Opening up the archive: memory, identity and historical fiction in Uruguay (1988-2011)

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Karunika Kardak

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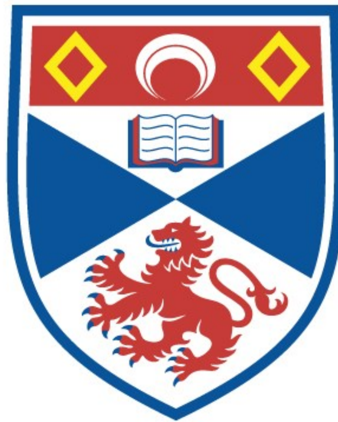

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Abstract

This thesis examines the representation of key events from the nineteenth century in five Uruguayan historical novels published in the aftermath of the country's recent dictatorship (1973-85). It answers the following research questions: how does historical fiction utilise the past in order to address concerns of national identity and cultural memory in the present? And how does it reassess the country's foundational myths by portraying both national heroes and historically marginalised figures? Using the methodological and theoretical tools of memory and identity studies, it analyses how the selected authors engage with archival sources, school textbooks and other received historical sources, as well as forms of material culture such as monuments, to enhance their interpretations of the past. In doing so, this study also aims to trace the development of the historical novel genre in this key period of post-dictatorship Uruguay. The selected novels, published over the course of twenty-four years (1988-2011), fictionalise both well-known and relatively unnoticed incidents from the country's past. They include Tomás de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* (1988), based on the massacre of the indigenous Charrúas (1831) and its aftermath; Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* (1994), which subverts the myths surrounding the national hero José Artigas (1764-1850); Susana Cabrera's *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001), which unearths the historical murder of an elite Montevidean woman by her slaves in 1821; Mario Delgado Aparaín's *No robarás las botas de los muertos* (2002), on the Siege of Paysandú in 1864-65; and lastly, *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (2011) by Marcia Collazo Ibáñez, which portrays the lives of six women related to Artigas. The thesis concludes that these works reflect upon issues of identity and memory to propose more egalitarian and pluralistic versions of them for Uruguay's post-dictatorship present.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to my supervisors, Gustavo San Román and Catherine O'Leary for their continuous support and insightful comments on several drafts of this thesis. Without their patience and thoughtful advice on critical thinking and the importance of writing well, alongside their enthusiasm for my research topic, I would not have been able to complete this project. Their encouragement and support, including on non-thesis related things, such as attending conferences and teaching, has made me develop as an academic, and as a person, for this I will be eternally grateful.

At the University of St Andrews, I am thankful to the Department of Spanish for their support generally and for organising many relevant seminars, lectures and research days which kept my interest in Latin American studies going. My fellow PhD students in Spanish and very good friends, Brigid Lynch, Guadalupe Elías, Karen Brown, Isabelle Gribomont and Julia Hieske, have been an invaluable source of support and inspiration. I am also indebted to Juan Mosquera for helping me solve many Spanish-related queries I've had over the past three years. Other friends from the wider PhD cohort, especially Rebecca Hagen, Eleanor Crabtree, Darya Tsymbalyuk and Catherine Barbour, have also been most encouraging allies. I'd also like to thank Nicki Hitchcott and Claire Whitehead for giving me an insight into academic life with Byre World and the Forum for Modern Languages respectively.

In Montevideo, the kindness and support offered to me by many people was essential for the completion of this project. Amir Hamed, Mario Delgado Aparaín, Napoleón Baccino Ponce de León, Marcia Collazo Ibáñez, Carlos Demasi, Inés Cuadro, Alejandro Gortázar, Aldo Marchesi, Pablo Rocca, Margarita Carriquiry, Hugo Achugar and Vania Markarian were generous with their time and expertise, allowing me to get a good sense of academic and literary culture in Uruguay. I'd also like to thank Margarita Muñiz, Sofía Gervaz, Graciela and Daniel San Román, Laura Musto and Jorge Rebella for being extremely hospitable and welcoming during my short stay in their beautiful city.

I am also grateful to Fabricio Prado for organising the Rio de la Plata workshop at the College of William and Mary and, with Alex Borucki, for giving me useful

feedback on one of my draft chapters. At the Museo Histórico Nacional, Ernesto Beretta and his team have been very kind in responding to my queries about their exhibits.

Undoubtedly, my thanks go to my parents, Taruna and Milind, my brother Santosh and my partner Bram who have been my rocks throughout this PhD in ways too numerous to mention here. My extended family, especially my granny Suman, have always believed in me. I am grateful also for my chosen family, my best friends, Alexa, Anandita and Nadine who were persistently there for me in laughter, and in sorrow.

Finally, this doctoral thesis would not have been possible without the University of St Andrews Seventh Century PhD Studentship, the L J Woodward Memorial Scholarship and Ministry of Social Welfare and Development Fund of Maharashtra, India. Moreover, the Santander Mobility grant, the D.J. Gifford Prize and the Society of Latin American Studies Postgraduate Travel Grant helped me conduct research in Montevideo, Uruguay. Additionally, financial support from the University of St Andrews discretionary fund allowed me to finish the final year of my research. I am extremely thankful for all of the above.

Research Data/Digital Outputs access statement

Raw interview transcripts will be kept confidential and relevant excerpts are provided in an appendix to the thesis.

Introduction

> Thou who stealest fire,
> From the fountains of the past,
> To glorify the present; oh, haste,
> Visit my low desire!
> Strengthen me, enlighten me!
>
> Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) in 'Ode to Memory' (1830).[1]

British diplomat Lord Posonby, referring to Uruguay's Cruzada Libertadora (1825), had once said: 'Un pueblo que es capaz de hacer la guerra con valor, puede constituirse y gobernarse por sí solo en la paz'.[2] Demonstrating the region's urge for self-governance, Posonby's words would influence its caudillos to sign the Convención de 1828, officially bringing the new Uruguayan state into existence. Soon after, in 1830, its leaders would formulate and swear in the new constitution, marking a fresh start in the region's history. Historian Juan Pivel Devoto, writing about the country's independence at the zenith of Uruguay's dictatorship in 1975, would echo Posonby's words during the year-long commemorations of the same Cruzada Libertadora. It was indeed the memory of these twenty-odd years (1810-30), ending with the same year Tennyson finished his 'Ode to Memory', that the dictatorship would use to glorify its turbulent present. But, ten years on, at the advent of re-democratisation, would the same memory enlighten and strengthen Uruguay's future?

This thesis examines how five historical novels published in the aftermath of Uruguay's recent dictatorship (1973-85) represent key events from the country's nineteenth century past. It answers the questions of how these works of historical fiction utilise the past to raise issues of national identity and cultural memory of concern to the

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[1] *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London & Harlow: Longmans, 1969), p. 210.
[2] Quoted in Juan E. Pivel Devoto, 'El proceso de la Independencia Nacional', *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional*, 10 (September 1975), 39–50 (p. 48).

present; and how these texts reassess the country's foundational myths by portraying both national heroes and historically marginalised figures. The selected corpus spans twenty-four years (1988-2011) and consists of texts that deal with a variety of events from Uruguay's nineteenth century. *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* (1988) by Tomás de Mattos recounts the, until then, little-known massacre of the indigenous Charrúas in 1830s Uruguay, whilst *Artigas Blues Band* (1994) by Amir Hamed represents the national hero, José Artigas (1764-1850), as rising from his ashes at his mausoleum in Montevideo. Similarly, Susana Cabrera's *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001) unearths the historical murder of an elite woman by her African slaves in 1821, and *No robarás las botas de los muertos* (2002) retells the events of the Siege of Payandú (1864-65). Finally, Marcia Collazo Ibáñez's *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (2011) retells Uruguayan history from the perspectives of six women related to the nation's foundational figure, José Artigas.

Through this diverse corpus, the thesis explores how these historical novels reassess the nation's foundational myths in the aftermath of a violent and repressive dictatorship that dominated the country from 1973 until the return to democracy in March 1985, after the elections at the end of 1984. It examines what this reappraisal of history implies for the authors' present and whether these works set a precedent for future generations' perception of these myths. At same time, as some of the selected texts depict lesser-known incidents from the nation's nineteenth century past, this thesis analyses how the reintroduction of these events into the national imaginary attempts to reconfigure Uruguayan collective memory and identity in the present. Particularly, this research focuses on how these texts portray national heroes and other recognisable individuals from the country's nineteenth-century history as well as those who were marginalised from it. It discusses how the selected authors project their understanding of these figures onto contemporary Uruguay and how their historical novels follow and reinforce more egalitarian trends of the present. In other words, as this thesis studies how these historical novels document the evolving nature of the memory of Uruguay's nineteenth century, it points to how they direct the reader towards new and renewed ways of remembering the past. In doing so, it attempts to trace the development of the historical novel in Uruguay and answers the question of how these texts indicate a turn in this genre in this post-dictatorship period.

The above five texts have been selected carefully in terms of their dates of publication to capture a substantial period, of almost a quarter of a century, as well as for their representative features of style, length and content. As they fictionalise different stages from the nineteenth century –chronologically, Artigas's revolutions, Portuguese/Brazilian governance of the region, Uruguayan independence and post-independence civil conflicts– and focus on both famous and forgotten events, together they represent the rich variety of this historical period. This allows for a thorough examination of how the nineteenth century is represented in post-dictatorship Uruguay. Moreover, given that the historical novel genre in Latin America often canonises male authors, apart from recent exceptions such as Isabel Allende, in order to have a more gender-balanced view of the field in Uruguay, this thesis makes a conscious effort to include works by two female writers, who are significant in their own right as novelists, namely Susana Cabrera and Marcia Collazo Ibáñez. Moreover, as will be noted below, except for Tomás de Mattos and Amir Hamed's works, the other three texts, albeit successful in terms of sales and popularity with the reading public, have not been studied in detail. As this thesis examines the above five novels together, it demonstrates that their common themes and concerns cannot be viewed merely as trends but, in fact. illustrate a reinterpretation of the genre itself; that is to say, they represent a new kind of historical novel.

For the purposes of this investigation, the significance of the nineteenth century in Uruguay is two-fold. The first half of the period saw the origins of a regional identity in Montevideo as opposed to Buenos Aires and, after almost a decade of Portuguese occupation (1817-25), the region achieved its official independence as a separate nation-state, Uruguay (1825-30). On the other hand, although the latter half of the nineteenth century was characterised by many civil wars, it also marked the beginning of institutionalised identity politics as the state attempted to unite its citizens with the incoming migrants from Europe by providing all of them with a fixed narrative of national origins. In other words, early nineteenth-century history was appropriated for memory-making and identity formation purposes through art, education, literature, monuments and commemorations. These top-down politics can be traced to predominantly three stages, beginning in late nineteenth century Uruguay.

Firstly, the military dictatorships of Lorenzo Latorre (1840-1916; in power 1876-80) and Máximo Santos (1847-1889; in power 1882-86) attempted to modernise the nation and played a seminal role in identity politics.[3] These leaders commissioned art such as Juan Manuel Blanes's (1830-1901) paintings of national heroes and significant battles, as well as a monument commemorating the declaration of independence in the city of Florida by Juan Manuel Ferrari (1874-1916). Additionally, they organised competitions for the creation and recitals of epic poetry in homage to the monument.[4] Likewise, in this period, intellectuals like Isidoro de María, Francisco Bauzá, Carlos María Ramírez and Francisco A. Berra wrote significant works of national history, reflecting a need to narrativise the nation's past. In other words, they attempted to provide an accessible version of the past that would serve as a reference point not only for future generations of historians but also for writers of history textbooks and literature. Accordingly, as education was made compulsory through the reforms of José Pedro Varela (1845-1879), a specific version of history was taught at schools.[5] A version that, according to Jens R. Hentschke, proposed Uruguay to be 'innately autonomous and democratic (Artiguista), white, cosmopolitan and educated: in short, as civilised and modern'.[6] Similarly, historical fiction based on early nineteenth-century history was also produced in this period, notably in the works of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz (1851-1921), whom we shall discuss shortly below. As nineteenth-century historians and cultural producers explored the nation's past to create its foundational myths, they also decided

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[3] Along with the development of telegraph, postal and train services, especially during Santos's government, there was an attempt to secularise the state through laws regarding civil marriage and convents. See Benjamín Nahum, *Breve historia ilustrada del Uruguay independiente* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2005), p. 43–47.

[4] Juan Zorilla de San Martín's *La leyenda patria*, an epic poem which commemorates the Thirty-Three Orientals, was recited at the inaugural of the monument at Florida in 1879. (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1883).

[5] According to Carolina González Laurino, the education reform was 'una de las piezas clave en la generación de la cohesión de una sociedad que ya comienza a concebirse en términos nacionales.' *La construcción de la identidad uruguaya* (Montevideo: Universidad Católica & Taurus, 2001), p. 32.
In fact, Bauzá and Berra also wrote books for schools and universities. Berra's *Bosquejo histórico de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (1st edn 1881; several later edns) was eventually banned from schools by Santos's government because it did not portray the national hero Artigas in a good light. See Guillermo Vázquez Franco's *Francisco Berra: La historia prohibida* (Montevideo: Mandinga Editor, 2001) on this issue; also Jens R. Hentschke, 'Artiguista, White, Cosmopolitan and Educated: Constructions of Nationhood in Uruguayan Textbooks and Related Narratives, 1868-1915', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 44 (November 2012), 733–64.

