed, Saúl Mendes’s speech against the corrupt government of the republic and his call for violence as an instrument for justice intensifies the riot instigated by the military. Fuelled by his exhortation the mob attacks the Presidential Palace and President Solibor finds a similar fate to De Launey and Fesselles: ‘la prueba del éxito revolucionario: la cabeza del presidente Solibor paseada en una lanza por las avenidas afiebradas, celebrantes, confusas y alegres, de los ciudadanos libres’(Fuentes 2012: 109).

Moreover, the aftermath and institutionalisation of the revolution in France are also featured in Fuentes’s novel. Indeed, division amongst the revolutionary leaders and the political agendas of the Girondins and Jacobins followed the defeat of the Monarchy. The French Assembly used the threat of counter-revolution as a scapegoat to declare an on-going revolution, promoting foreign wars against Austria and England and purges within the Assembly. Likewise, in Fuentes’s novel, the institutionalisation of the revolution leads to the division between its three main leaders: Aarón Azar, Dante Loredano and Saúl Mendes. The Constitutional Assembly led by Azar deflected the inner problems of the revolution by promoting fear of an external and internal counter-revolution: ‘la asamblea revolucionaria puso al voto la ejecución de contra-revolucionarios. Se propusieron largas listas de antiguos funcionarios, de expatriados, de traidores. Todos juntos y todos revueltos’ (172). In the

fictional and historical revolutions, these strategies led to the instauration of a dictatorial regime, which revoked the liberties initially granted.

#### **4. 3. 4. Literary and Historical Revolutionaries**

As in *La campaña*, a reader familiar with the history of the French Revolution can establish the connection between historical and fictional characters in *Federico*. This historicism becomes a methodological pattern in Fuentes's late literary writings. In this case, the biographies of the historical figures constitute the building blocks of Fuentes's revolutionary leaders. Indeed, Saúl Mendes, Sor Consolata, Dante Loredano, Aarón Azar and Andrea del Sargo mirror the historical French revolutionaries Jean-Paul Marat, Charlotte Corday, Georges-Jacques Danton, Maximilien Robespierre and Napoleon Bonaparte, respectively. According to Boldy, 'Saúl Mendes, Dante (a veces Dantón) Loredano y Aarón Azar, [son] fácilmente identificados con Marat, Danton y Robespierre, y asociados explícitamente con la verdad (Saúl), el poder (Aarón) y el compromiso o la imposibilidad (Dante)' (Boldy 2017: 126). The connection to the historical figures, blurred by the author, has the effect of universalising the prototype of revolutionary characters, enhancing a universal idea of Revolution.

Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793) or 'the wrath of the people' was a French doctor actively involved in the development of the French Revolution. His radical political views agreed with those of the Jacobins. Through his journals *L'Ami du peuple* (1789-1792) and *La République française* Marat spread his political accusations, causing the execution of moderate revolutionaries (mostly Girondins) accused of treason (Lefebvre 2001: 236-237). Marat spent most of his later days taking medicinal baths to alleviate his chronic skin-illness (*Dermatitis Herpetiforme*), presumably contracted in the Parisian catacombs. The Girondist Charlotte Corday (1768-1792) met Marat under the pretence of revealing to him a list of Girondin traitors and stabbed him in his bathtub on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1793. She was sentenced to death by guillotine on 17<sup>th</sup> July of 1793. Marat's controversial death made him a martyr of the Revolution.

In *Federico*, Saúl Mendes and his wife María Águila can be equated to Marat and Corday. Like Marat, Mendes is an ideologist of the revolution, who believes that 'la violencia es el instrumento de la justicia' (Fuentes 2012: 103) and the vehicle to obtain political change. Mendes also uses his journal to disseminate his radical revolutionary ideals (126). Moreover, he fears that revolutionary government, once institutionalised, would become an oppressive

force, betraying the idea of freedom and the revolution: ‘ser revolucionario es ser opositor. Siempre [...] contra toda posición oficial’ (115). His chronic skin condition, in the novel associated with his Judaic ancestry, forced him to bathe to alleviate his stigmas (141). Mendes preaches his ideology half-naked from his balcony: ‘miraba a Saúl Mendes perorar desde el balcón con una toalla blanca en la cabeza, semidesnudo’(134). This description of Mendes points to Jacques-Louis David’s painting *La Mort de Marat* (1793), which depicts him with a towel on his head. Saúl meets a similar death to Marat; María-Águila, mirroring Charlotte Corday, stabs him after his bath. Unlike Corday, María Águila acknowledges ‘te mato para que cumplas tu destino revolucionario [...] Tú nunca traicionarás, qué la revolución sea traicionada por otros’ (152). In death, Saúl Mendes, like Marat, becomes the martyr of the revolution. This statement reinforces Fuentes’s binary depiction of martyr and survivor revolutionaries, analysed with regards to the Mexican Revolution.

Despite his aristocratic family ascendance, Dante Loredano strives for social change as ideologist and leader of the revolutionary movement. Following his moderate views, Dante acts as an appeasing figure mediating between Aarón and Saúl’s opposing notions of the revolution. His conciliatory revolution is unpopular in the Assembly, which fears Dante’s ideological betrayal in favour of his brother Leonardo: ‘¿Cuánto tardarán tu hermano y los suyos en aprovechar a su favor las nuevas leyes, convertirlo en oportunidad de rehacer fortunas, de acumular riquezas?’(140). Moreover, his opposition to the radical purges of revolutionaries within the Assembly during Aarón Azar’s Terror Regime, leads to his execution under the accusation of treason (172-175).

Fuentes’s character mirrors the French revolutionary Georges-Jacques Danton (1759-1794), a lawyer actively involved in the unfolding of the Revolution. He had founded the Committee of Public Salvation led by his colleague Maximilien Robespierre. During the institutionalisation of the Revolution, the conciliatory character of his political ideas faced the opposition of the Constitutional Assembly. Indeed, Danton is renowned for acting as a conciliator with the Girondins in 1792 (Lefebvre 2001: 232-233). Saint-Just (1767-1794) and Robespierre accused him of treason against the Republic due to his moderate revolutionary views. Danton, Camille Desmoulines and Philippe Fabre were arrested on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1794 and sentenced to die by guillotine on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April of 1794.

Furthermore, the Jacobin Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794) symbolises simultaneously the victory and failure of the French Revolution. Despite his orphanhood Robespierre became a

writer, lawyer and politician. Lefebvre, Michelet and Arendt stress Robespierre's change of thought and policies. While he supported individual freedom and freedom of speech at the start of the Revolution, he annulled these rights during his *Reign of Terror* (1793-1794): 'no sooner had Robespierre risen to power and become the political head of the new revolutionary government [...] than he reversed his position completely' (Arendt 1990: 241). Girondins and Jacobins who deviated from Robespierre's view of the Revolution were suspects of treason and faced a death penalty in the name of virtue (Arendt: 79). After Danton's death, members of the Assembly plotted against Robespierre, fearing an eventual purge within the institution. Louis de Saint-Just, Robespierre and Georges Couthon were detained under charges of treason on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1794. Robespierre was sentenced to death by guillotine and taken to *Place de la Révolution* in a wagon.

Fuentes's literary figure Aarón Azar mirrors 'the incorruptible' Robespierre. Indeed, Saúl is concerned by Aarón's righteousness and rigid interpretation of the revolution: 'Aarón sirve un sueño moral imposible, un sueño que solo existe en el soñador mismo' (Fuentes 2012: 141). Aarón's association with Robespierre strengthens in the unfolding of his revolutionary regime. Like his French counterpart, Aarón justifies the use of violence and death in the pursuit of virtue. Thus, he also unleashes the purge of political dissenters within the Assembly, inaugurating a Reign of Terror in the fictional republic. Fuentes highlights the irony in the revolutionary discourse 'from freedom to terror' through Aarón's occupation of Solibor's palace, which symbolises the perpetuation of political oppression. Following the historical event, the fictional Assembly queries Aarón's extreme policies after Dante's execution, capturing and accusing him of treason, as 'nadie era traidor, pero ¿quién sería el siguiente traidor?' (Fuentes 2012: 191). Like Robespierre, Aarón is transported to his execution on a wagon. During this journey, Aarón is humiliated, publicly scorned and physically attacked by the people, until he is finally killed (263).

Finally, the puppeteer behind the unfolding of the fictional revolution was the Corsican soldier Andrea del Sargo, who echoes the Corsican General Napoleon Bonaparte. Nevertheless, the relation between this historical character and his literary counterpart seems more distant. At the end of *Federico*, the reader realises that del Sargo was responsible for the direction taken by revolution. The soldier admits remaining in the background, waiting that Aarón 'cometiese los crímenes que nos eran indispensables, siempre y cuando nosotros no los cometiésemos' (Fuentes 2012: 272). In the historical revolution, Bonaparte took over the government of the Moderate Directory and attempted to restore the Monarchy. Likewise, in

the novel Andrea appoints Leonardo Loredano as the leader of the government, stressing the return of the political body of the Republic to its pre-revolutionary state.

As previously demonstrated the French Revolution becomes the historical substratum of the characters and general plot in *Federico*. Unlike Fuentes's other novels in his Revolution cycle, *Federico* contains an attempt from the author to diffuse its historical association. Moreover, Fuentes's exploration of the French Revolution is also tied to his literary interpretations of Latin American experiences of Revolution and the understanding of these events due to their political, ideological and historical connection. Indeed, as pointed out by Boldy, the titles in *Federico* are quotations of the Mexican National Anthem (1854). Moreover, Zacarías Loredano evokes Fuentes's revolutionary characters like Artemio Cruz and Juan Francisco López Greene, who use the social, political and economic platform of the revolution to acquire personal fortunes. Zacarías's bastard son, Juan Colorado, also goes by aliases like 'El manco de Celaya, el Centauro del Norte, el Atila del sur y el Varón de cuatro Ciénagas, y para los más malpensados, el Quinceuñas' (289). According to Steven Boldy, 'Juan Colorado es a la vez todos los líderes revolucionarios desde "el Manco de Celaya" hasta "el Quinceuñas," es decir, la sucesión fraticida desde Obregón hasta Santa Anna, pasando por Villa, Zapata y Carranza' (Boldy 2016: 132). The former references underline the connection between the historical revolutions, as well as Fuentes's journey into French history to create a more rounded view of his conception of Revolution.

#### **4. 4. The Anatomy of Revolutions: Fuentes, Arendt and Nietzsche.**

Throughout this chapter, I have analysed Fuentes's stylistic and thematic patterns in his literary reinterpretations of the Mexican Revolution, the Revolutions of Independence and the French Revolution and the connection to their historical depictions. Fuentes's semantic reassessment of these historical events is marked by his critical approach, which questions, debunks and complements traditional interpretations of these revolutions *vis-à-vis* official silences or their mystification as foundational moments. Such is the case of Fuentes's emphasis on the proletarian sector and the massacres of Cananea and Río Blanco in the unfolding of the Mexican Revolution. Moreover, his criticism of the independence struggles and the Mexican Revolution contrasts with their epic rendering by nineteenth-and-twentieth-century official historiographies. The diachronic perspective distinctive of Fuentes's historicist approach allows the reader to assess these events in the light of their long-term consequences, while stressing their connection to present contexts. Fuentes's understanding of

Revolution through his *oeuvre* comprises a double-movement: from national to international events and from particular revolutions to the general phenomenon. Indeed, *Federico* sums up Fuentes's exploration of this topic stressing general reflections on Revolution, blurring historical specificity and referentiality.

The philosophical discussions developed throughout the dialogues in *Federico*, in the light of Fuentes's Revolution cycle, allow the reader to identify a general typology of revolutions. Boldy highlights that this novel 'condensa todo el pensamiento de Carlos Fuentes sobre la revolución, su larga meditación sobre el individuo y el poder, tema que comparte con Friedrich Nietzsche' (Boldy 2017: 131). Indeed, Fuentes links his reflection on Revolution to Nietzsche's works by discussing his philosophical postulates on *freedom*, *violence*, the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* through his literary character, *vis-à-vis* the French Revolution. In the novel, the inter-textuality with Nietzsche's works is a central *motif* and could be indicative of Fuentes's intellectual influences. Indeed, Boldy states that the German philosopher is 'una figura que lo ha acompañado en gran parte de su obra desde *Cambio de piel*' (122). Moreover, although it is not possible to establish an exact inter-textual relation between Fuentes's notion of Revolution in *Federico* and Arendt's theories, her characterisation of this phenomenon helps frame his literary reflection. Indeed, both interpretations underline similar aspects and hold complementary discussions on the typology of revolutions.

Firstly, Arendt stresses that a revolution could only develop in a society where its *body politic* has become politically or economically corrupt and oppressive of the civil society, posing revolution as the only path to freedom from the tyrannical system (Arendt 1990: 112). Likewise, Fuentes's depictions of the three Revolutions stress the corruption of the political systems (Colonial, Porfiriato, Solibor) as characteristic of the fictional revolutionary outbreaks. Moreover, the interdependence between violence, war and revolution is also present in both reflections. Arendt highlights the historical connection of both phenomena, as revolutions unfolded through armed insurrection (or civil war) and points to the mid-twentieth century tendency to moralise the justification of war given recent conflicts. Fuentes's reflection in *Federico* seems to complement Arendt's by problematising the bio-political question and the commodification of war in late-twentieth-century international wars in the Middle East and Africa. Indeed, in Fuentes's novel, war turns into the business of a minority, mirroring contemporary warfare where global conflict is endorsed by financial gain, questioning the pursuit of *freedom* in war-discourses.

Likewise, Fuentes portrays violence as the primary vehicle of the three literary and historical revolutions. In *Federico*, President Solibor's regime is overthrown through a violent upheaval. Similarly, it becomes the principal device of the revolutionary governments in the aftermath of the uprising through 'la contra-revolución –esto distraía y permitía regresar a la revolución porque si la revolución estaba amenazada, lo demás no contaba' (Fuentes 2012: 204). In the end, the fall of the revolutions is marked by the same violence that initiated them. Although Fuentes identifies this characteristic as part of the revolutionary phenomenon, he also condemns the recourse to violence in revolutions, as illustrated by his letter to the Zapatista Subcomandante Marcos, published in *Nuevo tiempo mexicano*: 'yo voto porque nuestro país encuentre vías que cierren el paso a la violencia, que no hagan necesaria una acción como la que ustedes iniciaron el 1 de enero (Fuentes 1994: 175).