[6] Hentschke, 'Artiguista, White, Cosmopolitan', p. 737. Hentschke's recent monograph provides a wide-ranging discussion on the Varelian reforms, *Philosophical Polemics, School Reform, and Nation-Building in Uruguay, 1868-1915: Reforma Vareliana and Batllismo from a Transnational Perspective* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2016).

on who would be left out of this official history, namely women, Afro-Uruguayans, and indigenous groups.

A second stage in the consolidation of Uruguayan identity through the use of its nineteenth century past took place in the period called *batllismo* (1903-30). Named after President José Batlle y Ordoñez (1856-1929; in power twice, 1903-07 and 1911-15), who attempted to imbibe the nation with modern European values, this epoch saw enormous economic success accompanied by social reforms such as divorce laws, workers' rights and the abolition of the death penalty, allowing Uruguay to view itself as the Switzerland of America.[7] Additionally, this stage was marked by commemorations of the centenaries of many early nineteenth-century events like the 1825 Cruzada Libertadora, the military campaign that liberated the region from Brazilian (and previously Portuguese) rule eventually leading to Uruguayan independence, and the 1830 Jura de la Constitución, the swearing in of the new constitution.[8] Along with further cultural production from writers Zorilla de San Martín and Acevedo Díaz and artists like Blanes and the younger Pedro Blanes Viale (1879-1926), there was an urge as well as the financial means to build more monuments, further marking the nation's landscape with icons of the past.[9]

The third and most recent stage in the political use of the nineteenth-century past was the civic-military dictatorship in Uruguay beginning in 1973. In an atmosphere of economic and political crisis and as a reaction to the emergence of radical left-wing guerrilla groups such as the Tupamaros who kidnapped and executed US advisor Dan Mitrione in 1970, the military took over the government in June 1973 when President Juan María Bordaberry dissolved the parliament and gave the military special powers over civil society.[10] The regime subsequently banned left-wing parties such as the Frente

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[7] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 57–79; Hentschke, 'Artiguista, White, Cosmopolitan', p. 748.
[8] See *Los uruguayos del Centenario: Nación, ciudadanía, religión y educación (1910-1930)*, ed. by Gerardo Caetano (Montevideo: Taurus, 2000). In 1923, there was a discussion in the parliament about which of these two events should be considered Uruguay's national day, see Gustavo San Román, *Soy celeste: Investigación sobre la identidad de los uruguayos* (Montevideo: Fin de Siglo, 2007), pp. 200–03.
[9] Although the Latorre and Santos's governments had attempted to do so, the early twentieth century's economic progress allowed for more grandiose reproductions of past figures. See Susana Antola and Cecilia Ponte, 'La nación en bronce, mármol y hormigón armado', in *Los uruguayos del Centenario*, pp. 217–43.
[10] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 128; Francesca Lessa, *Memory and Transitional Justice in Argentina and Uruguay: Against Impunity* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 35; Cara Levey, *Fragile Memory, Shifting Impunity: Commemoration and Contestation in Post-Dictatorship Argentina and Uruguay* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016), p. 52. Also see Gerardo Caetano and José Rilla's *Breve historia de la dictadura (1973-1985)* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1991) and Carlos Demasi,

Amplio and began the systematic repression of those suspected to be left-wing or left-leaning. After implementing several oppressive policies which forced many Uruguayans into exile, the military's imprisonment of citizens for political reasons and the violence inflicted upon them led the country to be labelled 'the torture chamber of Latin America'.[11] Many of these prisoners were also killed or 'disappeared' in collaboration with the subsequent dictatorships in Argentina (1976-83) and Chile (1973-90), today known as the Operación Cóndor.[12] Also repressive at a cultural level, the dictatorship's policies renewed the official accepted version of history with many nation-building gestures as a means to propagate a semblance of unity in times of turmoil. As they highlighted the military's role in iconic moments of the nation's past, the regime's abuse of a certain view of nineteenth-century history and its protagonists was most clear in the Año de la Orientalidad celebrations that took place in 1975.[13] Over the course of the whole year, as the dictatorship government commemorated 150 years of the Cruzada Libertadora, they also celebrated military victories that took place in 1825, namely the battles of Rincón (first defeat of the Brazilians, 24 September) and Sarandí (another major win for the Orientals, 12 October).[14] For Isabela Cosse and Vania Markarian, the dictatorship 'postulaba una relación emotiva con el pasado, donde el *sentimiento patriótico* importaba más que el análisis del recorrido histórico de la colectividad'.[15] Indeed, eliciting an emotional reaction to the nineteenth-century past during the dictatorship linked the regime to the successes of Uruguayan history and functioned as a means to secure citizens' adherence to military rule. The dictatorship's politics thus heightened the institutionalisation of Uruguay's nineteenth century whilst its oppressive policies afforded no space for countering or responding to the state's official discourse. Considering how the early nineteenth-century history was used for nation-building purposes through the 1870s until the recent dictatorship, at the advent of re-

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Aldo Marchesi, Vania Markarian, Álvaro Rico, and Jaime Yaffé's *La dictadura Cívico Militar: Uruguay, 1973-1985* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2009).

[11] Lessa, *Memory*, p. 31. On pages 39–41, Lessa discusses imprisonment, torture and the division of Uruguayan society into A, B and C citizens depending on their political affiliations, with C being the lowest band that included those not considered suspicious.

[12] Lessa, *Memory*, pp. 36–38; Levey, *Fragile Memory*, pp. 52–55.

[13] 'Orientalidad' originally denoted Uruguayan-ness in the nineteenth century when Uruguayans were known as 'Orientales'. In the early twentieth century, it was replaced by 'Uruguayidad'. González Laurino, *La construcción*, p. 20.

[14] Isabela Cosse and Vania Markarian, *1975: Año de la Orientalidad: Identidad, memoria e historia en una dictadura* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 1996), pp. 18–19.

[15] Ibid, p. 16.

democratisation in 1985 an engagement with this very past was a likely, natural impulse. As it is argued in this thesis, this renewed impulse had one of its most significant outlets in literature, and especially in the historical novel.

In the late 1970s and as Uruguay's military was gradually losing power, in order to cement their role in the nation's governance, they proposed a new system of government, labelled by some critics as *democradura*, and held a plebiscite for its approval.[16] In 1980, when in a momentous referendum Uruguayans rejected this political system, the military agreed to negotiate with the country's leading political parties, excluding those of the left, which marked the beginning of the transition to democracy. In July 1984, the Naval Club Pact was signed and elections were to be held in November of the same year.[17] Subsequently, re-democratisation took place in 1985 with the installation of the newly elected government presided by Julio María Sanguinetti.[18] Uruguay's dictatorship was thus not overturned through a revolution but was a systematic and negotiated handing over of power which would later be characterised by immunity for the military's crimes between 1973-85 under the controversial Ley de Caducidad de la Pretensión Punitiva del Estado passed in 1986.[19]

Along with the liberation of the dictatorship's prisoners and the return of many exiled citizens, in its cultural and intellectual sphere post-dictatorship Uruguay witnessed a surge in critical works about national identity. A country which had once deemed itself the Switzerland of America and had prided itself for its egalitarian and democratic ideals faced a crisis of self-perception as it recovered from the repression of the dictatorship. A significant preliminary work in outlining this crisis was Carina Perelli and Juan Rial's 1986 *De mitos y memorias políticas: La represión, el miedo y después*. In this work, Rial listed four of the nation's foundational myths, including those of Uruguayans as cultured people and its democratic traditions, and elaborated on how they had been destroyed by

[16] Lessa, *Memory*, p. 45; Levey, *Fragile Memory*, p. 69. The term *democradura* was coined by Phillipe Schmitter and Charles Guy Gillespie first used it in the Uruguayan context in his key work on the redemocratisation process, *Negotiating Democracy: Politicians and Generals in Uruguay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 104–05.
[17] Gillespie, *Negotiating Democracy,* pp.160–91; Lessa, *Memory*, pp. 45–47 and p. 133; Levey, *Fragile Memory*, pp. 71–72.
[18] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 140; Levey, p. 72.
[19] Lessa, *Memory*, pp. 137–38; Levey, *Fragile Memory*, pp. 72–74. Chapter 1 of this thesis briefly discusses the implications of this law and the 1989 referendum to repeal it.

the dictatorship.[20] Whilst Rial then asked the reader '¿[s]erá posible volver a crear un imaginario social hegemónico para esta sociedad uruguaya donde tantos cambios han ocurrido, pero donde tanto se intenta ocultarlos?',[21] Perelli's next section rejected the existence of a single version of the social imaginary, noting that 'las memorias son muchas y múltiples, a veces opuestas, a menudo contradictorias'.[22] Foreshadowing the research questions of this thesis, Perelli and Rial's work explored how Uruguay's identity myths were being put into question and highlighted the significance of memory in this process.

Many other edited volumes, predominantly by left-leaning intellectuals and often printed by the publishing house Trilce, based their definition of identity on Benedict Anderson's works to discuss its crisis in Uruguay.[23] Like Perelli and Rial, these compilations examined identity formation in Uruguay in relation to the dictatorship's politics. Of these works, Hugo Achugar and Gerardo Caetano's *Identidad uruguaya: ¿mito, crisis o afirmación?* (1992) is pivotal. The chapters in this collection propose preliminary ways of viewing post-dictatorship identity and highlight three main ideas: the significance of historical events and figures in identity-formation,[24] the need for multiplicity or plurality in relation to the renovation of identity to become more democratic,[25] and lastly the importance and evolution of memory in this process.[26]

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[20] Juan Rial, 'El "imaginario social" uruguayo y la dictadura. Los mitos políticos (de-re)construcción', in *De mitos y memorias políticas: La represión, el miedo y después*, by Carina Perelli and Juan Rial (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1986), pp. 15–37 (pp. 24–25).
[21] Ibid., p. 36.
[22] Carina Perelli, 'La manipulación política de la memoria colectiva', in *De mitos y memorias políticas*, pp. 117–28 (pp. 127–28).
[23] These works include *Cultura(s) y nación en el Uruguay de fin de siglo*, ed. by Hugo Achugar (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 1991); Hugo Achugar, *La balsa de la Medusa: Ensayos sobre identidad, cultura y fin de siglo en Uruguay* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 1992); *Identidad uruguaya: ¿mito, crisis o afirmación?*, ed. by Hugo Achugar and Gerardo Caetano, 3rd edn (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 1993), the first edition was published in September 1992; *Uruguay hacia el siglo XXI: Identidad, cultura, integración, representación*, ed. by Gerardo Caetano (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 1994). And more recently, *Imaginarios culturales: Desde las huellas indígenas a la modernidad* ed. by Hugo Achugar and Mabel Moraña (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2000).
[24] Hugo Achugar, 'Uruguay, el tamaño de la utopía', in *Identidad uruguaya: ¿mito, crisis o afirmación?*, pp. 149–65 (p. 159 and p. 161).
[25] Gabriel Peluffo, 'Crisis de un inventario', pp. 63–73 (p. 72); Gerardo Caetano, 'Identidad nacional e imaginario colectivo en Uruguay. La síntesis perdurable del Centenario', pp. 75–96 (p. 77). Milita Alfaro, 'Cultura subalterna e identidad nacional', pp. 123–34 (p. 132). All in *Identidad uruguaya: ¿mito, crisis o afirmación?.*
[26] Caetano, 'Identidad nacional', p. 77.

Gabriel Peluffo, echoing many others in recognising this crisis, notably uses the term 'cultural inventory' in his discussion:

una crisis de lo que podríamos denominar su "inventario" cultural. Elijo la palabra inventario porque combina, fonéticamente, la idea de un registro acumulativo a lo largo de la historia, con la idea de un proyecto colectivo entendido como "invento", como construcción social imaginada y proyectada hacia el futuro.[27]

Peluffo's reference to culture as an invented accumulative register suggests that whilst history is part of this inventory it also includes monuments, museums and other such objects that stems from the study of the past. Whilst Peluffo does not mention it directly, his term cultural inventory, as well as Rial's phrase social imaginary, is essentially how cultural memory has been defined in the last few decades, pointing to the significance of the present research's focus on fictional representations of the past in relation to the term.

Cultural memory is defined as a repository of ideas, events and feelings that are collectively recalled by a group which functions, according to Jan Assmann, as 'a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society'.[28] Combining the past, the present as well as the future, cultural memory does not develop organically but is constructed and maintained through several formative processes. For Assmann, these processes are 'figures of memory' whilst Marita Sturken, for her part, labels them 'technologies of memory'.[29] These elements include historical and literary texts, material culture in the form of monuments, museums and memorials and institutions like schools and universities. Accordingly, these figures of memory create and sustain important moments and leaders from a country's past, which Pierre Nora has labelled *lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory.[30] As this thesis focuses on events and figures which one may consider sites of memory of Uruguayan culture, it discusses how historical novels assess them for the present in order to renew them for the future.

[27] Peluffo, 'Crisis', p. 63.

[28] Jan Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', trans. by John Czaplicka, *New German Critique*, 1995, 125–33 <https://doi.org/10.2307/488538>, p. 126.

[29] Assmann, 'Collective Memory', p. 129. Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. 9.

[30] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', trans. by Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, 26, 1989, 7–24 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>, p. 7.

Some novels in this thesis, however, also deal with historical events that were forgotten or suppressed for political reasons. As implied by Ernest Renan in his 1882 lecture 'What is a nation?', forgetting is an essential element of memory which determines what we remember collectively.[31] Highlighting the power structures involved in memory-making, Sturken pertinently notes 'the forgetting of the past is often highly organized and strategic'.[32] Forgetting thus not only includes disremembering events that do not contribute to a linear, unifying national narrative but also those actions that highlight problematic behaviours of historically celebrated figures. Considering this tension between remembering and forgetting, this thesis argues that in post-dictatorship Uruguay, historical novels contest this strategized forgetting, as previously suppressed personal memories are brought to the forefront of cultural memory.

Literature plays a significant role in memory processes; it functions both as a figure of memory and as a means to contest formative cultural processes. Renate Lachmann, for instance, stresses the relationship between literary texts and memory: '[l]iterature is culture's memory, not as a simple recording device but as a body of commemorative actions that include the knowledge stored by a culture, and virtually all texts a culture has produced and by which a culture is constituted'.[33] Attesting to literature's role in creating new memory narratives, Lachmann further asserts: '[w]riting is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into memory space'.[34] Building upon Lachmann's idea that literature serves as a culture's memory, this thesis posits that it can also be used to examine the present and future functions of memory, i.e. it reflects changes in contemporary society, whilst also foreshadowing others to come. Studying historical fiction produced in the aftermath of an authoritarian regime then allows us to understand how cultural memory has altered and evolved in Uruguay.

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[31] Reproduced in *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings*, ed. by Vincent P. Pecora (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 162–75 (p. 166). Similarly, Andreas Huyssen recently asserted that 'every act of memory carries with it a dimension of betrayal, forgetting and absence.' *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 4.

[32] Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, p. 7.

[33] Renate Lachmann, 'Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature', in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 301–09 (p. 301).

[34] Ibid., p. 301.

This thesis is also informed by the relationship between cultural memory and history. Although memory and history are often viewed as contradictory,[35] they are in fact interconnected. Sturken, for instance, views cultural memory and history as '*entangled* rather than oppositional'.[36] Indeed, the historian's task both forms the basis for and is informed by figures of memory such as monuments and textbooks. Sturken accordingly writes that 'memory objects and narratives move from the realm of cultural memory to that of history and back'.[37] Taking into account this 'entangled' relationship, the methodology of the present thesis is to first analyse the history of events represented in each novel and then to discuss how they have been portrayed in cultural memory narratives through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in order to enhance the interpretations of the novel analysed subsequently.

Cultural memory also goes hand in hand with identity. Although identity can be defined at various levels: individual, relational and collective, this thesis considers the collective form of identity as 'people's identification with the groups and social categories to which they belong, the meanings that they give to these social groups and categories, and the feelings, beliefs, and attitudes that result from identifying with them'.[38] A significant way in which people identify with a social group, at a national level in this case, is through shared experiences in the present as well as an agreed upon narrative of the past. In other words, cultural memory and identity interpellate individuals in a group or society.[39] Similarly, for Assmann, '[t]he supply of knowledge in the cultural memory is characterized by sharp distinctions made between those who belong and those who do not, i.e., between what appertains to oneself and what is foreign'.[40] But, cultural memory does not just constitute identity, it also reinforces it, as Assmann further affirms that it

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[35] Maurice Halbwachs, whose work was fundamental for memory studies, posited that collective memory is 'a current of continuous thought' whilst history is 'a unique and total image of the past'. 'Maurice Halbwachs: From the Collective Memory', in *Theories of Memory: A Reader*, ed. by Anne Whitehead and Michael Rossington (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 139–43 (p. 140 and p. 143).
[36] Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, p. 5.
[37] Ibid., p. 5.
[38] Vivian L. Vignoles, Seth J. Schwartz, and Koen Luyckx, 'Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity', in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, ed. by Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignoles (New York: Springer, 2011), pp. 1–27 (p. 3).
[39] Alison Landsberg first used the term interpellative in relation to memory and the past in *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 3.
[40] Assmann, 'Collective Memory', p. 130.

'allows the group to reproduce its identity'.[41] These theoretical considerations both highlight the link between history, memory and identity generally and indicate how memory studies echo the concerns of Uruguayan intellectuals in the immediate aftermath of the dictatorship, pointing to the significance and urgency of this thesis on historical novels in relation to these concepts.

The historical novel genre has a rich tradition in Uruguay and in Latin America generally. Whilst Alejandro Magariños Cervantes (1825-1893) is often recognised as the first Uruguayan author to write historical novels, his successor Eduardo Acevedo Díaz's works *Ismael* (1888), *Nativa* (1890), *Grito de gloria* (1893) and *Lanza y sable* (1914) are seminal. On fictionalising Uruguayan history from the independence struggles until the civil wars of the mid-nineteenth century, Acevedo Díaz established the myth of the Uruguayan gaucho, a common man within a particular historical period on the lines of Walter Scott's works as outlined by George Lukacs in his analysis of the Scotsman's novels.[42] Following this tradition, Acevedo Díaz's intentions in writing historical novels for identity-building purposes are clear not only in his own journalistic writing but his contribution has also been recognised by many literary critics such as Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Pablo Rocca, Gustavo San Román and Margarita Carriquiry.[43] This thesis intends to build upon this relationship between historical fiction and national identity in Uruguay to argue that in the post-dictatorship period this literary genre once more becomes the space in which identity is examined and re-evaluated.

Similarly, in Latin America, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historical novel, in the words of Noé Jitrik, was 'a search for a national identity, a search for

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[41] Ibid., 128.

[42] Emir Rodríguez Monegal, 'La novela histórica: Otra perspectiva', *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 13 (May 1982), 36–40 (p. 39); Gustavo San Román, 'Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Alejandro Magariños Cervantes y los orígenes de la novela histórica en el Uruguay', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 80 (2003), 323–45 <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475382032000114388>, p. 345; Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. by Hannah Mitchell and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962).

[43] Acevedo Díaz's article from 1895 on the historical novel in his newspaper *El Nacional* mentions his aim to 'educar muchedumbres', as quoted in Pablo Rocca's 'Prólogo' in *Cuentos completos*, by Eduardo Acevedo Díaz (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1999), pp. 7–22 (p. 13); Rodríguez Monegal, 'La novela histórica', p. 40; Rocca, 'Prólogo', p. 10–14; San Román, 'Eduardo Acevedo Díaz', p. 323; Margarita Carriquiry, 'Aportes de la novela histórica a la construcción de la identidad nacional', *[sic]: Asociación de Profesores de Literatura del Uruguay*, 3 (2011), 5–19, <http://www.aplu.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/sic-diciembre-20112.pdf> [accessed 9 February 2019], pp. 7–9.

legitimacy'.[44] The latter half of the twentieth century, however, witnessed a turn in the genre and the advent of what Seymour Menton labelled the New Historical Novel. Exemplified by Alejandro Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949), Menton notes that the New Historical Novel is characterised by 'the subordination, in varying degrees, of the mimetic recreation of a given historical period', 'the conscious distortion of history', 'the utilization of famous historical characters as protagonists', metafiction, intertextuality and 'Bakhtinian concepts of the dialogic, the carnivalesque, parody, and heteroglossia'.[45] Similarly, other critics, such as Karl Kohut, also highlighted the relationship between the postmodern condition and the historical novel: 'La posmodernidad condiciona la novela histórica y, al mismo tiempo, es condicionada por ella'.[46] Both Menton and Kohut were arguably influenced by Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographical metafiction (1988), a genre which 'plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record' and whose protagonists 'are ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history'.[47] Moreover, in this postmodern version of the historical novel even well-known historical figures 'take on [a] different, particularized, and ultimately ex-centric status'.[48] Whilst many studies of the genre in Latin America in the 1990s stemmed from theories of postmodernism, they indicated a move away from the traditional didactic relation of historical novels to national identity. Although this thesis places its Uruguayan works within this Latin American framework, it focuses entirely on Uruguay's national context in order to examine how the selected novels engage with national identity and cultural memory in the aftermath of its dictatorship.

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[44] Noé Jitrik, *The Noé Jitrik Reader: Selected Essays on Latin American Literature*, ed. by Daniel Balderston, trans. by Susan Benner (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 83.
[45] Seymour Menton, *Latin America's New Historical Novel* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993), pp. 22–24.
[46] Karl Kohut, 'Introducción', in *La invención del pasado: La novela histórica en el marco de la posmodernidad* ed. by Karl Kohut (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1997), pp. 9–26 (p. 20).
María Cristina Pons in *Memorias del olvido: Del Paso, García Márquez, Saer y la novela histórica de fines del siglo XX* also uses postmodern theories of Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon in her analysis of fin-de-siecle historical novels. (Madrid and D.F. Mexico: Siglo veintiuno, 1997). Similar works include Raymond D. Souza, *La historia en la novela hispanoamericana moderna* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1988); Juan José Barrientos, *Ficción-historia: La nueva novela histórica hispanoamericana* (D. F. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2001); and recently, *Redefining Latin American Historical Fiction: The Impact of Feminism and Postcolonialism* ed. by Helene Carol Weldt-Basson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[47] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 114. See Jerome de Groot on historiographical metafiction in *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 119–21.
[48] Hutcheon, *Poetics*, p. 114.

Despite the historical novel being a significant genre in Uruguay, this topic has generated little scholarly research of the same length and depth as this thesis, apart from generalised articles or book chapters on its post-dictatorship version. Argentine critic Teresa Basile's doctoral thesis, submitted in 2002, is the only research to examine the topic exhaustively.[49] As she discussed Uruguayan historical novels published immediately after 1985, Basile's corpus included Tomás de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* (1988) and *La fragata de las máscaras* (1996); Fernando Butazzoni's *El príncipe de la muerte* (1993); Mercedes Rein's *El archivo de Soto* (1993); Hugo Bervejillo's *Una cinta ancha de bayeta colorada. Desandanzas del Goyo Jeta* (1992) and Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* (1994). A thorough study of the genre, Basile also examined how these texts explored identity in the aftermath of Uruguay's dictatorship.[50] Her theoretical approach, based on the works of Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard and Jürgen Habermas, reflects a poststructuralist and postmodern understanding of the issue at hand which leads to interesting conclusions but sometimes digresses from the political considerations of studying identity in historical fiction. Basile's subsequent monograph *El desarme de Calibán. Debates culturales y diseños literarios en la posdictadura uruguaya*, published in late 2018 and partially based on her doctoral research, includes a study of cultural essays from the period. On examining both cultural criticism and the historical novels side by side, Basile observes:

> Es possible leer en estos textos tanto el desarme del intelectual revolucionario […] como el desarme de las marconarrativas "arrogantes" o excluyentes dentro de la tradición identitaria uruguaya, junto con la deconstrucción de las identidades monológicas y de las verdades unívocas.[51]

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[49] Teresa Basile, 'La novela histórica de la posdictadura en el Uruguay' (unpublished Doctoral thesis, Universidad Nacional de la Plata, 2002) <http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/tesis/te.126/te.126.pdf> [accessed 3 April 2019].

[50] Two other critical works that focus on post-dictatorship Uruguayan literature in relation to identity, memory and the nation are: Alexandra Falek, 'The Fiction of Afterwards: "Mnemonic Manifestations" in Cultural Works from Uruguay (1995–2005)' (unpublished Doctoral thesis, New York University, 2009). <https://search.proquest.com/docview/275846152/fulltextPDF/2EFF1C939A1D40F6PQ/1?accountid=8312> [accessed 3 April 2019]; and Elizabeth G. Rivero, *Espacio y nación en la narrativa uruguaya de la posdictadura (1985-2005)* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2011). Rivero's corpus includes the works of Tomás de Mattos but does not focus on his historical novels.

[51] Teresa Basile, *El desarme de Calibán: Debates culturales y diseños literarios en la posdictadura uruguaya* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 2018), p. 15.

Basile's investigation is crucial in the field. Yet, as it focuses on literary texts from the 1980s and 1990s, both her thesis and monograph do not trace the development of the Uruguayan historical novel into the twenty-first century. Moreover, although Basile mentions the term memory occasionally, this thesis' engagement with archival sources such as periodicals and diaries, based on the analysis of historical events and their memory politics, reveals more nuanced interpretations of the chosen novels.

Like Basile, Verónica Garibotto's research also began with her doctoral thesis from 2008 titled 'Contornos en negativo: Reescrituras posdictatoriales del siglo XIX (Argentina, Chile y Uruguay)' which became the basis of her 2015 book, *Crisis y reemergencia: El siglo XIX en la ficción contemporánea de Argentina, Chile y Uruguay*.[52] In her monograph, using Foucauldian theories of power and systems of enunciation, Garibotto examines the ideological implications of representing the nineteenth century in post-dictatorship literature.[53] Along with literary texts from Argentina and Chile, the critic focuses on Mauricio Rosencof's play about Artigas *…Y nuestros caballos serán blancos* (1986) and de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* to pertinently note that 'el siglo XIX es la dimensión narrativa que registra (y contribuye a) la reformulación del campo cultural que se realiza en la región en las últimas décadas; una reformulación que comienza con la crisis posdictatorial'.[54] Garibotto's contributions to the field are significant and her transnational and comparative approach of examining Southern cone literature together, which is shared by other studies,[55] is indeed advantageous because of the region's common experience of the military-civic dictatorships. My national approach, on the other hand, highlights the particularities of Uruguayan history to demonstrate how these novels document and foreshadow memory and identity trends in contemporary Uruguay. Although one approach is not better than the other, they must arguably exist side by side to contribute towards a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

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[52] Verónica Inés Garibotto, 'Contornos en negativo: Reescrituras postdictatoriales del siglo XIX (Argentina, Chile y Uruguay)' (unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2008) <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7120/> [accessed 9 February 2019]; *Crisis y reemergencia: El siglo XIX en la ficción contemporánea de Argentina, Chile y Uruguay (1980-2001)* (West Lafayette, IND: Purdue University Press, 2015).