It is relevant to note that Arendt, Nietzsche and Fuentes discussed the idea of *freedom* or *liberty* and its relation to the Law in their works. Arendt and Fuentes (through Nietzsche's works) explore the definition of *freedom* (*liberté*) and its repercussions in the ideology and development of revolutions. As seen in the introduction to this section, Arendt posits *freedom* and in particular *liberty* (freedom mediated by social contract) as the primary goal of revolutions. The notion of *freedom* and the instinct of *free will* appear across Nietzsche's works. Although not defined concisely, there seem to be two conflictive notions in his understanding of *freedom*. For instance, the idea of individual liberty is effectively negated by the circular predetermination inherent to his notion of *Eternal recurrence*. Nonetheless, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1891), *freedom* is associated with the evolution of the spirit into lion 'to create itself freedom and give a holy Nay even unto duty' (Nietzsche 1923: 70) for creating new values. Likewise, in *The Will to Power* (1901)<sup>30</sup> the instinct of liberation is regarded as 'the second stage in the metamorphoses of the will to power' (Nietzsche 1914: 70) where 'one wishes to "shake oneself free from those who have power' (71).

Nietzsche's concept of *will to power* was influenced by Schopenhauer's idea of *will to live*. In *The Will* and *Thus Spake*, this notion is associated with the individual's drive to surmount his particular realities and acquire that which he regards as valuable in comparison with fellow individuals, and is not only related to political power. Zarathustra speaks of this will as 'whatever maketh them rule and conquer and shine, to the dismay and envy of their

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<sup>30</sup> This book was published posthumously and edited by his sister Elizabeth Foster-Nietzsche. Indeed, according to Hollingdale, Foster-Nietzsche intervened in great measure in his posthumous works.

neighbours, they regard as the high and foremost thing, the test and the meaning to all else' (Nietzsche 1923: 66). As such, this concept is related to the unconscious needs and passions that stem from instinct rather than from rationally processed desires: 'every instinct is a sort of thirst for power; each has its point of view, which it would fain impose upon all other instincts as their norm' (Nietzsche 1914, 2: 13). However, it also acquires political implications given its imposition on others: 'it is much more a question of establishing certain relations of power: the stronger becomes master of the weaker, in so far as the latter cannot maintain its degree of independence, -here there is no pit, no quarter, and, still less, any observance of "law"' (115).

In Fuentes's novel, the literary Nietzsche asks his interlocutor for the definition of *freedom*, and the difference between 'absolute freedom' and 'recurrent freedoms' (Fuentes 2012: 126). This concept is problematized further in the plot where Fuentes conveys the citizens' misunderstanding of the *freedom* predicated by the revolutionaries. Indeed, the people considered the revolution, as the *liberty* to act at will, often violently, and without restraints. Therefore, the institutionalisation of terror by Aarón comes across as the withdrawal of newly gained liberties by the same government that had granted them, raising the question among the citizens '¿Ya no hay libertad? ¿Ya no hay revolución?' (231). This contributes to the failure of the revolution in the novel. Indeed, in Fuentes's narrative cycle, socio-political *freedom* becomes a myth and a promise that the revolution cannot fulfil.

Moreover, in her analysis of Revolution, Hannah Arendt reflects on the social question posed by the French revolutionary slogan: '*Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité*'. As has been analysed earlier in this chapter, Arendt studies the concepts *equality* and *solidarity* in the American and French revolutionary experiences from a philosophical point of view. The historical Friedrich Nietzsche stresses in different works his disbelief in Revolutions as they predicated equality, which was against his notion of the superman: 'with these preachers of equality I will not be mixed up and confounded. Fort thus speaketh justice unto me: "men are not equal"' (Nietzsche 1923: 118). Indeed, Nietzsche's negation of the possibility of *equality* concurs with Fuentes's discussion of this topic in *Federico*. The fictional Nietzsche identifies equality as 'un ideal de igualdad bajo la norma. Y la norma dice a cada cual lo suyo. Ya empiezan las dificultades (Fuentes 2012: 70).

Like Arendt, Fuentes highlights the centrality of solidarity in his conception of Revolution. Fuentes develops the predicament of equality and the tension between the individual and the

collective through Basilicato's experience of the revolution. As a social outcast, Basilicato despises his individuality finding a sense of belonging in his communion with the mass in the outbreak of the revolution. The transcendence of his subjectivity initially imbues Basilicato with a sense of power. However, as the literary Nietzsche points out, Basilicato struggles to live as part of the collective and reclaims his individuality by becoming Saúl Mendes's protector: 'la urgencia en el ánimo de Basilicato fue la de escapar a la gran masa revelada por esas horas ardientes' (Fuentes 2012: 134). His desires of success, or his *will to power*, move him to betray the ideals of the revolution. Indeed, it is in the tension between social *solidarity* and individual success that Fuentes places the betrayal of revolutions. Basilicato's actions echo the personal betrayals of revolutionaries like Federico Robles, Artemio Cruz and Juan Francisco López Greene. Thus, in Fuentes's revolution cycle the betrayal of solidarity is also associated with the Nietzschean notion of *will to power*.

Finally, Arendt addresses topics such as the failure of revolutions and their tendency to oppression and circularity in their metaphoric association with Saturn. Fuentes's novel follows the unfolding of the historical revolution portraying the oppressive character acquired by the revolutionary regime. Both revolutions saw the interim revolutionary governments overthrown by the military. In the French case, it was Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) who took control of France and eventually attempted to restore the Monarchy. In the novel, Andrea del Sargo appoints Leonardo Loredano as president of the republic. Furthermore, when both revolutions come to their end, instead of installing a new political system they revert to the previous order. Ironically, this stresses the original meaning of the word Revolution as noted by Calvert and Arendt. Indeed, the failure of both revolutions points to the idea in Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Gattopardo*: 'se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi' (Lampedusa 2005: 41).

Nonetheless, in 'Federico (31)', Fuentes includes Nietzsche's notion of *eternal recurrence* with regards to history, time and its circularity to debate it in relation to revolutions: 'lo que te indico es que este tiempo, este hoy tuyo y mío, ya ocurrió [...] porque el tiempo no es lineal como tú crees. El tiempo es cíclico. Vivimos un eterno retorno' (Fuentes 2012: 186). Indeed, the fictional Nietzsche highlights the influence of Christianity in our modern conception of time, as it shares its linearity and faith in progress with 'el progreso laico' where instead of heaven its goal was directed 'hacia el progreso y la felicidad' (Fuentes 2012: 186). This notion appeared since *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and was developed throughout his works, becoming the backbone of his philosophy (Hollingdale 1973: 145). Indeed, in the parable of

‘The Convalescent’, Zarathustra regains conscience, after lying on the floor of his cave for a week, and his animals tell him: ‘we know that though teachest: that all things eternally return, and ourselves with them, and that we have already existed times without number, and all things with us’ (Nietzsche 1923: 269-270). Thus, the *Eternal recurrence* in Nietzsche is permitted by the circularity of time in the universe and comprises the endless exact repetition of time and existence.

Conversely, in the novel, Fuentes’s alter ego challenges Nietzsche’s deterministic postulates on *freedom* and the *Eternal recurrence*, underscoring the possibility of change for individual and national destinies in the future:

Yo creo en el libre arbitrio. Creo en la actividad de los seres humanos.  
¿Incluyendo los personajes de una novela?  
El cristianismo somete la voluntad al capricho de Dios.  
Yo quiero liberar la voluntad.  
¿Repitiéndola una y otra vez?  
Todo lo que ocurre es reiteración de lo mismo. No hay escapatoria.  
Pensamos y la voluntad es obra de nuestro pensamiento, no de la voluntad divina, sino de nuestra libertad. Tus ideas pertenecen a la fatalidad, Federico no a la libertad.  
Estás loco.  
No. No estoy de acuerdo contigo, es todo. Creo en la libertad. Creo en el futuro. Creo en el progreso. Creo en el valor insustituible de cada individuo. Creo que cada uno de nosotros posee un término en la tierra y creo que lo que haga cada uno con su vida es valioso. (Fuentes 2012: 186-187)

Thus, this fragment condenses the author’s stance on the circular trajectory associated with revolutions, which was also analysed with regards to his interpretation of the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, despite the continuities in the aim, development and end of revolutionary processes, the emphasis placed on personal or collective will highlights the acknowledgement of the change brought by revolutions. Thus, in the light of Nietzsche’s and Vico’s postulates on the cyclical nature of history and time, it could be suggested that Fuentes’s conception of the process of Revolution is more related to the spiral form. Indeed, while the general structure and characteristics explored in this chapter become a constant in historical revolutions, each stems from specific cultural and historical contexts that shape them and allow the possibility of change.

## 5. Amidst Revolutions: Literary Historicism and Critical Appraisal in Alejo Carpentier's Literary Revolution Cycle

‘Ahora que el mundo estaba tan cambiado que el “érase una vez de los narradores de recuerdos había sido sustituido por los términos de “Antes de la Revolución” y “Después de la Revolución” los museos gustaban muchísimo’ (Carpentier 1982: 403). Although this statement from *El siglo de las luces* refers to the French Revolution, it is also evocative of the impact that this phenomenon has in Carpentier's *oeuvre*, where it emerges as a thematic pattern. Both his biography and writings appear framed by historical and contemporary outbreaks of socio-political revolutions. Indeed, Revolution shaped Carpentier's understanding of Latin American history, his theories on *lo real maravilloso*, *el barroco latinoamericano* and the social role attributed to the Latin American writer as ‘Cronista de Indias’ who ought to ‘definir, fijar, criticar, mostrar el mundo que le ha tocado en suerte vivir’ (Carpentier 2003: 312).

Similarly to Fuentes's writings, the recurrence of this topic from *El reino de este mundo* (1949) until *La consagración de la primavera* (1978) marks the existence of a Revolution cycle in Carpentier's works and an evolution in his perception of this phenomenon. This topic is further discussed in his articles for the Cuban magazines *Carteles* (1919–1960) and *Bohemia* (1908–) and his column *Letra y solfa* (1950–1959) in the Venezuelan journal *El Nacional*. Unlike Fuentes's cycle, which was predominantly tied to the Mexican Revolution, Carpentier's cycle comprised the portrayal of multiple historical revolutions, including the Haitian Revolution (1791), the French Revolution (1789), the Russian Revolution (1917) and the Cuban Revolutions (1933; 1959). The Mexican Revolution and the Latin American Revolutions of Independence are also discussed as part of the depiction of these revolutionary movements.<sup>31</sup> Carpentier's focus on historical revolutions suggests that his narrative cycle is underscored by historiographical interpretations of these events.

This chapter offers a transversal analysis of Carpentier's narrative cycle following the analytical methodology of the previous one. It comprises the novels *El reino de este mundo* (1949), *El acoso* (1956), *El siglo de las luces* (1962) and *La consagración de la primavera*

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<sup>31</sup> Although the topic of dictatorship, explored by the author in the short story ‘Derecho de Asilo’ (1976?) and the novel *El recurso del método* (1974), is linked to Revolution by antithetical opposition, and, therefore, constitutes a trigger of Revolutions, this thesis will not engage in an analysis of these works.

(1978). The overall assessment of Carpentier's literary cycle seeks to emphasise the continuity in the author's recourse to literary historicism in the representation and discussion of Revolution. Firstly, I start by analysing methodological and stylistic patterns of depiction to consolidate Carpentier's historicist approach. Some of these aspects were noted in regards to his depiction of the Conquest, but they are best developed in his Revolution cycle. In doing so, I discuss González Echevarría's readings of Carpentier's works, debating his conclusions and furthering his findings by re-centring the attention on history, while broadening his theory of the *Archive*.

Secondly, I explore the binary oppositions that constitute structural and thematic patterns across his writings, highlighting their critical reassessment of historical revolutions. I discuss the dualistic tensions between the individual and the society with relation to the racial struggle in Latin America, ideology and practice and the conflict between reason and faith in ideological implementation. Moreover, I examine the encounters between the two continents that pervade hegemonic and alternative discourses on Revolution in Latin America. I conclude this chapter by analysing the movement of *corsi e ricorsi* that characterises Carpentier's depictions of historical and contemporary revolutions. The comparative scope of this study endorses a dialogue with Carlos Fuentes's representation of this phenomenon.

### **5. 1. Historicist Representation and Reflection in Alejo Carpentier's Revolution Cycle**

The first methodological pattern that emerges in Carpentier's Revolution cycle is the attention to and use of history and historiography in the creation of these depictions. Carpentier's consistent literary historicism in his narrative cycle complements the conclusions drawn with regards to his representation of the Conquest. Indeed, Carpentier's historicist drive points to the underscoring historical consciousness of his narrative and to his method for reworking cultural sources into his fictions. Moreover, it comprises both the author's effort to accurately base his literature on historical events and historiographical sources, and his obsession with stressing the documented nature of his novels.

The historical basis of his literary narrative converges with his theoretical postulates on *lo real maravilloso*, which first appeared in the prologue of *El reino* in 1949, as introduced earlier in the thesis. Carpentier ties the idea of *lo real maravilloso* to history by insinuating its existence 'en las vidas de hombres que inscribieron fechas en la historia del continente' (Carpentier 2007: 9-10). Indeed, in an attempt to inscribe his novel within this notion, Carpentier underlines the documentation and, thus, the veracity of his literary narration:

Porque es menester advertir que el relato que va a leerse ha sido establecido sobre una documentación extremadamente rigurosa que no solamente respeta la verdad histórica de los acontecimientos, los nombres de los personajes- incluso secundarios-, de lugares y hasta las calles, sino que oculta bajo su aparente intemporalidad un minucioso cotejo de fechas y de cronologías. (Carpentier 2007: 11)

The disclosure of his historical method and historiographical documentation becomes a pattern across his literary cycle. For instance, the practical function of the only footnote in *El acoso* (1956) is to situate the plot in the Cuban 1930s and 40s (Carpentier 1980:133). *El siglo de las luces* (1962) includes a postscript note from the author ‘Acerca de la historicidad de Víctor Hugues’ that establishes the character’s historicity and informs the reader of his thorough research and sources. *La consagración de la primavera* (1978) also contains inter-textual allusions to the sources used in his depiction of the Cuban Revolution. These references are accompanied by extra-textual allusions in interviews, conferences, essays and articles that stress the personal experiences and historical investigations underneath his novels.