[53] Garibotto, *Crisis*, p. 3.

[54] Ibid., p. 5. Garibotto mentions *Artigas Blues Band* by Amir Hamed in the beginning of her monograph whilst in her thesis a whole chapter was dedicated to it.

[55] For instance, Ana Ros's *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Whilst Basile and Garibotto focus on works from the late 1980s and early 1990s, Fabian Debenedetti Carvajal's Master's dissertation examines *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001) by Cabrera and *No robarás las botas de los muertos* (2002) by Delgado Aparaín alongside de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* to discuss how these works represent historically marginalised figures of women, Africans and Indians as a means to reassess the nation's foundational myths.[56] Although Debenedetti Carvajal's dissertation situates itself in the right direction, because of its narrow scope, short length and academic level, it is necessarily limited in its depth and rigour. The three studies noted here not only reveal the relevance of my research questions and its corpus but also point to the unexplored academic gaps that this thesis attempts to fill. Furthermore, my interdisciplinary approach based on theories of memory and identity accompanied by historical and literary analysis should provide more comprehensive interpretations of the selected novels.

This present study is divided into five chapters, each based on a novel from the corpus and is organised chronologically according its date of publication. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the historical event fictionalised in the novel and demonstrates how the nation remembered the event in literature, art, school textbooks and monuments. Subsequently, the novels' portrayal of the incident is examined through selected passages accompanied by a comparative analysis in the light of archival works such as newspapers, journals and nineteenth-century history books as well as art pieces, memorials and monuments in conjunction with theoretical considerations of memory studies. The chapters also draw on comments from three of the five authors I was able to interview, excerpts of which are made available in an Appendix to the thesis. Additionally, for ease of consultation by the reader a chronology of Uruguayan history and a list of postdictatorship historical novels are provided in the same Appendix.

Chapter 1 is based on Tomás de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* from 1988, which recounts the massacre of the indigenous Charrúas in the early nineteenth century. A historical review of this incident shows that its details were supressed for political reasons, allowing Uruguay to view itself as a white Europeanised nation without an

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[56] Fabian Eduardo Debenedetti Carbajal, 'Vozes alternativas na reconfiguaração dos mitos fundacionais: presença da mulher, do negro e do índio no romance histórico contemporâneo uruguaio' (unpublished Master's dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2007) <https://www.ufrgs.br/ppgletras/defesas/2007/FabianEduardoDebenedettiCarbajal.pdf> [accessed 9 February 2019].

indigenous population. The novel's subsequent analysis demonstrates how de Mattos raises issues of ethics in the period immediately after the Uruguayan dictatorship whilst reassessing the historical role of national heroes such as Fructuoso Rivera and his nephew Bernabé. As the novel brings forward previously marginalised voices of women through its female narrator Josefina and describes the past from the perspective of the Charrúas, the chapter discusses how it speaks to identity concerns of 1988 Uruguay and suggests a revision of cultural memory regarding the nation's indigenous groups. Chapter 1 argues that de Mattos's novel signals the opening up of the archive via fiction and, in highlighting the above concerns, sets the stage for other novels to follow.

Chapter 2, on Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* (1994), first outlines the history of Uruguay's foundational leader José Artigas to examine how his image as an ideal hero was created and later used to propagate a fixed idea of national identity. In the ensuing analysis of Hamed's novel, the chapter posits that this postmodern work unravels the national hero's myth through an engagement with material culture such as monuments as well as historical and literary works about him. In doing so, it demonstrates that Hamed calls for a reassessment of Artigas and proposes a less static version of the national hero. *Artigas Blues Band* also indicates a concern for Artigas's treatment of women and highlights the role of his Afro-descendent servant Ansina, hinting at a more egalitarian vision of the past. In its reassessment of the national hero through symbolic iconoclasm, Chapter 2 argues that Hamed's novel plays with the archive to question national myths.

Chapter 3 focuses on Susana Cabrera's *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001), which fictionalises the murder of Celedonia Wich by her African slaves in 1820s Montevideo. The chapter begins with an overview of the biased cultural perceptions of Afro-Uruguayans in contemporary society and explores the historical details of Wich's murder. The novel's ensuing analysis demonstrates how the text attempts to reclaim memories of Afro-Uruguayan women through a focus on oral history and material culture such as museums. Moreover, on examining its intertextual elements such as quotes from iconic works of literature, this chapter explores how the novel raises issues of freedom and violence in the context of slave rebellions. Additionally, the text's analysis reveals an inherent contradiction of the novel as it portrays Uruguayan patricians in a sympathetic light whilst condoning Celedonia Wich's treatment of the slaves. Chapter 3 argues that *Las esclavas del Rincón* reflects the concerns of the novels discussed in Chapters 1 and 2

but also differs from them as it brings forward a little-known event from the archive to propose Afro-Uruguayan memories as part of national memory in the present.

Chapter 4, on *No robarás las botas de los muertos* (2002) by Mario Delgado Aparaín, first traces the causes of the Siege of Paysandú (1864-65) to nineteenth-century civil conflicts between the Blancos and the Colorados to suggest that although historically many attempted to view the siege as a patriotic gesture, its representation was often marred by political differences. Then, the analysis of Delgado Aparaín's novel demonstrates how the author updates the memory of this siege by fictionalising it from the perspective of outsiders such as a Spanish musician and an English art counterfeiter. Moreover, the chapter analyses the text's multifaceted view of the siege's defensive leader Leandro Gómez, whilst arguing that it glosses over the role of Venancio Flores who headed the besieging forces. At the same time, the novel satirises historical foes such as the Argentine Bartolomé Mitre and the Brazilian Barón de Tamandaré, a stance which, this chapter proposes, portrays Uruguayan identity in opposition to its giant neighbours. The novel's representation of blacks and women is also analysed to discuss how it follows the trend of bringing forward marginalised figures from the country's nineteenth-century past. Ultimately, this chapter argues that as Delgado Aparaín diligently follows the pattern of historical novels as established in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, he uses the archive to create a new memory narrative that looks past partisan politics to unite the country.

Chapter 5 goes back to Artigas through Marcia Collazo Ibáñez's *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (2011), which fictionalises the lives of six women associated with the national hero. Through a historical review, this chapter discusses how these women were remembered only in relation to Artigas and how their roles were side-lined in national history. In contrast, Collazo Ibáñez's novel reveals a concern for reclaiming their personal memories via fiction. An examination of the novel's representation of the foundation of Montevideo through Artigas's two grandmothers, Ignacia Xaviera Carrasco and María Rodríguez Camejo, shows how the text functions as a female counter-history. Similarly, the chapter argues that his mother Francisca Pasqual Arnal's fictional memories highlight women's roles in the nation's origins. Simultaneously, reconsidering Artigas's relationship with his three partners, Isabel Sánchez, Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán and Melchora Cuenca, the novel calls for a diverse and multifaceted vision of identity in contemporary Uruguay. Ultimately, as this chapter

analyses Artigas's image in the novel, it echoes the findings of Chapter 2 as the national hero's myth is viewed as fluid, ever changing and open to interpretation. Bringing the cycle of post-dictatorship historical novels studied here to a close, Chapter 5 asserts that *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* uses fiction to examine and fill gaps in the historical archive. Lastly, the conclusion brings together all five literary works to demonstrate how developments in the historical novel genre in Uruguay propose a complex, pluralistic vision of the past to reveal new ways of interpreting the country's post-dictatorship identity and memory crisis.

Chapter 1

Setting the Stage: *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* by Tomás de Mattos

Tomás de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* deals with the extermination of the indigenous Charrúas in early nineteenth century Uruguay and outlines Colonel Bernabé Rivera's role in their massacres from 1831 to 1832. One of the heroes of independent Uruguay, Bernabé was also the nephew of Fructuoso Rivera (1784-1854), the first Uruguayan president, who ruled from 1830 to 1834 and again from 1839 to 1843. The historical details of the massacre of the Charrúas had long been repressed for political and ideological reasons in Uruguay which, unlike many of its Latin American counterparts, came to view itself as a Europeanised nation without an indigenous population. In 1988, de Mattos's return to this forgotten period of Uruguayan history marks a turning point in national culture as well as in the historical novel genre. It indicates a shift in cultural memory regarding both the Charrúas and the country's historical origins and heroes. By representing previously silenced voices, de Mattos's novel also makes a case for a more inclusive national identity in the present. *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* further speaks to present concerns as it alludes to the immediate aftermath of the dictatorship. A provision made during the negotiations between the military and politicians about Uruguay's transition to democracy, the Ley de Caducidad de la Pretensión Punitiva del Estado (henceforth, Ley de Caducidad) was officially passed in 1986. This problematic law guaranteed amnesty and impunity for officers and soldiers who had acted under official orders during the military rule. The ethical issues raised by the novel are analysed below in relation to debates about this law in post-dictatorship Uruguay. Furthermore, it is argued that de Mattos's exemplary text introduces the concerns of a 'new' historical novel in Uruguay and, in setting the stage for other writers, it provides them with a literary model to follow and develop by revisiting similar moments in national history.

This chapter first discusses the historical representation of the massacre of the Charrúas and their place in the national imaginary, arguing that cultural memory was

traditionally built upon their absence in Uruguayan society. Next, an analysis of the novel outlines the relevance of the historical periods that frame the text in relation to the author's and the reader's present. This is followed by a discussion of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*'s main themes of violence and culpability with regard to the Charrúa massacre and as a metaphor for the recently ended dictatorship. The subsequent section discusses the novel's critical portrayal of nineteenth century national heroes and their myth-making processes. Then, the chapter focuses on de Mattos's concern with hitherto marginalised figures in official historiography, namely the Charrúas, the nineteenth century woman and the common soldier. As the conclusion brings together the issues of identity, memory and history raised in the novel, it also signposts features and themes that will be reflected in other works to be examined in the thesis.

Historical background

This section outlines the historical details of the massacre of the Charrúas –the main, and almost mythical, group of indigenous peoples that inhabited the Banda Oriental, the nineteenth century term for present-day Uruguay– and its role in the consolidation of national identity. It argues that because the massacre highlighted the unscrupulous behaviour of two of Uruguay's national heroes, Fructuoso Rivera and Bernabé Rivera, its details were suppressed. Moreover, by viewing the indigenous Charrúas as barbarians, historians justified the Riveras' actions as being for the greater good of a young republic in need of modernisation. Since after 1832 only a handful of Charrúas remained in Uruguay, the ethical implications of their massacre were effortlessly repressed, allowing historical works to side-line it and promote the new Uruguayan nation as a predominantly white one without an indigenous population. In other words, it argues that Uruguay's racial politics were built upon and dependent on the absence of the Charrúas.

At the time of writing *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, the author de Mattos's main, and perhaps only, historical source was Eduardo Acosta y Lara's *La guerra de los charrúas* (1961-1970). In this two-volume book, Acosta y Lara compiles, reproduces and comments on nineteenth century archival documents such as letters and newspaper articles, and also provides excerpts from significant history works by Antonio Díaz and Manuel Lavalleja. Acknowledging the significance of *La guerra de los charrúas*, at the beginning of his novel de Mattos expresses, 'su deuda con don Eduardo Acosta y Lara,

cuya labor de investigación, recogida en su obra "La guerra de los charrúas" fue de consulta continua para la solución de muchos de los problemas que se plantearon en esta novela'.[1] Accordingly, *La guerra de los charrúas* forms a major source for this present section which also draws upon historical works by Pablo Blanco Acevedo, Eduardo Acevedo and Daniel Vidart to analyse the role of Fructuoso Rivera and his nephew Bernabé in the massacre of the Charrúas and its place in Uruguayan cultural memory.

As the first president of independent Uruguay, one of Fructuoso Rivera's main tasks was to establish law and order in the countryside. At the time, the new government and its supporters viewed the indigenous populations, consisting mainly of the Charrúas, as an obstacle to domestic peace. During the colonial period, the Charrúas lived a nomadic life in small tribes and often had altercations with European soldiers as well as with other indigenous groups such as the Guaraní.[2] This led to their persecution by the Spanish Blandengues regiment, which was formed in 1797 to control the selling of contraband and the theft of cattle in the countryside. Two decades later, however, the Charrúas would also fight alongside the creole leader, and previously Blandengues commander, José Artigas (1764-1850) during the Portuguese Invasions beginning in 1816. Thus, the ruling forces always had a complex relationship with the Charrúas and in the colonial context they had been viewed as the exotic 'other' who could not be integrated into first Spanish, and later Uruguayan, society. Accordingly, historian Daniel Vidart laments that '[e]l destino de los charrúas estaba sellado desde el momento que desembarcaron en Ámerica los contingentes hispánicos'.[3]

By 1830, when the first Uruguayan constitution was adopted, the Charrúas' nomadic lifestyle clashed with the interests of rural landowners who attributed numerous instances of looting and farm attacks to the autochthonous tribe. Consequently, these landowners sent complaints to the government and demanded that this unruly situation be resolved. An Englishman, Diego Noble, even offered money and horses to the government to undertake an endeavour to obliterate the Charrúas.[4] These influential

[1] Tomás de Mattos, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!,* 4th edn (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1997), p. 2. Further references to this edition of de Mattos's novel are given after quotations in the text.
[2] Daniel Vidart, *El mundo de los charrúas* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2000), p. 16.
[3] Ibid., p. 94.
[4] Antonio Díaz, *Historia política y militar de las Repúblicas del Plata desde el año de 1828 hasta el de 1866,* 12 vols (Montevideo: El Siglo, 1877-78), II (1877), 84.

figures thus saw the Charrúas as the biggest threat to internal peace and development in the Banda Oriental, leading Acosta y Lara to assert: 'cualquier gobierno llamado a regir los destinos de la República, habría tenido que abocarse a la reducción de aquellos indígenas, como etapa previa al logro del bienestar nacional'.[5] Thus, the massacre of the Charrúas was regarded as an inevitable end to the enduring confrontations between indigenous people and Uruguayans. Furthermore, as we shall see below, by viewing the massacre as a necessary evil for the greater good, President Rivera and Colonel Bernabé's unethical actions were ignored and they were deemed free of responsibility and historical guilt.

Instead, historians such as Antonio Díaz and Pablo Blanco Acevedo depicted President Rivera as being obliged to undertake this mission despite his previous positive relationship with the Charrúas when they fought alongside him against the Portuguese. Taking advantage of his relationship, in 1831 he sent General Julián Laguna to parley with several Charrúa leaders. Under the ruse of wanting their aid to see off a potential Brazilian attack, Laguna was to convince the Charrúa caciques to meet Rivera with their tribes, including women and children, at a location known as Salsipuedes, near two rivers of that name in the north of the country. In return, the President promised to provide them with land and cattle, allowing them finally to settle down. Although many caciques believed Laguna and agreed to meet at Salsipuedes, some were suspicious of Rivera's motives and stayed away.[6]

The location's name ('get out of here if you can') turned out to be highly ironic and the massacre that followed at Salsipuedes was described in two important historical excerpts reproduced in Acosta y Lara's work: Manuel Lavalleja's 'Memoria' written in 1848, and Antonio Díaz's *Historia política y militar de las Repúblicas del Plata* (1877-78).[7] Although these accounts differ in many details, both agree that Venado was the

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[5] Eduardo F. Acosta y Lara, 'Periodo Patrio II' in *La guerra de los Charrúas en la Banda Oriental*, 2 vols (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 1989), II, 1. This is a later reprint of Acosta y Lara's essays from the 1960s.

[6] Manuel Lavalleja, 'Memoria', reproduced in *La guerra de los Charrúas*, by Acosta y Lara, II, 190–193 (p. 191).

[7] Manuel Lavalleja (1797-1852) was the younger brother of Juan Antonio Lavalleja (1784-1853), the leader of the Cruzada Libertadora of 1825 and Fructuoso Rivera's rival for the first presidency of Uruguay. After being thwarted for the presidency in 1830, Juan Antonio Lavalleja unsuccessfully rebelled against Rivera's government in 1832. On the Lavalleja family, see Ricardo Goldaracena's *El libro de los linajes: Familias históricas uruguayas del siglo XIX* (Montevideo: Arca, 2000), pp. 155–66 and on Juan

most influential cacique present at Salsipuedes (in Díaz's version he is called *Venao*). According to Díaz, when the Charrúa tribes arrived, Rivera's soldiers disarmed them as they set up camp. Afterwards, as Rivera walked alongside Venado, he said to the cacique, 'préstame tu cuchillo para picar tabaco'.[8] Upon completely disarming him by borrowing his knife, Rivera proceeded to fire a pistol at Venado, which was also a signal to begin the massacre of the unarmed Charrúas. Lavalleja and Díaz both concur, however, that Rivera inexplicably missed this close-range shot allowing Venado to flee. Despite Venado's survival, this incident points to the deceit involved in the massacre, yet neither Díaz nor Lavalleja discussed or acknowledged the immorality of Rivera's actions.

On the other hand, Díaz's account describes how Rivera saved the life of a cacique named Perú. Díaz recounts that during the massacre, Perú, who had fought alongside Rivera before, directed himself towards the President and exclaimed, 'mira Frutos, matando [a] los amigos'.[9] On hearing this, Rivera not only stopped his men from attacking Perú but also saved the other Charrúas' lives. Thus, although most Indians were killed during the massacre, a large number were also taken prisoner whilst a handful were able to flee the scene. The captured Charrúas were transferred to Montevideo, where families were separated and individuals were then handed over to affluent households as unpaid servants (or rather as slaves), leading to their eventual obliteration as a people. Writing in the early twentieth century, Pablo Blanco Acevedo praises Rivera's actions: '[d]espués de esta sublevación, el país volvió á la paz, que no fué alterada durante todo el año 31'.[10] Blanco Acevedo's words prefigure how the massacre would later be perceived as a success whilst pointing to the epoch's racial politics which viewed the Charrúas as a nuisance and their death as devoid of ethical concerns.

Following the massacre at Salsipuedes, President Rivera directed his nephew Bernabé to pursue the remaining Charrúas who had evaded death or capture, reinforcing the idea that they were barbarians who had to be dealt with. As Colonel Bernabé undertook the task of hunting down the Charrúas, he too used deception as a tactic

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Antonio Lavalleja, see Lincoln Maiztegui Casas's *Caudillos*, 2 vols (Montevideo: Editorial Planeta, 2011-12), I (2011), 102–19. When this chapter refers to Lavalleja, it is the younger brother Manuel.

[8] Díaz, *Historia*, II, 86.

[9] Perú was later taken to Paris by a Frenchman, François de Curel, where he and three other Charrúas were put on display and paraded as zoo animals. Díaz, *Historia*, II, 86-7. Vidart, *Mundo*, p. 115.

[10] Pablo Blanco Acevedo, *Historia de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1900), p. 140.

resulting in cacique Venado's death. According to Lavalleja, when Bernabé encountered Venado along with twelve other Charrúas near the stream Cañitas, he struck a deal with them: 'se comprometió con este a entregarle su familia y todas las de los que lo acompañaban, si se sometía a el [sic] Gobierno y a vivir quieto en el punto que se designase'.[11] The cacique agreed to Bernabé's ruse, possibly in a desperate attempt to be reunited with his family, and marched back with the latter's army. After two days, however, Bernabé left the contingent and directed Venado (accompanied by a few of his officers) towards Durazno, making the Charrúa leader falsely believe that he would be reunited with his people there.

Anticipating Venado's acquiescence, a few days earlier Bernabé had sent some soldiers with captain Fortunato Silva to a certain Bonifacio's cattle ranch where they were to await the Charrúas. On reaching Bonifacio's house, the Charrúas were escorted inside the kitchen under the pretext of being given shelter and sustenance and were asked to leave their weapons outside. Whilst the unsuspecting and unarmed Charrúas rested and smoked tobacco, Silva's men fired at them from the outside, killing all of them. Like the Salsipuedes attack, this new assault involved disarmed, and deceived, Charrúas dying at the hand of well-prepared Uruguayan soldiers. Whilst Díaz fails to judge the act, in his own account Lavalleja criticises Bernabé and foreshadows his death at the hands of the Charrúas: '[a]sí concluyó el cacique Venado y sus compañeros mandados bárbaramente asesinar por Bernabé y así también muy en breve pagó el horroroso crimen que cometió, siendo jueces de su causa y verdugos de su cuerpo los mismos charrúas'.[12] Lavalleja's criticism, however, cannot be viewed entirely as a defence of the Charrúas, but rather as tainted by contemporary politics since he did not think highly of the Riveras because of his familial affiliations.

At the beginning of 1832, Rivera redirected Bernabé and his army to Bella Unión and the surrounding region of Misiones Orientales.[13] Here, another autochthonous tribe of the Banda Oriental, the Guaranís, had been crossing the Brazilian border to hunt cattle because of their dire living conditions. Since they posed a risk to the then peaceful border

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[11] Lavalleja, 'Memoria', p. 191.
[12] Ibid., p. 192.
[13] In 1832, the Misiones Orientales belonged to the Uruguayan government which established Bella Unión as its capital. Today, most of this region is part of the Brazilian Rio Grande do Sul province whilst Bella Union is the second most important city of the Artigas province in Uruguay.

relations between the two countries, the Uruguayan government interpreted their actions as rebellious. Colonel Bernabé was then charged with subduing the Guaranís of Bella Unión, also known as the *misioneros*, who were completely defeated by his troops. This was yet another example of the state's anti-indigenous politics leading to various unequal battles between governmental forces and poorly armed autochthonous groups.

On returning from Bella Unión in June of 1832, Bernabé was informed that the few remaining Charrúas were camped nearby at Yacaré Cururu and he was determined to hunt them down.[14] This was an unwise decision, since his troops were considerably fatigued because they had been fighting for months on end. Bernabé's subsequent behaviour can be seen as neither heroic nor brave but rather as the outcome of an obsession. Nonetheless, Díaz portrays his actions positively. In Díaz's version, when informed about the number of Indians in the vicinity, Bernabé cut his forces down to 46 men because he thought it was unnecessary for all his troops to attack them. The Charrúas, on the other hand, were aware of the soldiers' fatigued state and took advantage of it by using shrieks and howls to distract them and break up their formation, leading Díaz to describe their actions as barbaric: '[l]os bárbaros tomaron a sus perseguidores diseminados, y empezaron a agruparse de cuatro y cinco para matar a uno, cuyo suplicio a *bolazos* y lanzadas, tuvo un carácter horrible'.[15] At this juncture, although Bernabé remained on horseback, he was soon brought down by 'un diluvio de boleadoras' and Indians who were shouting '¡Bernabé! ¡Bernabé!' proceeded to attack and kill him.[16] Their call, more than 150 years later, was to provide the title for de Mattos's novel. Historically, Díaz's portrayal of the Charrúas as vengeful barbarians who used unscrupulous tactics to attack the soldiers ignores the fact that all the previous assaults on the indigenous group were of a similar unequal and deceitful nature. Furthermore, reflecting the remnants of Spanish colonial practices and following the Latin American trope of civilisation versus barbarism, Díaz's account demonstrates that the Charrúas were viewed in society as savages who either had to be civilised and integrated into society or obliterated entirely.[17]

[14] Yacaré Cururu is in the Artigas department in Uruguay and today the town is named Bernabé Rivera as a homage to the colonel's services to the country.
[15] Díaz, *Historia*, II, 90.
[16] Ibid., pp. 90–91.
[17] See Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (New York: Doubleday, 1961).

Following these ideals, Díaz not only glorifies Bernabé's actions but also depicts his death as tragic. Blaming President Rivera for his nephew's death, he calls Bernabé a hero:

había obedecido con notable disgusto, las órdenes referentes al suceso, y es creencia general que así fue – Era hombre de estimables prendas, y que hubiera hecho en la República Oriental una figura tanto, o más espectable [sic] que su hermano.[18]

Like Díaz, the early twentieth century historian Blanco Acevedo also portrays Bernabé as a valiant fighter.[19] It is to be noted that both these historians were writing during a period of nation-building (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) and in the shadow of many civil wars. As they were engaged in the creation of an official history for the nation, pointing out possible lapses of judgement and stubbornness on a national hero's part would have proved counter-productive. Accordingly, the Bernabé of their works was a heroic, saintly figure who sacrificed his life for domestic peace whilst the Charrúas were portrayed as uncouth savages.

Although Lavalleja was slightly critical of Bernabé, his version of the latter's death also views the Charrúas as barbarians, reflecting the omnipresent view of them in Uruguayan society at the time. Unlike Díaz's version, in which Bernabé is immediately killed, in Lavalleja's account he is first taken prisoner and tortured before his death at the hands of the Charrúas:

en fin murió, le cortaron la nariz y le sacaron las venas del brazo derecho para envolverlas en el palo de la lanza del primero que lo hirió, lo arrastraron a una distancia donde había un pozo de agua, allí le metieron la cabeza dejándole el cuerpo fuera.[20]

Lavalleja, who claims to have heard this story from the Indians he lived with in 1833, uniquely provides the Charrúa point of view, albeit a filtered one. However, the detail with which he describes their brutality emphasises their supposed barbarism, making it easier to justify further attacks on them and to write them out of civilised history.

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[18] When Díaz was writing it was erroneously believed that Don Fructuoso Rivera and Bernabé Rivera were brothers. *Historia*, II, 91.
[19] Blanco Acevedo, *Historia*, pp. 140–41.
[20] Lavalleja, 'Memoria', p. 193.

De Mattos thus chooses to fictionalise a historical narrative which involves questions of colonial practice and the rights of the indigenous populations of Uruguay. The historical incidents also raise issues about the unreliability of memory and history as there are many contradictions, grey areas and, indeed, ethical concerns about the behaviour of the heroes of Uruguayan independence. These questionable actions have been long overlooked or deliberately written off as a necessary evil by authors of official history. As there was no Charrúa left to contradict the official version, the cultural memory of that time is not violent but in fact a glorious one. For instance, the massacre was first fictionalised in a less known short story called 'La cueva del tigre' by the seminal writer Eduardo Acevedo Díaz.[21] First published in a newspaper in 1890, this short story uses Antonio Díaz's version and embellishes it with a few fictional details.[22] Although Acevedo Díaz is slightly critical of President Rivera because of his Blanco ideals, the writer also highlights the Charrúas' barbarism by describing their torture of Bernabé and signals their disappearance from the Banda Oriental:

> Consumado el sacrificio, Sepe hizo cubrir con algunos nervios del cadáver el extremo de la moharra de su lanza. […] Esta fue la última hazaña charrúa, provocada por un acto de barbarie del presidente Rivera. Después, el resto de la tribu formidable, desapareció para siempre.[23]

As it emphasises that there were no Charrúas left in the region, it reinforces the idea that Uruguay was a white nation and justifies the promotion of European migration in the late nineteenth century. Published only a handful of times, this short story is not as well-known as Acevedo Díaz's 'Combate de la tapera' (1892), attesting to the problematic nature of the massacre's memory in Uruguay.