Like in *La aprendiz* and *El arpa*, a reader that follows his authorial remarks will find the accuracy of these statements and even stronger resonances between the historical and fictional representations in his revolution cycle, than in those of the Conquest. To stress the methodological continuity between both topics, while the reconstruction based on historical data in his revolution cycle remains constant, Carpentier’s direct inter-textual relationship through quotations and paraphrases increases. Moreover, like Fuentes, Carpentier goes beyond the mere transcription of information from his sources, as his literary reinterpretations of Revolution are accompanied by critical reassessments of the historical events that stem from his present context. Carpentier’s literary historicism, or the systematic archival and historical research and its inclusion in his works, resembles the process of historical writing. This similarity suggests that his historicist impulse encompasses a conscious contribution to the historical reflection on Revolution.

Given Carpentier’s determination to alert the reader to the historicity in his literature, it is not surprising that critics like González Echevarría, Manuel Durán, Modesto Sánchez and Carlos Santander, among others, have analysed the presence of history in his works. With variations of depth, they have reached similar conclusions on Carpentier’s historical basis and methodology. Sánchez and González Echevarría even establish some of the sources used by Carpentier in his fictions. González Echevarría draws on this tradition of interpretation in *The Pilgrim at Home* (1977), an all-encompassing analysis of Carpentier’s works from ¡*Ecue*

*Yamba O!* to *El siglo*. The short chapters on *La consagración* and *El arpa* were added to the 1990s edition, as these novels were published after *The Pilgrim*.

In *The Pilgrim*, González Echevarría analyses Carpentier's *oeuvre* problematizing the dialogical relationship established between the latter's theoretical postulates on the Baroque and *lo real maravilloso* and his fictions, to demonstrate 'the discordant, even polemical relationship between essayistic pronouncement and novelistic writing' (González Echevarría 1990: 17). His approach in *The Pilgrim* can be rooted in his article 'Semejante a la noche historia/ficción', published in Klaus Müller-Bergh's *Asedios a Carpentier* (1972). This article presents a less rigorous analysis of the historical and literary foundation of Carpentier's short story. Nonetheless, his note on Rodríguez Monegal's affirmations on the lack of a study that challenged Carpentier's theoretical and practical coherence suggests that the aim of *The Pilgrim* is to become such analysis. This objective frames the direction of his findings and despite addressing the historicist basis of Carpentier's works, González Echevarría tends to deny its relevance.

Indeed, given the author's claims on the historicity of his literature, González Echevarría necessarily examines Carpentier's conception of history, its evolution and its place in his fictions, to expose his contradictions and inconsistencies. Nonetheless, this critic places Carpentier's working method in his historical text *La música en Cuba* (1946):

The research and the writing of *La música en Cuba* furnish Carpentier with a new working method, which consists of minute historical investigation, and creation from within a tradition that the author remakes himself with the aid of texts of different sorts. More specifically, *La música en Cuba* channels Carpentier's fiction into a new course, as a search for those forgotten texts which will allow him to "finish" the incomplete biographies of obscure historical figures with the aid of rigorous documentation and almost verifiable chronology. (González Echevarría 1990: 103)

The coincidences between Carpentier's fiction and his referenced historiographical sources lead González Echevarría to concede the historical substrata of *El reino*, *Los pasos* and *El acoso*. The critic highlights the historicity of the characters in *El reino*, as hinted by Carpentier, including the existence of a slave called Ti Noel and of Lenormand de Mezy, a colonist owner of the plantation where Mackandal's insurrection took place (131).

Furthermore, the comparison with the sources consulted by Carpentier and the consistency of his approach throughout his *oeuvre* compels him to admit the close relationship between them. Indeed, González Echevarría points to Carpentier's use of the works of Jean-Baptiste Labat, Moreau de Saint-Méry, Pierre de Vaissère and Victor Schoelcher in *El reino*. Likewise, he underlined Alexander von Humboldt's *Viaje a las regiones equinocciales de*

*Nuevo Continente* (1799-1804) and Richard Schombruck's *Travels in British Guiana 1840-1844* as foundation of *Los pasos* (175). Despite Silvia Cáceres's demonstration of the presence of Joseph Gumilla's *El Orinoco ilustrado* (1745) in this novel, González Echevarría argues that it only constituted a tenuous influence. With regards to *El acoso*, he refers to Modesto Sánchez's exhaustive analysis in 'El fondo histórico de *El acoso*: "época heroica y época de Botín"' (1975), which featured the inclusion of contemporary journalism articles as Carpentier's main sources (209). These findings lead the critic to conclude that Carpentier's composition method comprises 'the collage, the superimposing and collation of historical texts' (132). As such, it is possible to note that González Echevarría's initial conclusions on Carpentier's historical methodology converge, in general terms, with what I have defined as literary historicism.

However, as González Echevarría's analyses progress, he drifts away from these historicist conclusions to feature numerological, mythical and even cabalistic structural patterns to expose Carpentier's theoretical and practical discordance. For instance, he highlights the symbolical liturgical structure of Carpentier's works, arguing its connection to a cyclical conception of history and his theory on *lo real maravilloso*: 'the significance of this pendular movement between Sundays and Mondays, as well as that between December and January [...] is the ritualistic repetition to which Carpentier has submitted history and his text' (González Echevarría 1990: 141). In his numerological reading of *El reino*, González Echevarría compares the historical and fictional chronologies to note their concurrence first as coincidences and then as artifices. On the basis of slight chronological inaccuracies between the deaths of the historical and fictional Mackandal and Henri Christophe, he argues that 'Carpentier's hand has already been shown in the act of violating that assumed harmony between history and nature in order to force history into the design of his own text, into the itinerary of his own writing' (146). In his article, 'Realidad y realéza en *El reino de este mundo* de Alejo Carpentier', Steven Boldy problematizes González Echevarría's essentialist reading of *El reino vis-à-vis* its prologue. He argues that the Cuban critic overlooked important continuities in Carpentier's writings by splitting them in two groups: before or after 1953. Moreover, Boldy stresses that 'el tinglado sobre el que González erige la mala fe de Carpentier tampoco es demasiado estable' (Boldy 1986: 413).

Furthermore, González Echevarría's exploration of history and fiction in 'Semejante a la noche' presents a similar argumentation, positing the effective negation of history in Carpentier's cyclical notion of time: 'es evidente, además, que la repetición de

acontecimientos similares y la presencia de un mismo personaje en ellos, equivale a una negación de la historia' (González Echevarría 1972: 180). Nonetheless, he nuances this statement, acknowledging the contradiction between this conclusion and Carpentier's emphasis on the historical background of his works: 'la historia, en la obra de Carpentier, es un vacío, un silencio, que el texto de la narración, sea ésta histórica o novelesca viene a llenar. Por ello toda alusión en la obra de Carpentier remite a crónicas, a enciclopedias a bibliotecas' (189). As such, the critic's stance on Carpentier's use of history often comprises its negation or its submission to religious and mythical *motifs*, proving, in his view, Carpentier's failure to emulate his theoretical enunciations. However, Carpentier's mobilisation and amalgamation of historical sources in the creation of his interpretation not only resembles historiographical methodology but also highlights his attempt to grant voice to these texts. This weaving echoes the polyphony and plurality also stressed by Fuentes, where the different sources and voices are weighed to complement Carpentier's interpretation.

Alejo Carpentier's attempt to stress organic patterns between historical and mystical *motifs*, suggested by González Echevarría, is but one aspect of *El reino* and may well stem from an initial coincidence or, in the author's terms, the realisation of a 'miracle'. To assume that Carpentier chose the events portrayed in his novel merely upon a mystical chronological concordance would disregard their historical importance, and thus, that of Carpentier's historicist intent. Likewise, negating the relevance of the mystical structure in Carpentier's works would be equally essentialist in this thesis. González Echeverría's studies of mystical and religious structural patterns in his writings leave little considerations to add in this regard. For this reason, I re-centre the attention to the historicist basis of Carpentier's Revolution cycle, building on the critic's analyses of *El reino*, *Los pasos* and *El acoso* and the general methodology he attributed to Carpentier. Without denying González Echevarría's contribution to the understanding of Carpentier's literature, I diverge here from his mystical conclusions offering alternative readings of the historical themes in this literary corpus. I argue that Carpentier's literary historicism is connected to a critical awareness and will to update historical interpretations and not only to the enforcement of theoretical postulates.

The presence of historical and religious *motifs* in Carpentier's literature can be traced to his novel *¡Ecue Yamba O!* (1933), which he described as 'Historia Afrocubana' in the subtitle of the first edition. Indeed, in his *oeuvre*, religion and history constitute a core binary opposition in constant struggle through time. Nonetheless, if as González Echeverría claims Carpentier's playful collation of dates in *El reino* aimed to reconcile these conflicting binaries, then his

alleged chronological alteration shows awareness of its impossibility.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, their apparent modification suggests that for the author the importance resides on the events themselves, their meaning and interpretation and not merely the day on which they occurred. Indeed, each of Carpentier's works from *¡Ecue Yamba O!* and *La música en Cuba* onwards is the product of years of research on the event depicted. As such, like in Fuentes's narrative, Carpentier's historical *motifs* are not merely the propellers or settings of his fictional plots. In contrast, it is key to highlight Carpentier's critical selectivity of the past events or figures depicted, which were often tied to a historical reflection. Indeed, the historical importance of Mackandal and Henri Christophe for both Haitian history and *El reino* resided in their lives and deeds and not the date of their deaths.

González Echevarría underlines that 'the unity of *The Kingdom of This World* has preoccupied critics who have wondered if the story is nothing but a series of extraordinary scenes collected somewhat chaotically, without a unifying plot' (González Echevarría: 135). To make sense of the internal structure of this novel, critics like Emil Volek suggest the contrapuntal unity of its episodes, while González Echevarría builds a rigid numerological structure. Although the internal configuration of the novel contains binary oppositions, it is accompanied by a reflection on history that grants unity to the plot. Indeed, *El reino* gives an account of the complexity and long duration of the independence process in Haiti, as well as the uniqueness of this revolution in the Americas, where the racial question was also a key element of the process of emancipation. For this reason, Carpentier considered that 'en el juramento de Bois Caimán nace el verdadero concepto de independencia' (Carpentier 2003: 23). In his novel, Carpentier anchors his portrayal in the span of Ti Noel's life, who narrates the events he witnesses from his perspective as a black slave in Saint Domingue and becomes aware of their importance at the end of his life. Boldy notes the evolution of Ti Noel's historical consciousness and stressed that 'la memoria, ya no mítica sino comunal e histórico-cultural, le permite imaginarse un futuro' (Boldy: 431).

By including the stories of Mackandal and Bois Caimán, Carpentier underlines the roots of the racial conflict and the long duration of the emancipation in Haiti as an endemic process and not solely as a by-product of the French Revolution. Thus, Mackandal and Bouckman's early revolutionary attempts also grant unity to the depiction of this process in *El reino* and suggest that history is the bonding factor of its structure. In *Gazette de Saint Domingue*

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<sup>32</sup> González Echevarría notes that the only given date in *El reino* is the 14th of August of 1820, day of the stroke of Henry Christophe.

(1791-1792), periodical consulted by Carpentier and referenced in the novel, there are entire sections dedicated to reporting maroon slaves and their captures, stressing their struggle for freedom as a common characteristic of these slave-driven societies. Moreover, this topic is also discussed in *El siglo*, when Esteban visits Cayenne. Indeed, in this novel the emancipation of the slaves is presented not as a result of the French Revolution, but as a recurrent struggle across the New World since the sixteenth century: ‘los negros no los esperaron a ustedes para proclamarse libres un número incalculable de veces. Y con un conocimiento de crónicas americanas, insólito para un francés [...] el cultivador se dio a hacer un recuento de las sublevaciones negras que, con tremebunda continuidad, se habían sucedido en el continente’ (Carpentier 1989: 302).

Here, I will only point to the inter-textual connection in Carpentier’s revolution cycle with those historical sources overlooked by González Echevarría. This critic highlights Saint Mery’s *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l’isle Saint-Domingue* (1797-1798) as Carpentier’s source for the depiction of Mackandal and Bouckman: ‘it would be just as naïve to think that Carpentier simply copies the scene as not to notice that his text is but a careful recasting of it’ (González Echevarría: 133).

However, this was not his only source, given that Saint-Mery’s history only contains scarce information on Mackandal’s execution and does not include Bouckman’s gathering at Bois Caimán. Indeed, the first part of *El reino* is dedicated to the construction of Mackandal and the second to Bouckman’s rebellion. It is possible to suggest Carpentier’s use of *Histoire d’Haïti* (1847) by Thomas Madiou, documents such as *Relation d’une conspiration tramée par les Negres dans l’isle de S. Domingue* (June 1958) and oral history to complement his construction of these figures. For instance, Madiou underlines Mackandal’s Muslim and educated heritage, his influence over the slaves ‘en se presentant à eux comme prophète ou sorcier’ and his goal ‘de proclamer la Liberté et l’Indépendance de la race noire’ (Madiou 1847: 23). Madiou also portrays Bouckman’s rebellion and his subsequent capture and death where ‘sa tête ensanglantée, transportée au Cap, fut exposée sur une pique au centre de la place d’armes’ (73). Moreover, *Relation d’une conspiration* emphasises Mackandal’s poisoning of white colonists and contains a detailed narration of his execution and the reaction of the slaves who ‘croient à haute voix que François Macandal étoit sorcier et incombustible’ (1958: 3). Finally, the description of Sans Souci in the novel is based on Karl

Ritter's description of Haiti, *Naturhistorische Reise nach der westindischen Insel Haiti* (1826).

González Echevarría's reading of *El siglo* also drifts away from the historical inter-textualities to pursue a cabalistic analysis of its structure: 'its presence in the novel is not, like history, an external referential code but one which attempts to explicate the text of the novel itself' (González Echevarría 1990: 239). However, Carpentier alludes to some of his sources in 'Acerca de la historicidad de Víctor Hugues' including the works of Pierre Vitoux and the 'documentos reunidos por el autor en la Guadalupe y en bibliotecas de la Barbados, así como en cortas pero instructivas referencias halladas en obras de autores latinoamericanos' (Carpentier 1982: 416). Indeed, it is worth stressing the journals of the Convention, as well as the discourses and proclamations of French revolutionaries like Collot D'Herbois, Billaud-Varenne and Víctor Hugues that are included in Carpentier's novel. Moreover, the author seems to have also used Sainte-Croix de la Roncière's *Grandes figures coloniales: Victor Hughes* (1932) for the construction of this character. This biography contains a detailed reconstruction of Hugues, his business in Pointe-au-Pitre and francmasonry, his role as delegate of the Convention, his defence and government of Guadeloupe, and his creation of corsair fleets, among others. *El siglo* also incorporates sources used in *El reino*, such as Madiou's history, which included passages on Víctor Hugues and Vincent Ogé (1755-1791).

As can be seen from the above, and conversely to González Echevarría's analyses, Carpentier's literary historicism becomes a structural pattern in his portrayal of revolutions, which goes beyond seeking numerological convergences between natural and historical phenomena. Conversely, Carpentier's conscious application of historical research methodologies and the systematic re-interpretation of historiography suggest the revisionist intention of his works. Indeed, his historicist drive underlines that his conception of *lo real maravilloso* entails the need to interpret Latin American realities from the language of the baroque (literature/chronicle).

Carpentier's quest for the American past and the value of his literary reinterpretation resided in the present questions from which he addressed the processes of Conquest and Revolution. This awareness is illustrated by his self-imposed mission to become a chronicler of Latin America and contribute to its understanding and creation of 'La visión de América'. Indeed, in 'Un camino de medio siglo' (1975) he acknowledges that his interest in America stemmed from his Cuban upbringing, which was influenced by the late Independence of the island from

Spain (1902) and its subsequent dependence on the United States of America. The author stresses the out-dated nature of Colonial Spanish history manuals that contained little information on Latin America, and were used as history textbooks in Cuban schooling programmes until mid-twentieth century: ‘y no había manuales de historia de Cuba. Es decir, que mi generación, la que fue al colegio en la misma época que yo, creció desconociendo literalmente la historia de Cuba y la historia de América, lo cual era un *handicap* bastante desfavorable’ (Carpentier 2003: 50). As such, the historicist concern that pervades his literary production responds to the lack of accurate national histories that reflected the Cuban present, positioning his works against this historiography. This could have also been the reason why he claims to have devoted himself to studying America through texts produced in the continent: ‘hay una asignatura que tengo que aprender y esa asignatura va a ser el estudio sistemático de América’ (58).

Furthermore, the interpretation of history in America, written by Americans, accompanies Carpentier’s emphasis on forgotten historical figures to complement the voids and silences left by Colonial historiography. This feature, also present in Fuentes’s works, characterises Carpentier’s literary historicism in his Revolution cycle. Edmundo O’Gorman attributes the ‘invention of America’ to sixteenth-century Spanish explorers, who mirrored onto the New World their cultural and historical imaginaries. However, it would be possible to argue that Carpentier proposes a twentieth-century discovery of America, guided by the questions and imaginaries of Americans, who could offer a critical understanding of the amalgamation of different cultural processes and historical times: ‘y si nuestro deber es el de revelar este mundo, debemos mostrar, interpretar las cosas nuestras. Y esas cosas se presentan como cosas nuevas a nuestros ojos. La descripción es ineludible, y la descripción de un mundo barroco ha de ser necesariamente barroca’ (Carpentier 2003: 85). This idea in Carpentier’s seminar in Caracas ‘Lo barroco y lo Real Americano’ (1975) seems connected to the new possibilities of travel and the resurfacing of pre-Hispanic and colonial cultural, historical and archaeological testimonies that stimulated its understanding.

### **5. 1. 2. The Archival Nature of Carpentier’s Literary Historicism**

In *Myth and Archive* (1990) González Echeverría proposes a literary theory that underlines the archival nature of the ‘new novel’ in Latin America. As mentioned earlier, this critic argues that the legal, scientific and anthropological discourses were emulated and incorporated by Latin American narrative of the twentieth century. Often associated with legitimising discourses, these hegemonic languages mediated, and thus dominated, the

narration of Latin America since the colonial times. According to him, twentieth-century archival fiction is characterised by the ‘unwriting’ and ‘re-writing’ of these discourses, as through their fictional re-workings they are both effectively disassembled and resignified (González Echevarría 1998: 16). His theoretical considerations stem from his study of Carpentier’s *Los pasos*, also analysed in *The Pilgrim*. Like in the latter, although the critic’s considerations in *Myth and Archive* acknowledge the importance of history in Carpentier’s narrative, the historical discourse is left aside in the archival nature he attributes to his literature. This silence on history stands as a void in his theoretical approach given, as demonstrated so far in this argumentation, the inter-textual and referential nature of Carpentier’s and Fuentes’s literary historicism.

If we read Carpentier’s Revolution cycle under a common notion of an archive, as a repository of documents and registers of diverse genres and times, we notice that his works exceed González Echevarría’s formulation. The multi-dimensional nature of the Carpenterian archive is seen in his effort to include and reference music, art, cinema, literature, history, architecture and anthropology produced on both sides of the Atlantic. This characteristic of Carpentier’s narrative, also present in Fuentes’s works, turns the reading of his writings into a multi-sensorial and referential experience. *El siglo* constitutes a comprehensive example of such plurality. It gives an overview of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in the Antilles and narrates the unfolding of the French Revolution from the perspective of three Cuban creoles Carlos, Sofía and Esteban. Apart from the recurrent inter-textual reference to written corpuses of literature, history, philosophy, science, as well as political documents, the consistent reference to painting adds a visual dimension to the archive. This is illustrated by the allusions to the painting *Explosión en la catedral* in the novel, which evokes the 1630 Italian painting of the same name attributed to Monsu Desiderio, and becomes a metaphor of the epoch and the revolution. Furthermore, the chapters of the novel are accompanied by epigraphs taken from Francisco Goya’s *Los desastres de la Guerra* (1810-1815). Thus, they are attached to visual references that link the French Revolution to the nineteenth-century wars of independence.

Likewise, references to music are central to *El acoso* and *La consagración* and determine the structure and development of the plot. These novels are set in twentieth-century Cuba and also contain inter-textual allusions to written documents given their portrayal of the first and second Cuban Revolutions. In *El acoso* Beethoven’s *Third Symphony*, which is being performed at the theatre where the fugitive takes refuge, structures the development of the

novel, becoming the soundtrack of the manhunt. Furthermore, as noted by González Echevarría the two parallel narrations are situated ‘in a brief fictional present that is supposed to comprise the forty-six minutes that it takes to play Beethoven’s Third Symphony’ (González Echevarría 1990: 199). A similar relationship to music can be found in *La consagración*, whose connection to Igor Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913) can be established from its homonymous title. This ballet is central to the plot and concerns of its main characters Vera and Enrique, who pursue its adaptation featuring the performance of black dancers. Like in *El acoso*, the structure of the plot is dictated by the ballet and becomes the accompanying theme to the triumph of the Cuban Revolution (1959).

The cumulative nature of the Carpentierian Archive also comprises self-referentiality in its biographical and meta-fictional dimensions. His literature not only contains references to his biography from which his fictional plots stem, such as his trips to Haiti, Mexico and Venezuela but becomes an archive of his research, journalistic articles, critical and historical writings. Once again, *El siglo* exemplifies this self-archival characteristic. Carpentier roots this text in his unexpected layover at Guadeloupe in 1955. Nonetheless, within the pages of the novel, we can find echoes of his previous publications. For instance, Esteban’s name is connected to his discovery of the Cuban musician Esteban Salas, when writing *La música en Cuba* (Carpentier 1972: 72). Moreover, the incorporation of the Haitian Revolution in Saint Domingue echoes the plot and main argument of *El reino* and complements its interpretation.

*La consagración* is narrated from the intimate perspectives of Vera and Enrique, a Russian ballerina and a Cuban architect, respectively, and becomes the epitome of Carpentier’s personal archive. Through these characters, the novel recounts the Russian Revolution, The Spanish Civil War, the Second World War and the Cuban Revolution. Overall, their lives mirror the author’s biography and family background. For example, Enrique’s first exile to Paris during Machado’s regime and his travels to Venezuela echo those of Carpentier. Moreover, given the overarching musical *motif* of the novel, it establishes a strong connection with *La música en Cuba*, by including entire passages from this history. Carpentier’s journalism in *Carteles*, *Bohemia* and *Letra y solfa* is also referenced. Such is the case of his review of the Greek tragedy played at the University of Havana, his review of *El tren blindado*, his descriptions of La gran sabana, and ‘España bajo las bombas’, among others. If Carpentier’s literary historicism in *La consagración* frames the development of the Cuban twentieth-century amidst war and revolution, his archival effort becomes a tool for inserting himself in the historical progression of the century.

As such, Carpentier's literary historicism and conscious creation of archival narratives in his Revolution cycle complement the conclusions drawn on his methodological re-signification of historical sources with regards to the Conquest. In particular, this narrative points to the recovery of figures overlooked by European historiography and the need to produce Latin American self-interpretations. In addition, although González Echevarría's analyses shed light on Carpentier's mythical narrative patterns, they tend to overlook the historical vocation of his works, which in turn limit the scope of the critic's archival theory. In contrast, the study of historical *tropes* in Carpentier's works becomes central to frame his literary style and theories, as well as his understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **5. 2. 'Encuentros y Desencuentros': Structural and Thematic Binary Oppositions in Carpentier's Representation of Revolution**

Roberto González Echevarría, Julio Ortega and Steven Boldy, among others, note the dualistic structure of Carpentier's works, highlighting the tensions between Genesis and Apocalypse, Myth (Utopia) and History and, Order and Chaos, respectively. In *The Pilgrim*, González Echevarría states that this structural coordinate in Carpentier's fiction is related to his philosophical influences: 'the uneasy coexistence of Hegel, Marx, and Spengler should not veil their fundamental affinities, particularly in the pattern of fall and resurrection, apocalypse and new beginning, that articulates their conception of history' (González Echevarría 1990: 42). These oppositions constitute overarching manifestations of Carpentier's structural dualism, which also emerge as a pattern in his portrayal of Revolution. This is the case of thematic antagonisms such as the racial struggle, the individual and society (solitude and solidarity), ideology and practice (reason and faith), historical and contemporary revolutions, and the movement of *corsi e ricorsi*. These antagonisms are often interconnected and complement Carpentier's assessment of this historical phenomenon. In Carpentier's Revolution cycle, despite their conflictive nature, these binaries are often dialectically resolved either by a third possibility often based on hybridity, or by their inversion challenging their association to fixed interpretations. As Boldy notes in his analysis of *El acoso*, 'it would seem that the oppositions which structure the text are basically emblematic of the opposition between model and reality: that is, between hypotext and hypertext, between readability and unreadability' (Boldy 1990: 618).

### 5. 2. 1. The Racial Struggle in American Revolutions

Carpentier's literary re-interpretations of Revolution are framed from an American perspective. Indeed, his portrayals of the French (1789) and Russian (1917) Revolutions are subject to their influence on American experiences of Revolution. This echoes the role conferred by Carpentier on Latin American writers as modern 'cronistas de indias' who should write 'en función de la historia moderna y pasada de ese continente, mostrando, a la vez, sus relaciones con la historia del mundo todo, cuyas contingencias también le atañen, poco o mucho' (Carpentier 2003: 202). The first structural pattern that pervades the author's portrayal of Revolution is its Marxist intellectual influence since this phenomenon is recurrently featured as a Class Struggle. According to Carpentier, 'la historia de América toda no se desarrolla sino en función de la lucha de clases' (Carpentier 2003: 94). For critics like González Echevarría, Carpentier's Marxist perspective in the portrayal of the French and Haitian Revolutions raises questions of anachronism given the quotation of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1848) in events that preceded his revolutionary theory: 'the overall vision of the political questions discussed by Víctor and Ogé is strangely anachronistic, with its mentions of class struggles' (González Echevarría 1990: 234). Nonetheless, Carpentier's allusions to Marx or twentieth-century *avant-garde* artists like Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí, among others, suggest his deliberate use of anachronisms to establish links between the past and the present in his literature. Moreover, not only did Marx and Engels base their *Manifesto* on the analysis of the French Revolution, the subsequent development of their theory does not invalidate the existence of a class struggle at the time.

In *El reino*, the Haitian Revolution is framed through the Marxist conception of Class Struggle as seen in the social opposition that triggers the revolution between slaves and masters, oppressed and oppressors. Moreover, in *El siglo*, Carpentier stresses Voltaire's influence on Marx's theory by quoting excerpts from his *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764). This association is seen in Ogé and Víctor Hugues's reasoning of the black revolution in Saint-Domingue:

"La estratificación del mundo en clases carece de sentido." "Hay que privar al interés mercantil del horroroso poder de desatar guerras." "La humanidad está dividida en dos clases: los opresores y los oprimidos." "La costumbre, la necesidad y la falta de ocios impiden a la mayoría de los oprimidos darse cuenta de su condición la guerra civil estalla cuando la sienten." (Carpentier 1989: 147)

Thus, Carpentier intentionally frames the outbreak of this Antillean Revolution through Voltaire's ideas on class division and oppression to stress the convergences between his social

philosophy and Marx's revolutionary theory. Nonetheless, the Marxist discourse gains more presence in Carpentier's depiction of the Cuban experiences of Revolution in *El acoso* and *La consagración*, where the direct allusions to Marx's *Capital* (1867), *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852) and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) multiply.

Carpentier's inclusion of the racial conflict as characteristic of American revolutions is his most significant adaptation of the Marxist notion of Class Struggle. Indeed, race is placed at the very core of this class opposition given that in American colonies skin-colour entailed social and economic stratification as can be seen through the colonial caste system. The decay of the native population in the Caribbean and its gradual replacement with African slave-labour for the sugar plantations determined the cultural development of these isles. Due to the slave-driven nature of the Antillean colonial economy, Carpentier recurrently features the struggle between the white and black races in his Revolution cycle.

This binary opposition is seen more clearly in *El reino* through a *longue durée* depiction of the Haitian Revolution in its different stages from 1757 to 1804. As demonstrated earlier, Carpentier places its origins in Mackandal's and Bouckman's uprisings, which were often phrased in racial and cosmological terms:

Un día daría la señal del gran levantamiento, y los Señores de Allá, encabezados por Damballah por el Amo de los Caminos y por Ogún de los Hierros, traerían el rayo y el trueno, para desencadenar el ciclón que completaría la obra de los hombres. En esa gran hora -decía Ti Noel- La sangre de los blancos correría hasta los arroyos, donde los Loas, ebrios de júbilo, la beberían de bruces, hasta llenarse los pulmones. (Carpentier 2007: 41)

As such, through Ti Noel, Carpentier frames the unfolding of the Haitian Revolution beyond the question of independence for its process encompassed a racial struggle. Modern historians like David Nicholls in *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (1979), acknowledged that the Haitian Revolution comprised a double struggle for freedom: 'Haitian independence presented a radical challenge to colonialism, to slavery and to the associated ideology of white racialism' (Nicholls 1979: 3). On the one hand, we find the colonists' aspirations of emancipation from the French Metropolis. On the other hand, we have the slave revolution, which stemmed from racial and economic oppression, shifting the political character of the upheaval into a social quest.