When de Mattos grew up in the 1950s and 60s, although the massacre of the Charrúas was mentioned in history textbooks, it was not dealt with in any detail. For instance, in an earlier widely used twentieth-century school textbook by Hermano Damasceno (known as H.D.), the obliteration of the Charrúas is viewed as an achievement: 'Rivera tuvo que guerrear durante la mayor parte de su presidencia. Logró

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[21] Acevedo Díaz sources the name 'Cueva del tigre' from historian Díaz who believed it to be the location of the massacre. Díaz, *Historia*, II, 85.
[22] Pablo Rocca, in Acevedo Díaz's *Cuentos completos*, notes that the story was first published in 1890 in *La Época* under the title 'La boca del tigre' and later in *La Alborada* in 1901. See note (a) on p. 55.
[23] Acevedo Díaz, *Cuentos completos*, p. 55.

sofocar dos revoluciones de Lavalleja y exterminar a los últimos Charruas'.[24] Their historical 'presence' in Uruguayan school textbooks, and in culture generally, is then defined by their absence in the present. This national myth was further reinforced by the prevalence of works such as Juan Zorilla de San Martín's iconic *Tabaré* (1888) and the appropriation of Charrúa traits into Uruguayan popular culture, such as the national football team known as having the 'garra charrúa'.[25]

The image of the Charrúas as absent in post-1832 Uruguay was useful for the consolidation and reproduction of national identity in two ways. Firstly, it allowed Uruguay to view itself as a nation without Indians in order to promote immigration from Europe in the early twentieth century and to emphasise its exceptionality vis-à-vis other Latin American states. Secondly, it did not raise any ethical questions regarding national heroes such as Bernabé and Fructuoso Rivera, providing (new and old) Uruguayans with a linear narrative of their nation's origins based on which national identity was consolidated. In this context, de Mattos's fictional engagement with these events, as we shall see below, does not constitute a simple remembering, but rather functions as a questioning of national myth-making at a point when identity and more recent official history were being re-evaluated.

Tomás de Mattos and *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*

Born in 1947 in Montevideo, Tomás de Mattos spent the first few years of his life at Tacuarembó, a city in northern Uruguay. Although throughout his life he was to move back and forth between the two cities, he would always be known as a Tacuarembó writer. A lawyer by profession, de Mattos's literary career flourished simultaneously; as a teenager he first published a range of short stories in the weekly journal *Marcha* as well as in the famed Ángel Rama's anthology, *Cien años de raros* (1966). Despite his leftist orientation, during the dictatorship, de Mattos was able to publish three short story collections, *Libros y perros* (1975), *Trampas de barro* (1983) and *La gran sequía*

[24] Hermano Damasceno (known as H.D.), *Curso de historia patria: Libro primero*, 9th edn (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1944), p. 153.
[25] Zorilla de San Martín's *Tabaré* is discussed below. For an analysis of the football team's 'garra charrúa' see Gustavo San Román's '"*La garra charrúa"*: Fútbol, indios e identidad en el Uruguay contemporáneo', *Bulletin hispanique*, 107.2 (2005), 633–55 <https://doi.org/10.3406/hispa.2005.5245>.

(1984).[26] Published in 1988, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* was his first novel, which was succeeded in 1996 by *La fragata de las máscaras*, a rewriting of Herman Melville's novella *Benito Cereno* (1855). These two highly successful works were followed by a series of novels on religious themes and, more recently, *El hombre de marzo* (2010-13), a bipartite biography of the Uruguayan educator and politician José Pedro Varela (1845-1879). Along with being an acclaimed writer, de Mattos also taught literature and wrote for newspapers such as *Caras y Caretas*. In his later life, he was an ardent Frente Amplio supporter, the governing centre-left wing party in Uruguay, who recognised his knowledge of Uruguayan culture and made him the director of the National Library in 2005. As he passed away in early 2016 at the age of sixty-eight, de Mattos left behind a rich legacy of historical novels, short stories and articles.

When *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* was published in 1988, it was a commercial success - selling 23,000 copies in the first ten years of its publication - as well as a critical one, winning the Premio Bartolomé Hidalgo, the foremost literary prize in Uruguay.[27] As it spoke to a particular political and cultural moment in society, it signalled a turn in the re-writing of Uruguayan history through fiction. This led many critics such as such as Hugo Achugar, Luis Roniger and Gustavo San Román to aptly single it out as an exemplary historical novel of the post-dictatorship era.[28] *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* then serves as an appropriate literary reference point for Uruguayan identity and culture in the period immediately after the transition to democracy. Although a 'definitive' version of the novel was published in 2000, this thesis focuses on the 1988 version because it not only reveals the concerns of the early post-dictatorship period but also allows us to fulfil the secondary aim of this study: to trace the development of the Uruguayan historical novel.[29]

¡Bernabé, Bernabé! is an epistolary novel consisting of letters published by a prologist, M.M.R., in 1946 and written by Josefina Péguy, a Uruguayan woman born in

[26] Débora Quiring, 'A la sombra del paraíso', *La Diaria*, 22 March 2016, section Cultura, an obituary <https://ladiaria.com.uy/articulo/2016/3/a-la-sombra-del-paraiso/> [accessed 8 April 2019].
[27] Ibid.
[28] Hugo Achugar, 'Postmodernity and Fin de Siècle in Uruguay', *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature*, 14 (1990), 45–59 <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1242>, p. 56; Luis Roniger, 'Human Rights Violations and the Reshaping of Collective Identities in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay', *Social Identities*, 3 (1997), 221–46 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504639752078>, p. 233; San Román, *Soy celeste*, p. 211.
[29] Nonetheless, the 'definitive' edition of the novel is discussed briefly at the end of this chapter.

1832. Named after Napoleon Bonaparte's first wife, Josefina is the daughter of Máximo Péguy, an elite landowner from Montevideo and also the wife, and later widow, of a lawyer called Juan Pedro Narbondo. Josefina's letters are addressed to Federico, the editor of a weekly magazine pertinently called *El Indiscreto* in the 1880s.[30] Federico had previously asked Josefina for some documents from her deceased husband's archives on Bernabé Rivera for his magazine. Along with providing him with these documents, Josefina writes letters elaborating on 'factual' information and including oral versions of witnesses such as Sergeant Gabiano and Fortunato Silva. As she discusses archival documents and recounts conversations between herself, her family and their acquaintances about the Uruguayan past, particularly the massacre of the Charrúas, her letters serve to nuance the representation of this incident and to question the reliability of history and memory.

The novel consists of seventeen letters written by Josefina which vary in length, content and style. Some are argumentative, as she attempts to convince the reader of her perspective on historical events when gaps or contradictions are present; others are descriptive as they reimagine how certain events might have occurred. In a polyphonic manner, Josefina not only presents different voices and beliefs, but in one instance also imagines herself as an Indian soldier in Bernabé's army. In line with a recurring trope in the novel, Josefina often asks rhetorical questions about ethics and history in order to encourage the reader to form their own opinion on the issue. Set within the tradition of the epistolary and historical novel, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* deals with the interplay between private and public memories and highlights the tension between historical documents, personal memory and fiction.

Mapping out *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*

The variety of temporal perspectives in *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* speak to the present as a means to challenge particular ideas of national identity and myth.[31] Ranging from the early nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century, they frame the author's highly politicised depiction of the past. In chronological order, they are firstly the years 1811-26

[30] *El Indiscreto* was an actual magazine from the 1880s, it is discussed in detail below.
[31] These temporal perspectives of the novel have been previously studied in detail by Basile in 'La novela histórica' (pp. 90–96) and *El desarme* (pp. 170–74) and more briefly by Garibotto in 'Contornos en negativo' (pp. 102–04).

and 1831-32, corresponding to the periods of Bernabé's life that Josefina chooses to narrate. Secondly, the year 1885, when Josefina pens these letters to Federico and thirdly, 1946, when the fictional prologist M.M.R. publishes Josefina's letters. Fourthly and paratextually, 1988, when the novel was published.

The first historical period covered in the novel (1811-26; 1831-32) are the years after the 1810 May Revolution when the seeds of Uruguay as a nation were sown. As Josefina describes Bernabé's life, she first chooses to portray incidents that create a heroic image of him, such as his role in the battle of Sarandí (12 October 1825), which she will later disparage in relation to the Charrúa massacre. The novel then jumps to Bernabé's life from 1831 until his death in 1832 and omits the years 1826-30 when Uruguay became independent. In other words, it overlooks the nation's official origin as well as, in the prologist M.M.R. words, 'los días más gloriosos de los Rivera' (21). From the beginning then, de Mattos indicates that this rewriting of historical discourse deviates from the usual heroic version of the Riveras' lives and leans towards a more ambiguous interpretation of the past. As we shall see in a later section of this chapter, the critical representation of national heroes is a significant theme in *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*.

The novel's second time frame is the year 1885 when Josefina pens her letters to Federico. At this moment, as mentioned in the Introduction, the military was exceptionally powerful in Uruguay and national myths were enforced through various nation building gestures. In 1885 in particular, during the military presidency of Máximo Santos, there was 'una política deliberada del Estado de afirmación de la conciencia nacional uruguaya'.[32] Josefina's writing, however, does not conform to the contemporary national sentiment but contradicts it by reconsidering national heroes and highlighting inglorious events from the nation's past. The novel further draws attention to the connection between the recent dictatorship and Santos's military presidency as Josefina perceptively remarks that Federico has embarked upon 'una desinteresada evocación para escapar de las mezquindades del presente' (27). Thus, by placing Josefina's letters in 1885, de Mattos not only critiques the role of the armed forces in the 1880s, but by alluding to the recently-ended twentieth century dictatorship, also criticises its abuse of

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[32] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 47.

nation-building activities such as previously noted the Año de la Orientalidad celebrations in 1975.

The third time frame, the year 1946, further suggests similarities with the author's present. As M.M.R. publishes Josefina's account of Bernabé in 1946, he discusses his reasons for choosing this specific text from Josefina's body of work, adding another temporal dimension by alluding to the Nuremberg trials: 'me parece un texto muy cercano a estos tiempos todavía signados por las revelaciones de Nuremberg' (22). The Nuremberg trials of the Nazi regime were the first time that military officials were tried and punished for human rights violations by an international tribunal that overrode national laws. In other words, terms like crimes against humanity and genocide were considered in an international context, and safeguarding human rights was deemed more important than national sovereignty. Significantly, from the onset the international tribunal did not consider the excuse that the officials were just following orders.[33] The Nuremberg trials thus not only brought about changes in the way we view human rights today but also how we regard guilt and culpability. A lawyer by profession who was surely aware of the impact of these trials, de Mattos's allusion to them was deliberately political, given that in Uruguay the act of condemning crimes and sentencing the military had been hindered in the immediate post-dictatorship period. Due to pressure from the military during the re-democratisation negotiations, the Ley de Caducidad was passed in the senate in December 1986. This law decreed that neither the military nor the police could be prosecuted for any crimes, including human rights violations, committed before 1 March 1985 when they were following orders. Moreover, instead of the judiciary, it would be the executive (i.e. the political administration) who would examine any cases that courts had already received.[34] Thus, in a period characterised by impunity, de Mattos's allusion to the Nuremberg trials indirectly questions the decision to grant amnesty to those who committed human rights violations in the past.

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[33] Following the trials, the United Nations adopted new human rights conventions (e.g. The European Convention of Human Rights, 1950 and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984). It was then under the latter convention that Amnesty International sought to bring General Pinochet, the former dictator of Chile, to justice.
Henry T. King Jr., 'The Legacy of Nuremberg', *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 34 (2002), 335–56 <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1463&context=jil> [accessed 8 April 2019], pp. 347–8.

[34] Lessa, *Memory*, p. 137.

Before the publication of de Mattos's novel, many activists and human rights workers petitioned to have a referendum to reject the law or to retain it. In December 1987, the petition had over 634,700 signatures and was presented to the Electoral Court, which subsequently scheduled a referendum for 16 April 1989.[35] *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* then, published under these circumstances, when Uruguayans had to choose between the *voto amarillo* (to retain the law) and the *voto verde* (to repeal it), highlights a common feature of many historical novels: using the past to not only speak to the present but also to point to political concerns of the immediate future. The result of the 1989 referendum would define how Uruguayans would view themselves in the 1990s: as a country which silences human rights violations for the sake of domestic peace or as one which punishes those who authorised and committed them.[36] *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* thus deals with this complex relationship between identity and memory in the present as well as its relevance for the future.

The novel's allusions to the impending referendum did not go unnoticed. Its widespread success and critical acclaim resulted in a polemic regarding its ethical concerns between Hugo Achugar and Washington Lockhart in the magazine *Cuadernos de Marcha*.[37] Lockhart, a historian, criticised de Mattos for endorsing the *voto amarillo* because he portrayed Rivera committing an immoral deed for the greater good: 'El ¡Bernabé… le hizo el caldo gordo a "la amarilla", pues al proponer una gloriosa impunidad para Rivera, le […] dio una buena mano a Tarigo'.[38] As Lockhart overlooks the multi-vocal tendency of the novel as well as the narrator Josefina's point of view which does not endorse Rivera's actions, Achugar on the other hand writes: 'Lamentablemente (quizás afortunadamente) para usted y para mí, ninguno de los dos poseemos la autoridad ni el poder para imponer una cierta lectura de '¡Bernabé,

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[35] Ibid., p. 139.
[36] The outcome of the 1989 referendum was in the favour of the *voto amarillo* upholding the Ley de Caducidad. Twenty years later, a second referendum took place along with the national elections of 2009. Like the previous one, the 2009 referendum on the Ley de Caducidad did not meet the required quorum for its abolition. In 2011, however, after the law was denounced by international human rights organisations and because of the activism of many Uruguayans, the Frente Amplio government enacted Law no. 18.831 which effectively upturned the previous amnesty provisions. Lessa, *Memory*, pp. 138–40 and pp. 151–61.
[37] These articles are found in issues 39–43 of the Tercera Época from January 1989 until May 1989.
[38] Washington Lockhart, '¡Bernabé... y su antiética', *Cuadernos de Marcha*, May 1989, Tercera Época, 43, pp. 61–64. Enrique E. Tarigo was Uruguay's vice-president from 1985 until 1990 who campaigned for the *voto amarillo*.