In Carpentier's novel, we see through Ti Noel the existence of two opposing worlds and mentalities that despite sharing the same space have little understanding of each other. The world of the black-slaves, set in the *barracas* of the plantations, predominantly develops in the evenings. Ti Noel recalls Mackandal's evening-reunions for storytelling, as forms of

cultural resistance to preserve the cosmology and mythology of the 'Gran Allá'. It is also in this context where Mackandal and Bouckman's revolts are planned. Although the Liturgical calendar (Christmas, Passover, Holy Week) marks the time and structure of the novel, its religious meaning is subverted from the slave perspective:

Ti Noel y los demás esclavos de la dotación asistían a los progresos del Nacimiento recordando que se aproximaban los días de aguinaldos, y misas de gallo, y que las visitas y los convites de los amos hacían que se relajara un tanto la disciplina, hasta el punto de que no fuese difícil conseguir una oreja de cochino en las cocinas, llevarse una bocanada de vino de la canilla de un tonel o colarse de noche en el barracón de las mujeres angolas. (Carpentier 2007: 43-44)

This cultural distance is emphasised by Lenormand de Mezy's late realisation of the slaves' resistance codified in secret meanings of the drum and conch-shell sounds: 'los esclavos tenían, pues, una religión secreta que los alentaba y solidarizaba en sus rebeldías. A lo mejor, durante años y años, habían observado las prácticas de esa religión en sus mismas narices, hablándose con los tambores de calendas, sin que él lo sospechara' (69-70). In contrast, the lack of understanding of the world of the whites from the slave perspective is humorously illustrated through the drunken theatrical performances of Lenormand de Mezy's second wife, Mlle Floridor: 'estupefactos, sin entender nada, pero informados por ciertas palabras que también en creole se referían a faltas cuyo castigo iba de una simple paliza a la decapitación, los negros habían llegado a creer que aquella señora debía haber cometido muchos delitos en otros tiempos' (56). Steven Boldy's article on *El reino* analyses the conflict between the black and the European world, demonstrating that unlike the fixed categories of 'primitive' and 'civilized' attributed by González Echevarría to these worlds, Carpentier's narrative is fluid. Boldy argues that the echoes between European and African discourses 'funcionan no solo como oposición sino que también hay un relación de continuidad que apunta hacia un sincretismo y una universalización de las pautas culturales' (Boldy 1986: 415). However, despite Carpentier's subversion of the cultural association of these worlds with primitivism or civilisation, the binary racial conflict remains, and it is not reconciled in the novel. Indeed, the synthesis of these races in the figure of the Mulatto brings further ethnic divisions instead of cultural reconciliation.

Carpentier's depiction of the French Revolution in *El siglo* is also characterised by its racial antagonism and problematized through Víctor Hugues's imposition of enlightened European ideals in American colonies. In this novel, the slave revolution of Saint Domingue is described by white colonists, who stress the violence of the '*revolución de negros*' and refer 'terribles matanzas de blancos, de incendios y crueldades, de horrorosas violaciones'

(Carpentier 1989: 158). Only Ogé, a mulatto himself, considers that ‘aquel movimiento, era pintado, sin duda, con colores excesivos’ (159) highlighting that the Parisian Storming of the Bastille had initially caused a similar reaction. The racial tension is further problematized through this character. During Ogé’s first encounter with Sofía, she is reticent to accept his medical knowledge due to his skin-colour, for ‘quien fuera negro, quien tuviese de negro, era, para ella, sinónimo de sirviente, estibador, cochero’ (119). Moreover, the assassination of Ogé’s brother, Vincent Ogé<sup>33</sup>, in Le Cap-Français becomes a turning point in his hopes for racial equality: ‘mi hermano Vincent ha sido ejecutado en la Plaza de Armas del Cabo Francés [...] “¿Los sublevados?”, preguntó Víctor. “No. Ustedes”, respondió el médico con ojos de una sombría fijeza’ (164). Indeed, Ogé’s equation of Víctor with the assassins of his brother and his decision to take part in the revolution, show the limitations of political solutions for this racial conflict. Although, as seen with regards to the Conquest, Carpentier dialectically places the resolution of such antagonism in *mestizaje*, its recurrence in his depictions highlights the persistence of this tension. In the episodes that take are set in Cayenne, the characters’ discussion with regards to slavery in the Haitian and French Revolutions complements the development of the racial struggle in this novel. This topic will be analysed as part of the binary of ideology and practice.

In *La consagración*, the racial struggle remains a central topic, despite being set in the twentieth-century after the abolition of slavery (1886) and the foundation of the Cuban Republic (1898). The novel illustrates how the racial struggle, propelled by slavery, had become a question of class in contemporary Latin American contexts, where it often determined economic stratification. Indeed, the black population was still tied to the economic occupations formerly carried out by slaves. Moreover, the novel illustrates the on-going racial taboo in the social interactions of twentieth-century Cuba. The black musician Gaspar Blanco questions Vera’s intentions of running a Ballet school for all races, stressing the existence of an invisible *ghetto* in Havana, echoing Sofía’s reaction to Ogé in *El siglo*, where people of colour:

Estaban condenados por una colectividad dominante que mucho les debía (y cuya “limpieza de sangre”, como se decía en lenguaje de asientos coloniales, era a menudo más que dudosa), a emplearse en labores ancilares y subalternas, y cuando lograban ascender al nivel de oficinas o comercios, era para desempeñar funciones donde no hubiesen de tener contacto con la clientela *blanca*, teniendo que resignarse [...] a regresar al ámbito de su *ghetto* invisible. (Carpentier 1989: 314)

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<sup>33</sup> This character is based on the historical Vincent Ogé (1755-1791) a wealthy educated mulatto who fought for the civil rights of coloured people, and was tortured and killed by white colonists in Le Cap-Français who refused to accept the decree of the General Assembly that allowed coloured mulattoes to hold public posts.

This leads Vera to establish a Ballet school in Old Havana, under the mask of a charitable enterprise, to prepare her ballet adaptation of *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Furthermore, Mirta's love-relationship with Calixto is considered taboo and even opposed by him, who feared the repercussions it would have on Mirta and Vera. The crimes committed by the repressive state force in Old Havana, during the Cuban Revolution of the fifties are also described with racial undertones in the novel.

Overall, the racial struggle constitutes a central axis in Carpentier's depiction of revolutions, highlighting its predominance in the Caribbean and American contexts. As demonstrated throughout this section in Carpentier's Revolution cycle the racial conflict becomes the primary motor in his depiction of the Haitian Revolution, granting unity to the structure of *El reino*. However, it is in *La consagración* that the author's emphasis on afro-Caribbean culture in the Americas, and its history of exploitation and slavery is tied to the Cuban twentieth-century. This shows the continuity and relevance of past, present and future granted by Carpentier to this binary struggle in his historicist depiction of Revolution. His emphasis on the continuous racial disparity and racism underlines the contemporary pertinence of addressing this conflict in regional and international contexts, given the racial undertones of the Second World War (1939-1945). In this sense, like in Fuentes's works, through Carpentier's historicist scope literature becomes a medium to circulate reinterpretations of past events in the light of present contexts.

### **5. 2. 2. The Individual in Society: Solitude and Solidarity in the Struggle for Power**

In their literary characterisations of Revolution, both Fuentes and Carpentier feature the tension between the individual and the collective as essential, to the unfolding of these historical processes. As seen before, Fuentes places the betrayal of social revolutions in the individual will for social empowerment. Likewise, through his literary characters, Carpentier stresses that the separation of the individual from the collective cause is related to the pursuit of political, economic or social power, which eventually lead to the corruption of the revolutionary ideals. This binary conflict echoes the Nietzschean notion of *Will to Power* as the motor of human actions, suggesting the influence of Nietzsche's philosophy in Carpentier's conception of power and its relation to the revolutionary phenomenon.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Carpentier's journalistic articles on this German philosopher in *Carteles* and *Letra y Solfa* make clear his knowledge of Nietzsche's philosophical writings on Wagner and *The Will to Power* and his awareness of Elizabeth Nietzsche's possible inclusion of Nazi elements in this text.

In Carpentier's Revolution cycle, this tension often surpasses racial antagonisms, giving prominence to the individual struggle for power. As noted by Boldy, 'the historical cycle of idealism and then corruption through power in Bonaparte is certainly relevant to the career of the *acosado* and is a phenomenon central to all of Carpentier's work, as with Víctor Hugues and his model Robespierre in *El siglo de las luces*' (Boldy 1990: 617). In *El reino*, the corruption of power, mentioned by Boldy, is explored through the depiction of Henri Christophe's Monarchy and subsequent republican governments. In concordance with the historical records, Carpentier's literary Christophe rises to power and declares himself King of Le Cap-Haïtien, instating a Monarchy that mirrored its European counterpart in all its forms. However, Carpentier's depiction of Christophe's reign comprises elements of the regimes of the other Haitian *Caudillos*, becoming a synecdoche of Haiti's post-revolutionary political development. Indeed, Toussaint Louverture (1743-1803), Jean-Jacques Dessalines (1758-1806) and Alexandre Petion (1770-1818) had also resorted to the personal implementation of power in their establishment of an independent Haiti.

In the novel, the progressive decay into a tyranny of Henri Christophe's Monarchy highlights the loss of racial solidarity and freedom promulgated by Mackandal (1957) and Bouckman (1791). As Ti Noel notes 'Mackandal no había previsto esto del trabajo obligatorio. Tampoco Bouckman el jamaquino' (Carpentier 2007: 146) Although set in a literary context this observation alludes to Toussaint Louverture's paradoxical decree of forced labour in 1800 to re-activate the economy of the island, despite having declared the abolition of slavery. Ti Noel's ironical remark and his reflection on the erection of Laferrière, stresses the distance between the collective pursuit of freedom and its individualistic unfolding:

Pronto supo Ti Noel que esto duraba ya desde hacía más de doce años y que toda la población del norte había sido movilizadada por la fuerza para trabajar en aquella obra inverosímil. Todos los intentos de protesta habían sido acallados con sangre [...] el negro comenzó a pensar que las orquestas de cámara de Sans-Souci, el fausto de los uniformes y las estatuas blancas [...] se debían a una esclavitud tan abominable como la había conocido en la hacienda de Monsieur Lenormand de Mezy. Peor aún, puesto que había una infinita miseria en lo de verse apaleado por un negro, tan negro como uno, tan belfudo y pelicrespo, tan narizñado como uno; tan igual, tan mal nacido, tan marcado a hierro, posiblemente, como uno. (103)

The ruthlessness of Christophe's slavery, blind to humanitarian considerations, described by Ti Noel, illustrates Carpentier's argument on the corruption of the individual by power. Likewise, Christophe's adoption of Catholicism to imitate European customs, which mirrors that of the historical Louverture, constitutes a denial of his African cultural roots and his racial and social collective (120).

Ti Noel's reflection highlights the irony in the subjugation amongst equals in origin, colour and features, which eventually leads to insurrection. Thus, while the revolution begins as a racial conflict against the French colonists, it acquires a social character, since Christophe's slavery is not defined by skin colour. In Carpentier's novel, after Christophe's death, slavery and racial inequality are reinforced by the development of mulatto governments, as Ti Noel finds out 'que el látigo estaba ahora en las manos de Mulatos Republicanos, nuevos amos de la Llanura del Norte' (146). Moreover, Ti Noel's misfortunes and his inability to gain freedom from slavery, portray through fiction the internal war of black-against-black set off by the revolution. This aspect of the Haitian independence, already central in Carpentier's historicist portrayal, is addressed again nearly forty years after by Michel-Rolph Trouillot in *Silencing the Past* (1995). In his analysis of the three faces of Sans Souci, this Haitian historian stresses that the internal struggle for power amongst the caudillos was silenced by official histories of the Revolution: 'the army put together by Dessalines did not only fight against the French expeditionary forces. At crucial moments of the war, black officers also turned against their own, engaging into what was, in effect, a war within the war' (Trouillot 2015: 40). As such, the change of regimes is contrasted by the permanence of oppression, highlighting that the tension between collective subjugation and individual power was a constant in the development and collapse of revolutions.

*El siglo* presents a similar oscillation between personal power and collective welfare through Robespierre and his Latin American counterpart Víctor Hugues. Carpentier's depiction of Robespierre and the French Revolution is directly tied to its imposition in the French Antilles by the former merchant and French government officer Víctor Hugues (1762-1826). As seen earlier, the Incorruptible's institution of the Revolution in France paradoxically became a Reign of Terror, which curtailed the same civil rights of freedom, equality and fraternity that he had proclaimed. Carpentier's Víctor Hugues, mirroring the historical figure, follows a similar path of corruption as Commissioner of Guadeloupe. In his fanaticism for Robespierre, Víctor unleashes a Reign of Terror haunted by the fear of a British invasion: 'ese día se inició el Gran Terror en la isla. No paraba ya la Máquina de funcionar en la Plaza de la Victoria, apretando el ritmo de sus tajos' (Carpentier 1982: 226). Víctor's revolutionary ideals change according to the unfolding of the Jacobin Revolution in France, incurring in ideological contradictions, as will be seen in due course. Nonetheless, after Robespierre's execution on 9<sup>th</sup> Thermidor, the 'Investido de Poderes' in the Antilles develops a personal obsession with power that resembles madness: 'cuando lleguen con sus papeles limpia-culos seré tan poderoso que podré restregárselos en la cara' (241). Although initially he continued

introducing the Jacobin Revolution, hiding Robespierre's fall, Hugues shifts his policies to maintain his authority. Ironically, his measures to retain economic and political power such as the legalisation of 'el curso revolucionario' benefited the island (262). Thus, 'había llegado el mandatario a constituirse una suerte de gobierno unipersonal, autónomo e independiente, en esta parte del orbe, realizando en proporción asombrosa su inconfesada aspiración de identificarse con el Incorruptible' (263).

Likewise, in *El acoso* this binary conflict and the betrayal of the revolution lie in the moral conflict experienced by the *acosado*. Alternately narrated in the internal monologues of the 'tiquetero' and the *acosado*, the novel portrays the fugitive's manhunt by state forces and by his radical revolutionary group in Havana. Carpentier's novel comprises a double betrayal of the ideals of the first Cuban Revolution of the 1930s. On the one hand, the fugitive's terrorist group of the 'Temibles' betray the ideals of the Directorio Estudiantil and the ABC by becoming *gangsters* of 'El Alto Personaje', presumably Batista<sup>35</sup>. On the other hand, after being held captive and physically tortured, the *acosado* sells out his comrades to protect himself by revealing their plans and location to the dictatorship's Secret Police (Carpentier 1980: 128). As such, Carpentier places the betrayal of the revolutionary cause in the *acosado*'s personal struggle for survival, highlighting, as stressed by Boldy, 'the negative shift in the life of the *acosado*, from idealist to terrorist, from the "heroic" to the "infame"' (Boldy 1990: 620).

Thus, the opposition of solitude and solidarity within this binary is key to Carpentier's understanding of Revolution, stressing a similarity with Fuentes's conception and depiction of this phenomenon. Indeed, the outbreak of revolutions is associated with solidarity given their initial collective cause, while solitude becomes characteristic of individual characters in positions of power like Christophe, Robespierre, Hugues and the *acosado*. The link between revolutionary solidarity and solitude appears in 'Conciencia e identidad de América' (1975) where Carpentier declares 'para mi terminaron los tiempos de la soledad y empezaron los tiempos de la solidaridad' (Carpentier 2003 48). Moreover, in his birthday discourse of 1974, at the event organised by the Communist Party, he emphasises and extends this idea: 'han terminado para el escritor cubano los tiempos de la SOLEDAD. Para él han comenzado los tiempos de la SOLIDARIDAD. SOLIDARIDAD que nos alienta a crear en función de la SOLIDARIDAD' (Carpentier 1991: 350). This affirmation is explicitly tied to the Cuban

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<sup>35</sup> Modesto Sánchez stresses the existence of radical revolutionary groups like the 'ABC', and 'Jóven Cuba' in the 1930s-40s Cuban political context, characterised by their use of terrorist means in their political struggle.

Revolution and the revolutionary role of the intellectuals. Moreover, the discussion on individual power is in line with the Marxist role assigned to the collective and the individual in the construction of history, which is only achieved through collective action. Ortega underlines in ‘Sobre *El siglo de las luces*’ the importance of the duality between the individual and the society as ‘la acción histórica sólo parece posible fuera del contexto originario de un individuo’ (Ortega 1972: 198). According to this critic, Esteban and Sofía ‘logran el más pleno sentido de su participación en la Historia al sumarse a la turba que propiciará la liberación española del poder napoleónico’ (198). As such, the collective is associated with both Revolution and history. This is also the case of Jean Claude and Enrique in *La consagración*, as they find in the Spanish Civil War a way into history. Indeed, at the end of this novel, Vera accepts the Revolution, becoming part of the collective and history for the first time: ‘esta vez no vivo en un escenario sino dentro del público. No estoy detrás de una mentida barrera de candilejas, creadora de espejismos, sino que formo parte de una colectividad a quien ha llegado la hora de pronunciarse y tomar su propio destino en manos’ (Carpentier 1979: 510).

### **5. 2. 3. Darkness in the Light: Ideology and Praxis, Reason and Faith in Carpentier’s Assessment of Revolution**

The contradictions between ideology and practice constitute a third binary pattern in Carpentier’s portrayal of revolutions. Indeed, Carpentier’s narrative cycle, like Fuentes’s works, stresses the paradoxes inherent in the application of European ideological postulates in American contexts. The scarcity of dialogues or ‘rechazo al diálogo convencional’ (Lastra 1972: 49), noticed by Pedro Lastra in his analysis of *¡Ecue-Yamba-O!* (1933), characterises Carpentier’s writings. Rodríguez Monegal and González Echevarría contemptuously refer to this narrative-style as ‘parrafadas’ or ‘disertaciones teóricas’. However, Carpentier’s essayistic-prose allows him to build critical reflections that stress the ironies of the revolutionary discourses and their realisation, while acknowledging their influence on subsequent political developments.

Such is the case of the depiction and discussion of the French Revolution in *El siglo*. The title of the novel, its epigraph regarding eighteenth-century Europe and the *philosophes*’ social ideology are constantly rebutted through the development of the plot. Indeed, the use of ‘Reason’ as the banner of the eighteenth-century to assert the superiority of the epoch and European men is challenged in Carpentier’s depiction of Revolution. In contrast, Carpentier posits irrational violence as a common denominator of revolutionary outbreaks and their

aftermath, which would also feature in Arendt's and Calvert's later political theories. Indeed, when talking about this novel, Carpentier underscores his deliberate emphasis on the irony between the enlightened revolutionary discourse and its obscure resolution: "el libro está dominado por el color rojo, no hay ningún capítulo del que esté ausente la imagen de la sangre (corales, sangre, guillotina, etc.)" (Carpentier in Fell 1989: 381). Thus, the bloodshed of revolutionary struggles becomes the antithesis of their proclaimed fraternity and solidarity.

Moreover, according to Carpentier "cada personaje de *El siglo de las luces* tiene, pues, un valor simbólico que sobrepasa su acción en la novela" (380). The main characters of the novel, Sofía and Esteban, become allegories of Praxis and Idealism. For instance, Carpentier characterises him as "utópico, el idealista que no tiene en realidad una conciencia política"(380), while Sofía "es la praxis [...] la mujer que intuitivamente siente lo que hay que hacer" (380). Beyond the symbolism of these characters, the novel erects a criticism of the revolutionary period that contrasts with the epic and romantic imaginary associated with the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Carpentier's critical depiction of these French revolutionary ideas, is reminiscent of Fuentes's analogous interpretation in *La campaña* of the Latin American struggles of Independence, stressing the critical nature of the literary historicism of both authors.

Carpentier uses parody to problematize revolutionary freedom as a myth, as can be seen in two evocative episodes of Esteban's return to America and Cuba. Firstly, his description of Víctor's arrival in America as the 'investido de poderes' bearing simultaneously freedom and death illustrates this paradox: 'luciendo todos los distintivos de su Autoridad, inmóvil, pétreo con la mano derecha apoyada en los montantes de la Máquina, Víctor Hugues se había transformado repentinamente en una Alegoría. Con la Libertad, llegaba la primera guillotina al Nuevo Mundo' (Carpentier 1989: 205). Secondly, Esteban's delayed return to Cuba and his journeys through Spain, Guadeloupe and Cayenne seeking a valid passport elucidate the revolutionary curtailment of individual freedom: 'los almojarifes, diezmeros, portagueros, alcabaleros y aduaneros de otros tiempos quedaban apenas en pintoresco anuncio de la mesnada policial y política que ahora se aplicaba, en todas partes – unos por temor a la revolución, otros por temor a la contra-revolución – a coartar la libertad del hombre' (307).

Esteban's progressive disillusionment with Víctor and the Revolution stems from the contradictions that he witnesses, in the Metropolis and its colonies, between the *philosophes'* social ideas and their implementation by the Assembly and the Directory. Upon his return to

Cuba, this character sums up his revolutionary experience emphasising that ‘esta vez la revolución ha fracasado, acaso la próxima sea la buena. Pero para agarrarme cuando estalle tendrán que buscarme con linternas a medio día’ (330). Given the American perspective from which *El reino* and *El siglo* depict the French Revolution, Carpentier reassesses the revolutionary ideas of liberty and equality concerning race and slavery. Moreover, the economic substratum of slavery in the American colonies challenged the effective transposition of French social ideas and emphasised the Marxist theoretical frame of Carpentier’s notion of Revolution.

Thus, the oscillating policies of the Metropolis with regards to slavery in the colonies, mirror the shifting attitudes of the French colonists *vis-à-vis* the declaration of racial liberty and equality, in fear of jeopardising their economic and social status. Víctor initially praises and enforces the ‘Decreto del 16 Pluvioso, que proclamaba la abolición de la esclavitud y la igualdad de derechos otorgados a todos los habitantes de la isla, sin distinción de raza ni estado’ (205). Nonetheless, as Esteban notes, this contrasts with Víctor’s authorisation of maritime slave trade and with his personal views on the black citizens: ‘bastante tienen con que los consideremos como ciudadanos franceses’ (226). Indeed, as Sofía recalls from her time with Víctor in Cayenne with regards to ‘el decreto del 30 Floreal’, Víctor ‘había mostrado una energía tenaz, casi sobrehumana, para abolir la esclavitud ocho años antes, y ahora mostraba la misma energía para restablecerla’ (388). Indeed, this ironic regression with regards to freedom and slavery in the French colonies is accompanied by the attitudes of the former revolutionaries Billaud-Varenne and Collot d’Herbois, who after fighting for the abolition of slavery, find themselves buying slaves after it is restored by Napoleon: ‘todo lo que hizo La Revolución Francesa en América fue legalizar una Gran Cimarronada que no cesa desde el siglo XVI’ (301). The hypocrisy of the Cuban criollos’ philanthropy in Sofía’s and Carlos’s Logia Andrógina is also underscored by Esteban: ‘se apiadaban sobre el destino de los esclavos quienes, ayer mismo, habían comprado nuevos negros para trabajar en sus haciendas’ (343). Carpentier complements this argument by underlining an identical oscillation of revolutionary policies in the Assembly’s religious persecution, which was annulled by Napoleon’s Concordat (1801) with the Vatican.

The dichotomy between *praxis* and theory also pervades the revolutionary unfolding in *El acoso* in the antithetical means of achieving political change during the first Cuban Revolution. This binary struggle is embodied by the ideological approach of the Cuban Communist Party versus the active terrorism of the ‘Temibles’. Indeed, the *acosado* places his

fluctuation from ideology to action in the fact that he ‘había estado demasiado rodeado, en aquellos días, de impacientes por actuar. Le decían que no perdiese el tiempo en reuniones de célula, ni en leer opúsculos marxistas, o el elogio de remotas granjas colectivas [...] cuando los mejores de su generación caían bajo la policía represiva’ (Carpentier 1980: 56-57). Sánchez highlights that the *acosado*’s revolutionary journey mirrored the political context of that time in Havana, and in particular the terrorist methods of the revolutionary group ‘ABC’ in contrast to the ideological vocation of the Directorio Estudiantil Universitario (DEU) and the Communist Party: ‘al principio la actividad del ABC se limitó a una campaña periodística contra el gobierno, dirigiendo un manifiesto al país conocido con el nombre de "Manifiesto del ABC." Con posterioridad este grupo desarrollaría una lucha clandestina contra el gobierno de Machado [...] consistente en la eliminación de altas figuras del gobierno’ (Sánchez 1975: 401). The *acosado*’s pursuit of revolutionary action and his evolution into a gangster, constitutes the negation of his ideological affiliations, which is sealed when he betrays his co-revolutionaries. In this novel, there seems to be no possible resolution for this conflict as the *acosado*’s internal conflict ends with his death, but the context in which his story is inscribed remains.

Thus, Carpentier’s tragic depiction of this dualism in his Revolution cycle seems to fall in the inexorable irresolution of its contradictions, in which González Echevarría bases his radical analyses. However, I argue, coinciding with Steven Boldy’s considerations on *El Reino*, that this apparent irresolution in Carpentier’s treatment of Revolution is solved in its continuities and discontinuities. In particular, this binary finds resolution through the permanence of Faith, as opposed to Reason. Beyond its religious manifestations, Carpentier’s depictions of Revolution are underscored by an inherent Faith in ideas and ultimately in men. After all, despite the enlightened claim to Reason, it was the belief in the *philosophes*’ ideas on men, which shaped French Revolution and of subsequent revolutionary outbreaks. This can be observed in Esteban’s remnant hopes for revolution ‘acaso la próxima sea la buena’ (Carpentier 1989: 330) despite his disenchantment. Additionally, Sofía’s understanding of Revolution, which is deemed as merely practical by Carpentier, ultimately stems from faith as she tells Esteban ‘te enojas con nosotros [...] porque tenemos fe en algo’ (334).

Indeed, despite the specificity of historic revolutions, the permanence and circulation of the revolutionary ideas characterises the continuity of this phenomenon. After Esteban returns to Cuba, he is continuously haunted by the presence and proliferation of the same revolutionary ideals that he had translated for Víctor Hugues in Pointe-au-Pitre. These, as noted in the

novel, would become the foundation of Latin American Revolutions of Independence in the nineteenth century. As stressed by Carpentier, ‘cuando las ideas de la Revolución Francesa parecían haber sucumbido en Francia [...] sus ideas seguían creciendo y fructificando en América’(Carpentier 1989: 53). At the end of the novel, it is Esteban’s humanist faith, which leads him to follow Sofía, taking part in the 1808 uprising against Joseph Bonaparte in Madrid. In *La consagración* and its all-encompassing depiction of historical revolutions, Vera stresses the persistence of revolutionary ideals: ‘la *Idea*, la eterna *Idea*, religiosa o política, unida siempre a la existencia de un sacrificio, *Idea* a la que estaba pagando tributo de mí misma sin haberla aceptado jamás’ (Carpentier 1979: 187). Throughout the novel, Vera is perceived as a ‘mujer que viene huyendo de la Revolución, – de todas las revoluciones’ (283). Nonetheless, her endeavour to avoid politics by taking refuge in ballet is rendered impossible, highlighting her growing political awareness and her final decision to become part of the Cuban Revolution (397). As such, the ideological continuum in revolutions since the eighteenth century, in spite of their failures, attest to the accumulation, circulation, change, permanence and transculturation of ideas in human development.

#### 5. 2. 4. Historical and Contemporary Revolutions

Alejo Carpentier’s literary interpretation of Revolution across his novels is caught between historical and contemporary experiences of this phenomenon. The tension between the historicity of the French, Haitian and Russian Revolutions and the unfolding of the twentieth-century Cuban Revolutions frame his conceptualisation of this historical event. Indeed, Carpentier’s literary historicism on Revolution emerged from his Cuban context: the military dictatorships of Machado and Batista and the attempts to overthrow them. It is also within this tension, that we can situate the authorial dimension of the dichotomy between praxis and ideology. Indeed, Carpentier’s reassessment of American Revolutions during the forties and fifties was influenced by his active political opposition to the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado (1871-1939), which saw his incarceration under charges of communism in 1927 and his eventual exile in Paris. His portrayal of these historical revolutions, as demonstrated earlier, is underscored by the dominant influence of Marxism and Communism, which grants ideological continuity to his representation of Revolution and the social task that he sees in literature.