Bernabé!''.[39] Achugar's statement is especially convincing if we consider the narrator's stylistic trope of presenting many voices with varying opinions on the Charrúa massacre whilst asking ethical questions about it without providing any answers.

Moreover, in his articles, Lockhart confuses fiction with history to assert that de Mattos's deviations from historical 'fact' make him an unethical writer since the novelist's task is to 'forjar derivaciones sin desatender la obra emprendida por el historiador'.[40] Lockhart's comment is reminiscent of historians who often disapprove of writers for taking the liberty of fictionalising history. But de Mattos's novel cannot be judged as a work of history; his task is to write fiction, and in doing so to seek a higher poetic truth in it. Nonetheless, the fact that *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* raises such strong opinions on the author's role and the conflict between history and fiction, points to a turn in the genre, as opposed to Acevedo Díaz's historical novels which used fiction to embellish the historian's undertaking.

The novel thus encompasses various temporal perspectives in order to address the issues that remained unsolved during the dictatorship as well as those that were brought up in its aftermath. Additionally, the time frames highlight some of the novel's themes to be discussed below: the issues of war and culpability; a reconsideration of nineteenth century national heroes; and the complex relationship between identity, history and fiction.

'Yo no soy el culpable': Military Obedience and Guilt

The post-Nuremberg understanding of truth, responsibility and morality is a major theme in *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*. Like the trials, it raises similar ethical questions about human rights and condemns their violations during a period of aggressive war and military rule. Reflecting the task of its genre, this historical novel not only challenges the historical ethics of killing the Charrúas but also indicates similar issues present in contemporary Uruguayan society.

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[39] Hugo Achugar 'El referéndum no leído y otros problemas de hermenéutica bifocal', *Cuadernos de Marcha*, April 1989, Tercera Época, 42, pp. 69–71 (p. 71).

[40] Lockhart, 'Bernabé ... y su antiética', p. 64.

The novel's ethical concerns manifest themselves primarily in Josefina's early letters where she indirectly challenges the contemporary widespread notion that the Charrúas were a social nuisance, thereby questioning this myth in the author's present. Attesting to the novel's polyphony, she first introduces points of view that conform to contemporary beliefs in her society. For her father, Máximo Péguy, these massacres were 'el inexorable desenlace de una guerra de más de tres siglos' (55-56). Similarly, her husband Narbondo deems the massacre inevitable: '[s]egún él, se dispersó y se disolvió, tal como se debía, a la nación charrúa, pero se respetó, en el mayor grado posible, la vida de los individuos' (54). In Josefina's opinion, her husband, foreshadowing history textbooks of the early twentieth century, wishes to 'absolver a don Frutos de la responsabilidad' whilst claiming that 'nadie […] podía ser responsabilizado' (57). Josefina, on the other hand, criticises historians who pass judgements when she affirms, with regard to Rivera, that '[n]o voy nunca a ser su juez: detesto los que emiten dictámines, sentados en sus escritorios, liberados de las incontables presiones que conlleva toda situación' (61). In a prefiguration of the critic Achugar's assertion that the novel does not impose a specific reading upon the reader, this phrase highlights de Mattos's reluctance to explicitly endorse a political standpoint. Despite Josefina's claim that she will not condemn Rivera, she is in fact inclined to blame him for the killings: 'Pero sí puedo decir que esas matanzas me avergüenzan y que […] a él le son atribuibles, porque las decidió, planificó y dirigió. No es poca carga para una conciencia' (61). As the narrator regards Rivera culpable for these crimes, she nonetheless presents different voices on the issues of the historical massacre of the Charrúas and its myth in contemporary Uruguayan society as well as on the question of impunity in 1980s Uruguay.

The sub-theme of guilt is also indicated through the protagonist Bernabé. Josefina, for instance, describes Bernabé's preparation for the Salsipuedes massacre as he instructs his troops about the betrayal of the Charrúas the following day. Bernabé expresses his reluctance to betray the Charrúas but convinces his soldiers that they must obey orders: 'Si a mí me duele, descarto que a ustedes les va a ocurrir lo mismo y peor, porque se están enterando de golpe y no se les dio el derecho a discutirlo. Camaradas: ésta es la vida del militar' (72). However, Josefina, taking on the role of a shrewd historian, suspects the sincerity of Bernabé's speech, viewing it as 'una sutil y mañosa manipulación de los

ánimos de sus principales subordinados' (73). When this anecdote ends, de Mattos gets to the crux of the matter, as Josefina asks the reader: '¿[l]as decisiones de la guerra solo requieren a la lógica? ¿Es recomendable, en aras de una mayor eficacia, aislarlas de toda consideración de justicia? ¿La disciplina es siempre la máxima virtud marcial?' (73). Josefina's rhetorical questions are thus not only critical of the military, but they also allow the reader to ponder upon these issues and associate them with the ethical dilemmas of the present. Once more, the novel functions at two levels: it challenges history and memory by bringing into question the Charrúa massacre whilst providing a context to evaluate the present.

Josefina further addresses the question of culpability when she discusses the Indian uprising in Bella Unión and Bernabé's subjugation of them in May and June 1832. She describes how on 11 June on the banks of the river San José del Uruguay, two small barges filled with Indians known as *misioneros* were fleeing to Argentina. As Bernabé and his troops attacked them, many *misioneros*, regardless of their swimming capabilities, jumped from the boats whilst others held on tightly to their edges. Bernabé's soldiers then shot their rifles at the *misioneros* holding on to the ships in order to make them fall and drown in the river. According to Josefina, who heard the story from Sergeant Gabiano, the following day there was a tense atmosphere in the camp as the soldiers noticed that 'flotaban en la mansa corriente del río muchos cadáveres' (130). As he recounted the incident, Gabiano also highlighted Bernabé's reaction: 'Bernabé los contempló con tristeza, pero cuando Gabiano le alcanzó un mate, le dijo: "Yo no soy el culpable."' (130). Bernabé's assertion emphasising his lack of culpability, raises the question of military obedience but does not impose any definitive answers. Since Bernabé believes himself to be devoid of guilt because he was following orders, the reader must decide where they stand with regard to his actions and by implication to the environment of impunity in post-dictatorship Uruguay. Following the pattern of the Nuremburg trials, de Mattos's novel substitutes a court room: the reader (i.e. the metaphorical jury) is provided with different viewpoints through which they are expected to form a judgement.[41]

[41] Garibotto has previously made a connection between the novel and de Mattos's profession as a lawyer: 'replica también en la ficción la dualidad profesional de Tomás de Mattos, escritor y abogado'. *Crisis y reemergencia*, p. 55.

Questioning National Heroes

The mythification of national heroes, irrevocably linked to a linear and sanctified narrative of a country's origins, is at the cornerstone of collective identity in most nations. Inevitably then, in the post-dictatorship reassessment of Uruguayan identity and memory, its national heroes are examined critically. In Uruguay, it is José Artigas, to be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, who imbibes the epitome of national values. Closely behind Artigas, however, are the early presidents and founders of the Colorado and Blanco parties, Fructuoso Rivera and Manuel Oribe (1792-1857) respectively.[42] This section considers how the novel portrays Uruguay's first president, Fructuoso Rivera, his nephew Bernabé Rivera and briefly, José Artigas.

It is not only the novel's prologue that foreshadows the narrator Josefina's critical stance on the Riveras, as M.M.R. notes her neglect of their glorious years, but also the premise of the novel itself, namely the letters intended for the editor of *El Indiscreto*. A weekly magazine, the real *El Indiscreto* was first published in June 1884 and had articles on history, literature, art and fashion as well as excerpts of short stories and poems. The magazine's cover featured a black and white portrait of an important person from contemporary Uruguayan society such as Juan Zorilla de San Martín (no. 4, 22 June 1884), Eduardo Acevedo Díaz (no. 25, 16 November 1884) and José Pedro Varela (no. 21, 19 October 1884) or from its recent history like Juan Antonio Lavalleja (no. 13, 24 August 1884) and Dámaso Antonio Larrañaga (no. 38, 15 February 1885). Inside the magazine, an article, under the title 'Nuestros grabados', usually explained the importance of the featured individual. This was presumably written by the editor, a role held by Ricardo Sánchez until June 1885 and later by Federico J. Silva, who in *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* is the intended recipient of Josefina's letters. Published during Máximo Santos's presidency, this magazine, bringing together literature and history, had the task of creating collective memory and forming national identity by highlighting significant narratives of the past and of the present. Although not much is known about its production nor its readership, in the context of *¡Bernabé, Bernabe!*, it is significant that de Mattos bases his rewriting of Uruguayan history on the premise of a magazine meant for nation-

[42] The formation of these parties and its significance is discussed in Chapter 4.

building, highlighting the irony of his work as well as emphasising his nuanced criticism of memory-making apparatuses.

In *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, when Josefina introduces Fructuoso Rivera to the reader, she first praises his personality: 'me cayó siempre simpática la naturalidad con la que nos emancipaba de los complicados rituales con los que mi madre procuraba encauzar la larga comida […] dejaba traslucir un temperamento paciente y recio […]. Tendía más a escuchar que a hablar' (29). This description turns critical, however, as she emphasizes his use of sarcasm and claims that Rivera 'consideraba que toda frase explícitamente ofensiva menoscababa su propia dignidad' (29). Although Rivera was not frugal in flattering even his enemies, Josefina, subtly criticising the leader, always sensed that 'tras esos juicios sinceros, [había] una sobrada conciencia de su propio valor' (29). She gives the example of an after-dinner conversation when she praised Artigas and Rivera feigned sorrow and nostalgia to comment: '[v]erdaderamente… lo que podrían ser todas estas Provincias si don José hubiera sido un poquito menos obcecado' (29). Echoing contemporary sentiments about Artigas in early nineteenth century Montevideo, the novel is not explicitly negative about Rivera's personality but paints him as over-confident. Furthermore, it presents a multifaceted image of him when Josefina calls him a chameleon who blended into both rural and urban Uruguay:

> [e]ra un camaleón: gaucho en los fogones y en las campereadas; memorioso oyente entre los viejos y alocado gurí grande que le gustaba mezclarse con la gurisada; hombre de mando, al frente de la tropa y caballero entre los hacendados y los notables de los poblados (30).

In addition to Rivera's comment about Artigas's stubbornness, the latter is also mentioned when Josefina asks the reader whether the massacre of the Charrúas was inhumane and unjust. She then imagines a conversation with her husband about the issue during which Josefina would teasingly mention Artigas's affiliation with the Charrúas. Narbondo would then exclaim, as he might have done when he was alive, '[d]ejá a ese fanático que porque las cosas no salieron como él quería, se quedó para siempre en el Paraguay. Así es muy fácil conservar las manos limpias' (62). By presenting a negative point of view of Artigas that had been present amongst elite circles of Montevideo in the nineteenth century (his Black Legend), the novel seems to deviate from his later twentieth century hero-worship. Indeed, de Mattos's representation of Artigas did not go unnoticed

as Lockhart criticises him for defaming the national hero.[43] De Mattos, however, is not anti-Artigas but instead opens up historical discourses to further interpretations of the hero.

In de Mattos's novel, Rivera and Artigas are both sidelined, as Bernabé's character becomes the main vehicle for the questioning of national heroes and the politics of myth-making. Before we discuss the novel's Bernabé, it is worth considering how the historical Bernabé was portrayed in the magazine *El Indiscreto.* In issue no. 75, published on 5 November 1885 and edited by Federico J. Silva, the magazine reiterates historian Antonio Díaz's version of the massacre and represents Bernabé's death as a huge loss to the nation:

> Con su muerte el país perdió una esperanza – Era una opinion fundada y generalmente admitida, que si él hubiera vivido en 1835, por su mérito y por las cualidades relevantes de que se hallaba adornado, habría ocupado la segunda Presidencia Constitucional de la República.[44]

Figure 1 The cover of issue no. 75 of *El Indiscreto*, 5 November 1885.

Thus, like in history and literature, the original *El Indiscreto*'s visual (see Figure 1) and textual portrayal of Bernabé, highlighting his potential to become the nation's next president, also consolidates a heroic version of him.

De Mattos, on the other hand, reproduces this portrait of Bernabé in his novel but challenges the veracity of the above historical claims, first by attributing the image to

[43] Lockhart, 'Bernabé ... y su antiética', p. 62.
[44] Federico J. Silva, 'Nuestros grabados: Coronel Don Bernabé Rivera', *El Indiscreto*, 5 November 1885, Año II, 75, pp. 346–47 (p. 347).