For this reason, it would be possible to associate the somewhat pessimistic character of his depiction of historical revolutions to the failure of the Cuban Revolution against Machado during the thirties. Indeed, despite Machado’s deposition in 1933, the emergence of Fulgencio

Batista's (1901-1973) military dictatorship saw the intensification of international dependence and violent repression in Cuba. In the light of his contemporary context, it can be suggested that his critical approach to historical revolutionary phenomena in these works acquired a performative value hinted in Sofía's reaction to Esteban's disenchanted account of his revolutionary experience: 'la dicha de los pueblos no podía alcanzarse en el primer intento; se habían cometido graves errores, ciertamente, pero esos errores servirían de útil enseñanza para el futuro' (Carpentier 1989: 331). Thus, the author's critical assessment of history in his literary works is related to the political development of Latin American Republics, and in particular, the desire for social change in Cuba and Latin America.

In his letter to Gene Bell of 1972, Carpentier claims that the pessimist tone that characterised his depiction of historical revolutions depended on their historical outcome, and did not stem from a personal view: 'aunque [se] diga que yo no ofrezco en dos de mis novelas un retrato positivo de las revoluciones, en ellas el balance siempre es positivo en favor de las mismas. Yo no puedo rehacer la historia' (Carpentier 1981: 70). However, it is possible to note in his narrative a turning point in his depiction of these phenomena marked by the triumph of the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959. This historical juncture shifted the resolution of this binary in his works, in favour of the present and future development of collective change:

En cuanto a mí, habiendo asistido a un proceso revolucionario que se produjo en el lugar de América donde menos se pensaba que pudiera producirse, no puedo ni podré sustraerme ya a la intensidad, a la fuerza, por no decir al embrujo, de la temática revolucionaria. Hombre de mi tiempo, soy de mi tiempo y mi tiempo trascendente es el de la Revolución Cubana. (Carpentier 2003: 67)

This contemporary revolution influenced the change in character of its depiction, which is detected in *El siglo* and becomes more explicit in *La consagración*.

Firstly, the socialist affiliation of the Cuban Revolution declared in the 1960s, and the political ties between the Soviet Union and the Cuban Socialist Republic led Carpentier to feature the Russian Revolution (1917) in his last novel. Through the contrasting interpretation of the narrators Vera and Enrique with regards to this event and the Spanish Civil War, Carpentier builds a debate on the challenges posed by individual aspirations and collective change. The emphasis on the twentieth-century on-going war context around the world, and in particular Vera's evolution, highlights the impossibility of her quest to remain apolitical problematizing Kant's *ars gratia artis*. In a conference given at Yale University, Carpentier makes a similar affirmation 'hablar, en América Latina de la neutralidad de la cultura es un absurdo' (Carpentier 2003: 201). The triumph of the Cuban Revolution coincided with

Carpentier's political aspirations of the thirties and his ideological convictions seen in the Marxist substratum of his works. Thus, the proximity of this Revolution to the nationalism of this writer, his return to Cuba in 1959, as well as his enthusiastic affiliation to its regime stress his ideological commitment to the Cuban Revolution. This is further emphasised by his insistence on conferring a social and political objective to art, music or literature.

Perhaps the most significant difference in Carpentier's depiction of Revolution before and after 1959 is found in the resounding optimistic tone that his reflections acquire. The endings of *El siglo* and *La consagración* are set at the opening of revolutions instead of their closure, which simultaneously opens the possibilities of their unfolding into the future. Despite the failure of the revolutionary attempts in *El reino*, Ti Noel 'lanzó una declaración de Guerra a los nuevos amos' (Carpentier 2007: 152), before being swept and killed by a wind gust, which suggests an early presence of this belief, although it is curtailed by his death. Moreover, Ti Noel's disappearance into nature is similar to Esteban and Sofía's dissipation into the anonymous mass in Madrid. The amalgamation of times synthesises the relationship between past and present and their transformation into hopes for the future. Carpentier's decision to embark on the Cuban revolutionary adventure in 1959, despite the critical reassessment of historical revolutions in his earlier works, resembles Esteban's 'pulsión revolucionaria' in *El siglo*. Indeed, Esteban, whom the author regards as his alter ego, joins the uprising in Madrid stimulated by Sofía regardless of his disenchantment with the French Revolution.

The movement from pessimism to optimism in Carpentier's depiction of Revolution is diametrically opposed to the one analysed in Fuentes's diachronic reassessment, setting apart their literary conceptions of this phenomenon. If the Cuban Revolution endorsed Carpentier's hopeful vision, Fuentes's somewhat positive perception of the Mexican Revolution changed after the student massacre at Tlatelolco in 1968. Moreover, as noted by Rafael Rojas in his article 'Carlos Fuentes entre dos revoluciones' Fuentes's initial support for the Cuban Revolution and socialism, influenced by the caso Padilla, 'se decantó claramente por el repertorio conceptual de la Nueva Izquierda, haciendo cada vez más visibles sus críticas al socialismo burocrático de la Unión Soviética y Europa del Este' (Rojas 2017: 148).

Although not directly addressed in his works, Carpentier also includes allusions and considerations about the Latin American Revolutions of Independence. Indeed, the ending of *El siglo*, as stressed by critics like Echevarría and Ortega, leads to the start of the Latin American struggles for independence. In his theoretical and critical works, it is possible to

find an assessment of these revolutionary outbreaks. Carpentier, unlike Fuentes, presents these revolutions in a more favourable light stressing that:

a partir de las revueltas de Haití, que fueron seguidas muy poco después por la serie de guerras de independencia que lograrían su victoria final en 1824, en la victoria de la batalla de Ayacucho, las estructuras de la vida, las estructuras sociales, variaban de una manera total [...] por la aparición en el primer lugar del escenario histórico de un personaje que políticamente no había sido tomado en cuenta si bien humanamente existía. Y ese personaje es el criollo. (Carpentier 2003: 94)

Thus, for Carpentier, the Revolutions of Independence granted Latin American republics with a national identity and ‘conciencia criolla’ in continuous construction since the nineteenth century. This assessment of the Independence movements in Latin America differed from that of Fuentes, who rebutted the revolutionary character attributed to them by Republican histories, stressing the lack of sufficient change in the political and economic structures.

Nonetheless, if Carpentier’s later novels stressed an optimistic development of Revolution, they are also streaked with a critical stance merely suggested in the plots. For instance, it is significant that the plot of *La consagración* mostly portrays the outbreak and initial consolidation of the Revolution ending with the victory at Playa Girón against the United States Navy in 1961. Carpentier’s silence on its aftermath, after almost twenty years between Castro’s arrival in Havana and the publication of his novel, is indicative of a less epic revolutionary unfolding. This consideration can be grounded in Irene’s pre-emptive questioning of the future of the Revolution, to boycott her lover Enrique’s return to Cuba: ‘toda la gente nueva que llegaba al poder en estos fregados países, empezaba siempre con magníficas intenciones [...] y esa pobreza, esa pureza, y esa sencillez, les duraba hasta el día en que un Jefe de Protocolo les señalaba la necesidad -el poder tiene sus servidumbres- de mejorar la guardarropía’ (Carpentier 1979: 524). Indeed, Irene’s arguments have the effect of planting doubts in the reader, indicating a possible critical perception of the author on the success of the Cuban Revolution. Thus, if the author, like Esteban, could not resist the revolutionary drive to join the revolution, neither could he renounce the critical awareness that characterises his literature.

### **5. 3. *Corsi e Ricorsi*: The Circular versus the Spiral**

The oscillating recurrences in Carpentier’s depiction of Revolution, along with the archetypical return to the origins that structures his works, have led critics like Rodríguez Monegal, González Echevarría and Ortega to identify a circular tendency in Carpentier’s conception of history and revolution. In *The Pilgrim*, González Echevarría attributes Carpentier’s cyclical conception of history to Spengler’s philosophical influence:

That static history characterizes Carpentier's fiction in the forties. It is not simply that Carpentier offers a decentred anti-Hegelian view of history, but that the historical process appears as a dynamic cycle of repetitions that results in a static and permanent image [...] This is why the historical world presented by Carpentier in his stories is always one of imposing buildings and ruins, a world of palaces and dismantled mansions, the two poles of a universe in constant construction and demolition. (González Echevarría 1990: 130)

More so, as seen with regards to González Echevarría's analysis of *Semejante a la noche*, he highlighted that Carpentier's cyclical depiction of history would result in *ahistoricity*, or the effective negation of history (change) given, in Nietzschean terms, 'the eternal recurrence of the same'. When contrasted with Carpentier's historicist drive, the evident contradiction of his conclusion moved him to nuance his affirmations: 'Carpentier, pues, como Cervantes y Borges, afirma el valor de la historia, pero de la historia escrita, y declara indisoluble el nexo que la une a la ficción novelesca' (González 1972: 190). Nonetheless, it could be argued that his argument remains inconsistent, for orality, characteristic of African and indigenous communities, is still part of the historical memory and culture used by Carpentier. As Boldy rightly argues 'la mentalidad negra es presentada como dependiendo de modelos culturales (leyendas, recuerdos, oraciones) que al fin y al cabo son una especie de texto y tienen el mismo tipo de relación con la realidad' (Boldy 1986: 414).

Although González Echevarría insists on the prevailing cyclical structure and repetition across Carpentier's works, he also states that from *El siglo* onwards, the author's conception of history ceases to be static as the cyclical beginnings are displaced. Esteban's reflection on the conch shell and its resemblance to history (time) in the novel, summarises this approach: 'contemplando un caracol –uno solo– pensaba Esteban en la presencia de la espiral durante milenios y milenios, ante la cotidiana mirada de los pueblos pescadores aún incapaces de entenderla ni de percibir siquiera la realidad de su presencia' (Carpentier 1989: 253). Nonetheless, this can lead us to consider whether there was ever such *stasis* in Carpentier's works. My analysis coincides with those of Boldy and Lastra, who favoured the idea of the spiral when addressing Time and history in Carpentier's writings. Pedro Lastra notes the presence of the spiral structure of *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!* where 'la situación final de la novela apunta casi *ad litteram* al reinicio de la vida en otra vuelta de la espiral' (Lastra in Müller-Bergh 1972: 50). I share Lastra's annotation and argue that the spiral conception of history and Revolution is present since *El reino de este mundo* and *La música en Cuba*. Boldy argues that, in this novel, reality (the real) is conceived as a project, the 'imponerse tareas' stressed by Ti Noel, instead of the blunt repetition of its architext. This argument can be furthered with regards to history and Revolution, both of which allow a possibility of change in virtue of the

referred faith, since ‘la grandeza del hombre está precisamente en querer mejorar lo que se es’ (Carpentier 2007: 152).

Moreover, the evolution of Carpentier’s characters in the novels, together with the changing nature of the revolutions challenge the *stasis* argued by González Echevarría. Although oppression is constant in the depiction of the Haitian Revolution and Ti Noel’s struggle for freedom is doomed to fail, the French Government, Henri Christophe’s black Monarchy, and the Mulatto Republic are not equivalent. They comprise complex political and social processes, of which Carpentier chose to stress the continuities in his critical reassessment of these historical phenomena. A similar approach is found in the critical emphasis that he places on the contradictory character of the French Revolution and its imposition in the Antilles. Thus, despite the convergence of characteristics between the Haitian, French and Cuban experiences of Revolution, these were not the same for they corresponded to particular contexts stressed by the author. Indeed, Rafael Rojas highlights Fuentes’s critical reading of Carpentier’s *El siglo*, considering that unlike the portrayal of revolutions in this novel, all were ‘irreversibles e irrepitibles’ (Rojas 2017: 139).

This is perhaps the reason why Carpentier in his letter to Bernard Martocq decides to refute a static reading of his works denying the saturnal character attributed to his fictional Revolutions: ‘No estoy muy de acuerdo [con] la afirmación de que yo tengo un concepto “saturnal” de la historia. Difiero totalmente [de] la idea de que ninguna revolución ha cumplido sus promesas. Si la Revolución Francesa fracasó en cierto modo, yo no podía, históricamente, mostrarme muy optimista frente a ella (Carpentier 1983: 131-132). Finally, this circularity is further denied in the incapacity of Carpentier’s characters to return to the same place at the start of each cycle. For instance, Ti Noel could not accept his condition as a slave once he became a free man. In *El siglo*, Víctor Hugues’s mercantilist government in Cayenne differs from his terror regime in Guadeloupe. Moreover, the *acosado* cannot start again and is doomed to death. Finally, Vera is forced to accept the impact that each revolution had in her life.

As such, in Carpentier’s narrative, the progression of history and Revolution follows a movement of *corsi e ricorsi* that pervades his literary and critical production. Vico’s philosophical influence is not just felt in *El recurso del método* as González Echevarría claimed, although perhaps gains more presence in his later novels. Precisely, it is in the Vicchian movement of *corsi e ricorsi* and the spiral conception of history that the recurrent

aspects of Revolution acquire meaning in Carpentier's semantic literary historicism. In Carpentier's literary cycle, this pendular movement stresses the continuities of the revolutionary phenomenon, while asserting the specificity of particular historical revolutions. As such, the notions of accumulation of culture and plurality endorsed by the spiral regressions make it possible to assess and learn from past events, which in turn facilitate change and advancement. The symbolic presence of the ruins that populate Carpentier's literature acquires a similar meaning to that in Fuentes, stressing the influence of the past (and its endurance) in the present. Thus, the tension between these binaries of end and beginning, history and present are resolved in the accumulation of culture, which highlights the historicist nature of Carpentier's literature.

As in Fuentes's works, the recurrences of the revolutionary events portrayed by Carpentier that lend a spiral form to his narrative cycle, allow us to draw a characterisation of Revolution, which in turn fosters the comparison between the works of both authors. To recapitulate, the following elements are central to their critical literary depictions of this historical phenomenon, which echo political theories. Both authors place the quest for freedom as the primary purpose of revolutions, and violent upheavals as the usual means of this endeavour. Moreover, the aftermath of Revolution is characterised by the corruption of power, which determines the failure or success of the revolutionary movements and is linked to solitude and solidarity. Nonetheless, the authors' particular spatial, temporal and cultural contexts frame their portrayals and determine their depiction of particular historical revolutions. Indeed, both authors present divergent tendencies in their assessment of revolutionary phenomena. Finally, these depictions are connected by the influence of Vico's philosophy in their conception of time and history, the movement of *corsi e ricorsi*, as well as by the pre-eminence given to the present and the future in their literary depiction of the Latin American past.

## 6. Conclusive Remarks on Literary Historicism in Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier

Over the course of this research project, I have analysed Carlos Fuentes's and Alejo Carpentier's literary interpretations of the historical *tropes* of Conquest and Revolution across their *oeuvres*. The transversal and diachronic study of their works, as well as the frame of literary historicism, allowed me to explore both their historicist writing methodologies and their conveyed semantic interpretation of such topics. Indeed, both aspects acquire a complementary status in Fuentes's and Carpentier's literary approaches, as often their chosen writing techniques and literary devices are constitutive parts of the critical reflections that they raise on Conquest and Revolution. Precisely, the analysis of history in their works becomes pertinent, given the essayistic nature of their literary prose and their conscious use of literature to engage with historical reflections and debates. Nonetheless, although the scholarly production on Fuentes's and Carpentier's literature today is vast, the examination of historical topics in their writings has been disregarded, overlooked or included within wider literary analyses that diminish its importance. The most recent criticism produced on their works, however, suggests a tendency to re-centre the attention to the study of historical topics in their literary writings. Such is the case of the studies of Covadonga Lamar Prieto, Daniel Chávez, María José Bustos and Julio Zárate, among others. It is within this current of literary criticism that my present research is inscribed.

The notion of literary historicism was developed over the course of this analysis and responded to the methodological patterns, stylistic convergences and thematic constants that emerged in the works of Fuentes and Carpentier. Moreover, it has also taken into account my previous approximations to reading historical topics in Latin American authors such as Gabriel García Márquez and Juan Carlos Onetti. On the one hand, I have built this concept with attention to late-twentieth century theoretical approaches on the study of history and literature, noting with particular attention those that included or focused on Latin American narratives. Indeed, the works of Linda Hutcheon, Roberto González Echevarría and Sergio Mejía, among others, were particularly important to the development of this concept. However, Hutcheon's primary focus on European postmodernism, González Echevarría's oblivion of history in his archival theory, and Mejía's all-encompassing *historicismo americano* stressed the need to devise an analytical framework to account for the specificities of this phenomenon in Latin American literature from the mid-twentieth century onwards. On the other hand, I have also complemented the scope of this notion by including theoretical

thinkers such as Giambattista Vico and Mikhail Bakhtin, who influenced the development of Latin American literature in the past century, as well as the literary theories of the studied authors.

Thus, the notion of literary historicism aims to provide another framework for the interdisciplinary interpretation of the works of authors like Fuentes and Carpentier, and is also pertinent for examining other Latin American writers of their generation. Indeed, in this thesis literary historicism has not only proven instrumental in structuring the analysis of both authors' writings but also to identify, under a term, the diverse but recurrent aspects of their literary exploration of history. Even though I have only analysed the topics of Conquest and Revolution in this thesis, it would also be possible to examine within this approach other historical phenomena that are also addressed in their literary works. Such is the case of dictatorships and *caudillaje* in Latin America, as well as the problematic political and historical relationship with the USA in the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries. Indeed, an all-encompassing scrutiny of historical themes in their writings is pertinent given the multiple interconnections between their works and the evolution of their interpretation of history over their careers.

To recapitulate, the notion of literary historicism comprises methodological and semantic aspects. Through the study of the works of these authors, I have demonstrated a consistent and similar methodological approach to the use of historiographical accounts and the depiction of historical *tropes*. Indeed, Fuentes's and Carpentier's systematic historical research and, moreover, their effort to direct their readers towards the historiographical and cultural sources used by them suggest a double purpose. On the one hand, by stressing the historicity of their works these writers highlights the historical basis and intention of their fictions, instead of positing them as merely imaginative intents. In addition, this emphasises the Americanist perspective in their literature, as both writers were interested in being researchers of Latin America in order to become its interpreters. On the other hand, these authors encourage a dialogue between Latin American literary and historical traditions, underlining the possibilities and limitations of both. As has been demonstrated, their literary writings often respond to the Colonial and Republican historical traditions of interpretation to highlight, problematize and complement them.

Indeed, their scrutiny of previous portrayals of the past becomes an endeavour to reassess and update these interpretations, while making them dialogue with contemporary or subsequent

accounts on the event. For this reason, the polyphony and *heteroglossia* in Fuentes's and Carpentier's works, as well as their recourse to establish explicit inter-textuality with their sources through direct quotations and paraphrasing becomes crucial. Fuentes's and Carpentier's use of archival research suggests that they did not seek merely to follow them, but that their literature also encompassed a critical attempt to subvert and complement them. Moreover, the amalgamation and juxtaposition of diverse historical and cultural depictions allowed them to de-centre monological discourses and give a more comprehensive view of the historical processes and events depicted. This also illustrates one way in which the methodological and semantic aspects of their literary historicism are interrelated.

It is characteristic of their historicist approach to focus their attention on problematic or overlooked figures or historical events in mainstream and particularly official historiography. Carmen Vásquez and Roberto González Echevarría interpreted Carpentier's desire to portray obscure historical figures as a practical move to fictionalise them. Admittedly, although a less known historical character would have granted Carpentier, or Fuentes, flexibility in their literary portrayals, one must not overlook the historical investigation behind their creation. In the works I have studied, their attention to characters like Malinztin, Jerónimo de Aguilar, Gónzalo Guerrero, Víctor Hugues and François Mackandal become a literary response to complement the silences on these figures in official or mainstream historiography. This interest can also be seen in the Americanist perspective that the writers adopted when depicting the French Revolution in Carpentier's *El siglo* and the critical stance on its influence on the Latin American struggles of Independence in Fuentes's *La campaña*.

In addition, the latter's emphasis of the role of the working classes in the Mexican Revolution and his thematisation of the massacres of Río Blanco and Cananea throughout his literary cycle are also tied to remedying historiographical voids. Whether these omissions were part of a conscious silencing by the State or merely overlooked by traditional historiographical currents, these authors sought both to denounce and shed light on such gaps. Their polyphonic approach to the historical understanding of the Conquest by including Hispanic and Amerindian Colonial accounts, as well as taking into account the interpretation of this event produced over five hundred years was also part of this critical diachronic reassessment. Therefore, their works become a revision of the Latin American past and a critical repository of its cultural and historical traditions of interpretation.

Indeed, in his acceptance speech of the *Premio Rómulo Gallegos* in 1977, later published in the Spanish periodical *El País* as ‘Una reflexión latinoamericana’, Carlos Fuentes emphasises this characteristic:

La gigantesca tarea de la literatura latinoamericana contemporánea ha consistido en darle voz a los silencios de nuestra historia, en contestar con la verdad a las mentiras de nuestra historia. En apropiarnos con palabras nuevas de un antiguo pasado que nos pertenece e invitarlo a sentarse a la mesa de un presente que sin él sería la del ayuno. (Fuentes 1977)

A similar attitude can be found in Alejo Carpentier’s reflection ‘Acerca de la historicidad de Víctor Hugues’. In this appendix, the author historically situated his literary character and exposed how Hugues had been forgotten by French Historiography:

Cómo Víctor Hugues ha sido casi ignorado por la historia de la Revolución Francesa –harto atareada en describir los acontecimientos ocurridos en Europa, desde los días de la Convención hasta el 18 Brumario, para desviar la mirada hacia el remoto ámbito del Caribe–, el autor de este libro cree útil hacer algunas aclaraciones acerca de la historicidad de su personaje. (Carpentier 1989: 415)

Thus, in the above fragments, as well as through their fictions, both authors reveal their conscious attempt to address such gaps and de-centre the canonical historical narratives. Their emphasis on American history, from Americanist perspectives, was also connected to the creation of a national and continental identity, as well as a tradition of self-interpretation.

Their critical attitude in re-interpreting the past and questioning previous historical renderings would seem to stem from a dissatisfaction with such interpretations. For Latin American intellectuals of the twentieth century, both Colonial and nineteenth-century Republican explorations of Conquest and Revolution had become insufficient to explain their present societies. Indeed, the complexity of the racial, cultural and social composition of these republics, together with the fast-paced transformation of their urban demography and socio-economic physiognomy in this century rendered a comprehensive revision of the past indispensable. Beyond the mere portrayal of historical events, their literary historicism conveys a desire to examine these processes from the point of view of their consequences in the contemporary development of Mexico, Cuba, and in general, Latin America. Fuentes’s and Carpentier’s critical endeavours were inscribed in the wider concern of twentieth-century Latin American intellectuals for reassessing the identity and history of their countries. Indeed, the inter-textuality established with thinkers like Octavio Paz, Samuel Ramos, Fernando Benítez, Alfonso Reyes and Fernando Ortiz, among others, both stresses their influences on Fuentes’s and Carpentier’s works and their contribution to these debates. In the light of this consideration, it is also important to stress that the authors’ literary careers developed in parallel to the transformation of the social sciences and the professionalisation of history writing in Latin America from the 1960s onwards.

For these reasons, the plots and semantic aspects of their work reflect the Agustinian and Vicchian concepts of time. Indeed, the notion of the present as a period that enclosed both past and future times pervaded their understanding of history and collective memory in their literary writings. According to Carpentier:

Ante esta presencia del pasado en nuestro presente, viviendo en un hoy donde ya se perciben los pálpitos del futuro, el novelista latinoamericano ha de quebrar las reglas de una temporalidad tradicional en el relato para inventar lo que mejor convenga a la materia tratada o valerse –las técnicas se toman donde se encuentran– de otros que se ajusten a sus enfoques de la realidad. (Carpentier 2003: 159)

In Fuentes's and Carpentier's works, the present determines their exploration of the Conquest and the reassessment of historiographically problematic characters like Christopher Columbus, Malintzin and Hernán Cortés. Their literary portrayals of these historical figures subvert Manichean traditions of interpretation fostered by the *black* and *golden legends* of the Conquest and share the common trope of the conquered-conquistadors. Likewise, Fuentes and Carpentier reassess the Indigenous and Spanish traditions in the formation of the cultural and political development of Latin American Republics. If Fuentes's concern with the colonial past is directed to the indigenous question, in Carpentier's works the predominance of topics like slavery and the African cultural influence in Cuba and the Caribbean are evident. Their revalorisation of the vision of the vanquished comprised a re-evaluation of the agency of the indigenous and black population during colonial times, their place in republican discourses and the need to effectively integrate them into twentieth-century national politics and imaginary. Moreover, in their works, the topics of conquest and colonisation are linked to the problematization of Latin America's on-going economic and political dependence on foreign powers.

Fuentes's and Carpentier's depiction of historical revolutions in Latin America derives from the diverse revolutionary experiences of their countries, both past and contemporary and, in particular, the development of the Mexican Revolution and the socialist Cuban Revolution of 1959. These political contexts determined the thematic obsessions of their writings and their exploration of national and international revolutions. On the one hand, while the majority of Fuentes's writings reassess the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath, as argued by Rafael Rojas, the development of the Cuban Revolution influenced his political and literary trajectory. On the other hand, although Carpentier's revolutionary cycle features Caribbean and Cuban revolutionary outbreaks since the eighteenth century, his emphatic remarks on his visit to post-revolutionary Mexico in 1926 in his essays stress the deep impression that this revolution made on him.

Carpentier's and Fuentes's different takes on the struggles of Independence in Latin America are interesting. In *La campaña* and *La región*, Fuentes questions their epic rendering by criticising the 'imitación extralógica' (Fuentes 1990: 11) of European models of modernisation by the creole projects of independence. In particular, he denounces the effective Republican negation of both the Spanish and Indigenous heritage. Indeed, his main criticism regarding the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution and the Latin American struggles for independence is built around the debate between tradition and modernity, and their failure to attain an equitable and inclusive progress. In contrast, in his essay and journalistic writings, Carpentier seems to have a more epic view of these revolutions, perhaps given Cuba's late independence from Spain. Nonetheless, as argued in this thesis, *El siglo* and *El reino* also problematize the blunt importation of the French Revolutionary experiences into the cultural and racial complexity of Latin America. Víctor Hugues's emulation of Robespierre's mandate and Henri Christophe's adoption of European monarchical systems in Haiti are undone by the American racial and cultural realities.

The authors' attitudes towards political Revolutions present an inverse trajectory from optimism to pessimism and vice-versa. Indeed, Fuentes's depiction of the Mexican Revolution in *La región* and *Agua quemada* is tinted with optimism, while in later writings like *Gringo viejo*, *Nuevo tiempo mexicano* and *Federico* his perception of revolution shows a more sceptical view. Indeed, the Gringo Viejo asks Arroyo ¿Hay alguna revolución que haya escapado a ese destino? (Fuentes 1995: 81). This change could have been related to the political development of Mexico in the twentieth century and his disillusionment with the Cuban Revolution. In contrast, Carpentier's depiction of revolutionary phenomena seems to take the opposite direction. Although he denied having a Saturnal conception of Revolution in his works, its depiction in *El reino* and *El acoso* is somewhat pessimistic. Nonetheless, this contrasts with the ending of *El siglo*, but not with the majority of the plot, and with the epic portrayal of the initial victory of the Cuban Revolution in *La consagración*. This change of perception could be related to his belief in the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and his political allegiance to its government.

Finally, it is relevant to discuss exactly why Fuentes and Carpentier turn to literature to depict and reflect on historical topics. Indeed, the authors' use of literature as a vehicle to transform historical narrative stress the possibilities that they saw in fiction to both question and complement the interpretation of the past. Both authors' dissatisfaction with previous historical renderings associated with official bodies, prior to the professionalisation of history,

clearly influenced their choice for alternative cultural discourses. At the same time, history as a source of literature in Latin America seems to counterbalance modernist and avant-garde literary tendencies of the early twentieth century. Indeed, even the exploration of narrative forms in the works of these writers remained rooted in the assessment of Latin American historical *tropes*.

Carpentier's literary theories of *lo real maravilloso* and the Baroque are part of his pursuit of an Americanist narrative genre that was suited to express the realities and problems of Latin America. Both authors stress the influence of the *cronistas de Indias*, in particular, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, in the development of the history and literature of the New World. The blurred borderlines between these disciplines, which characterises their accounts, seems to be the reason why Carpentier associates the history of the Americas with a chronicle of *lo real maravilloso*. Indeed, the flexible narrative possibilities of literature allowed writers like Fuentes and Carpentier simultaneously to include and explore diverse times, topics, genres and cultural discourses, which contrasted with time-spatial constraints of historical prose. In this sense, the literary reflection of historical topics would open spaces for the construction of inclusive and subversive cultural interpretations, without compromising the literary value of their writings. Allegedly, its literary format would ensure that their portrayals could reach a broader audience and its interpretation multiplies in the spirit of Borges's 'Pierre Menard autor del Quijote'. As such, the literary historicism of Carlos Fuentes and Alejo Carpentier also offers a reflection on the places of literature and history in twentieth-century Latin American societies and the role of its writers in the construction of their collective memory.

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