Josefina. In her letter to Federico, she mentions that although she had never met Bernabé, when she painted a portrait of him, her aunt reassured her that the likeness was uncanny. Josefina then, 'dando por suspuesta su autenticidad' (33), gives the editor Federico permission to print this portrait. Highlighting the irony of Josefina's belief that the portrait is authentic despite her never having met Bernabé, de Mattos engages with and puts into doubt the veracity of the original image in the historical *El Indiscreto* as well as its identity-building agenda. Similarly, Josefina comments on national iconography as she alludes to nation-building activities in her present (1885):

> [s]i así procedieras, perpetraríamos en grado de coautoría un valioso y perenne apoyo a la magra iconografía nacional. No te olvides que en estas sociedades […] es imposible evocar a un héroe o a un mártir si no se le asigna un rostro (33).

Emphasising the significance of visual culture in catering to schemes of establishing national heroes, the novel further points to de Mattos's concern with the uses of memory politics. We shall see, in the chapters to follow, art pieces related to national icons as well as material culture like monuments and their role in top-down cultural memory and identity are a continuous subject of critique in the historical novels of post-dictatorship Uruguay.

Along with critiquing iconography in her prose, Josefina presents a non-heroic version of Bernabé as she describes how he tracks down cacique Venado who had fled the Salsipuedes massacre. Hinting at the unreliability of memory, she provides two versions of a conversation between Bernabé and his officer Fortunato Silva, who advised the former against meeting Venado. The first version, in which Bernabé comes across as arrogant, was recounted to her by Sergeant Gabiano who heard it from Silva himself. In this account, Silva had warned Bernabé about meeting the Charrúas: '[p]iénselo bien… Lo van a secuestrar. A cualquiera se le ocurriría eso, para presionar al Presidente' (87). But the overconfident Bernabé had replied: '[s]i me llamo Bernabé, eso no puede suceder' (87). Josefina, however, heard another, rather heroic, variation of this conversation in the Valdés's and the Raña's houses. In this second account, Silva had asked Bernabé who was more valuable: '¿[u]n cacique viejo, al que solo le queda una docena de indios para mandar, o un Coronel de la República, que tiene toda una vida y quién sabe qué honores por delante?' (87). To this, Bernabé had replied graciously: '[s]i hoy algo valgo […] fue

porque nunca me pregunté si mi persona valía más que el deber que cada día me ha tocado cumplir' (87-88). Taking on the role of a historian, as Josefina must choose between these two versions of Bernabé, she favours the first one which portrays him as arrogant, calling the second version 'más confusa e inverosímil', arguably in a bid to detach herself from a saintly image of him (87).

As the novel engages with Bernabé's portrait in the original *El Indiscreto*, Josefina also brings into question the heroic description of his death in the magazine and in other cultural works. Asserting that it was not a glorious death, she compares Sergeant Gabiano's oral fictional account to Bernabé's epitaph written by the poet Francisco Acuña de Figueroa (1791-1862): '[s]egún lo que me contó Gabiano, la muerte de Bernabé tuvo algo menos de la Gloria que le canta nuestro inspirado Acuña de Figueroa en su epicedio' (136). Acuña de Figueroa, the author of the Uruguayan national anthem, wrote many elegies and epigraphs of historical figures to sanctify their contribution to the nation.[45] In *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, although Josefina contests Acuña de Figueroa's epigraph to describe Bernabé's inglorious death, she also quotes a short section of his poem in order to present multiple perspectives on him:

Te invito ahora para que, sin dejar de contemplar esta escena, oigamos la algo meliflua voz de nuestro poeta oficial, declamando estas estrofas:

> Admirado el oído extranjero,
> Tus hazañas también escuchó,
> Y de un polo hasta el otro del mundo,
> Bernabé, Bernabé, resonó.
>
> ¡Bernabé! Ya tu sombra terrible.
> De la Estigia, las aguas pasó.
> Ya no existe, tu brazo invencible,
> Solo llanto, nos queda y dolor (145).[46]

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[45] See Francisco Acuña de Figueroa, *Obras completas de Francisco Acuña de Figueroa*, ed. by Manuel Bernárdez, 12 vols (Montevideo: Vázquez Cores, Dornaleche y Reyes, 1890).

[46] Poems about Bernabé are in volume VII of Acuña de Figueroa's *Obras completas*. But this extract is not part of them. Other verses on Bernabé include a eulogy which was artistically interpreted by Juan Manuel Besnes e Irigoyen (1788-1865), but the above extract does not feature in it either. On Besnes e Irigoyen's painting see, Margarita Carámbula de Barreiro, 'A la heroica muerte del bravo Coronel don Bernabé Rivera', *Revista histórica*, Año 42 (2a época), 16 (December 1948), 491–501. Besnes e Irigoyen's work on Bernabé was also included in the Museo Histórico Nacional's ongoing exhibition to mark the painter's 150th death anniversary in 2016.

By providing a citation of his epigraph, the novel opens up the historical and literary archive to 'show' different perspectives on the past next to one another, resulting in a complex unheroic interpretation of the hero.

Whilst on the one hand de Mattos's novel veers from Bernabé's previous heroic representations in Uruguayan texts, on the other it follows the trope of portraying his death as the fall of a tragic hero. For instance, the novel's title, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* echoes the American William Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!* (1936) and foreshadows the tragic ending of the novel.[47] In de Mattos's work, at the beginning '¡Bernabé, Bernabé!' is a victory cry after the battle of Sarandí against the Portuguese when Bernabé's tactics were highly successful and his genius was recognised by everyone present there.[48] Josefina even imagined the perspective of a common Indian soldier in the aftermath of the battle shouting '!Bernabé! !Bernabé! !Bernabé!' whilst their leader General Juan Antonio Lavalleja applauded his efforts. This scene, however, is contrasted with the end of the novel when Bernabé dies at the hands of the Charrúas who attack him shouting, '¡Bernabé, Bernabé!' (143-44). Thus, previously a cry of victory, it now announces Bernabé's death.

As a tragic hero, Bernabé's fatal flaw, often overlooked in historical discourses, was his arrogance and stubborn behaviour when attacking the surviving Charrúas as opposed to his initial military prowess. According to Josefina: '[e]l cansancio y las ansias de capturar, de una vez por todas, al esquivo Polidoro lo habían turbado al punto de que había perdido esa gélida serenidad que lo caracterizaba en sus días de campaña' (137). Although many soldiers objected to his decision to attack the Charrúas, his obstinacy became apparent, since, as Gabiano informed Josefina, Bernabé 'no quiso darse cuenta de que no estábamos en condiciones de combatir' (137). His over-confidence, or hubris, as well as his relentless pursuit of the Charrúas led him to act in an irrational manner in contrast to his previous behaviour. Ultimately, the novel suggests that it was this tragic flaw that led to his death. Reinforcing Josefina's previous statement that there was

So, there are two possibilities: de Mattos is being ironic and has written this extract himself or he reproduces verses that are not present in *Obras completas*. The latter is likely, because the editor Bernárdez (VII, 103) notes that he left out some 200 verses based on national heroes.

[47] Garibotto discusses the relationship between these two novels in 'Contornos en negativo', pp. 124–25.

[48] Bernabé's contribution to the battle of Sarandí was also mentioned in *El Indiscreto* (Silva, 'Nuestros grabados', p. 346).

nothing noble about Bernabé's death, de Mattos's version of him differs significantly from those of previously mentioned historians Díaz and Blanco Acevedo. Clearly, such a view of early nineteenth century heroes is not radically negative; but it presents both Rivera and Bernabé as complex human beings who are prone to failure.

The de-mythification of national heroes is most apparent in *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* when Josefina finishes narrating Bernabé's story and asks Federico, and the reader, the following questions:

> ¿a cuál Bernabé hay que rememorar? ¿Al de Sarandí o al de Salsipuedes? ¿Al ídolo de las Misiones o al represor implacable de San José del Uruguay? […] ¿O al que pudiera haber sido, si no se hubiera empecinado en perseguir la muerte en Yacaré-Cururú? ¿Al jefe o al servidor? ¿Al victimario o la víctima? (165)

National heroes are at the core of memory and identity, and whilst the nation remembers them collectively, it looks up to the values they stand for. Nonetheless, these heroes are often a result of top-down memory politics, as governments and regimes use apparatuses like school textbooks, monuments and commemorations to enforce them upon a populace. By asking which Bernabé one should remember, the novel questions these politics which were at their peak during the dictatorship, thus undoing the process of nation-building and identity. On highlighting the relationship between historical novels, memory and identity, de Mattos's text reflects upon a trend in society and, as we shall see in the chapters that follow, foreshadows the themes of other historical novels of its time.

Reclaiming the Charrúas

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Charrúas' presence in cultural memory was characterised by their physical absence in the country. The Uruguayan and Latin American classic Zorilla de San Martín's *Tabaré* (1888), published exactly a hundred years before *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* exemplifies this myth. Set in the sixteenth century, this epic poem narrates the story of a half-Charrúa mestizo called Tabaré and his Spanish love interest Blanca, the sister of conquistador Gonzalo de Orgaz. In the poem's second half, a Charrúa cacique kidnaps Blanca and her brother Gonzalo mistakenly assumes that it was Tabaré's doing. But Tabaré later saves Blanca to bring her back to her brother. On returning, as Blanca sobs for the fate of her love for Tabaré, Gonzalo

interprets this as proof of the latter's guilt and kills him, bringing the story to a tragic end. Although the Charrúas are viewed as savages throughout the poem, Tabaré acts in a 'humane' manner because his saving grace was his half-Spanish heritage. A product of nineteenth century racial politics, Tabaré's character could not survive in the poem because, as a half-Charrúa, he was the exotic other who had to die for Uruguay to be born. In other words, it suggests that the absence of the indigenous population was a prerequisite for a white Hispanic nation to be created in the Banda Oriental.[49] Justifying the massacre of the Charrúas in the 1830s, this poem then contributes to the myth of Uruguay as a white nation without an indigenous population. A hundred years later, de Mattos's novel *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* signals a change in this national myth regarding the Charrúas. Firstly, as it questions the ethics of their massacre, it provides them with a fictional historical voice. Secondly, it brings this forgotten people's obliteration to the forefront and re-introduces living Charrúas into present-day cultural memory.

The most significant Charrúa in the novel is the cacique Sepé who had survived the massacre and lived in a village with a few other Indians selling knick-knacks and handmade liquor. In historical texts, Díaz mentioned Sepé as Bernabé's murderer, whilst Lavalleja claimed that it was Polidoro who killed him. Acosta y Lara then inferred that since Díaz and Lavalleja never mentioned Sepé and Polidoro together, it was quite likely that they were different names for the same person.[50] De Mattos follows Acosta y Lara's conclusion as Josefina's father Máximo Péguy also believes Sepé and Polidoro to be the same figure. Conflating the two identities is not only an authorial tactic to gain more coherence in his narrative but it also gives this Charrúa more agency in the novel. In other words, the cacique who killed Bernabé had to change his name in order to survive and make a living for himself despite the massacre of his people.

In an attempt to alter the present-day memory of the Charrúas, the novel represents Sepé's personality as different from the general opinion of them in nineteenth century Montevideo:

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[49] Gustavo San Román, 'Negotiating Nationhood: The Repressed Desire of the Native in *Tabaré*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 29 (1993), 300–10 <https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/XXIX.4.300>, p. 300.
[50] Eduardo F. Acosta y Lara, *El país charrúa: Reposición de trabajos sobre aborígenes del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2002), p. 77. Although this book was published after de Mattos's novel, the essay Acosta y Lara reproduces here was originally published in 1981 (p. 74).

> [e]stá muy extendida la creencia de que los charrúas eran tristes y taciturnos, sobre todo en Montevideo, que solo los recibió cautivos hace medio siglo atrás. Tanto es así que temo que cuando alguien se decida a escribir sobre ellos, les pinte un alma enfermiza (108).

Refuting this myth, Josefina describes Sepé differently: 'Sepé, en particular, era pícaro y dicharachero. Con todos los poros de su ser abiertos a los grandes y pequeños gozos de la vida, era un indio borracho, glotón y amante de todo ejercicio físico' (108). Although Josefina's description of Sepé's personality stems from Acosta y Lara's text,[51] on portraying the cacique as different from the stereotype of the melancholic Charrúa, like Zorilla de San Martín's Tabaré, she views the Charrúas as more sympathetic characters and thus attempts to diversify their image in cultural memory. In the same vein, de Mattos uses Biblical allusions to portray Sepé's actions, making him more identifiable to Uruguayan (and international) readers. For instance, Josefina describes Sepé's mourning ritual when the mother of his protector died and he sat next to the village well in silence for hours on end: '[s]olitario, casi desnudo, cubierto de llagas, mugriento y rodeado por la indiferencia de casi todos los presentes, era la encarnación de Job' (106). The biblical Job represents someone who was continuously punished by God but still persevered and did not lose faith. This comparison then suggests sympathy for Sepé whose punishment was losing most of his tribe and being one of the last Charrúas, but he persevered to survive and did not give up his culture. Portraying Sepé through a Biblical lens inverts previous colonial and postcolonial representations which saw the Charrúas as savages because they were not Christian, thus introducing new ways of viewing them in present-day Uruguayan society.

Although the novel's description of a likeable Sepé is significant, it raises the question of whether de Mattos presents a romanticised view of the autochthonous people. Indeed, to some extent, the narrator Josefina creates a romantic vision of Sepé as she praises his connection with nature and compares him to her godfather Amado Bonpland. A renowned French botanist and explorer, Bonpland travelled through Latin America and later settled down in Corrientes in Argentina.[52] According to his fictional goddaughter Josefina, whilst Sepé 'no necesitó leer a Rousseau para vivir enamorado de la Naturaleza',

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[51] Acosta y Lara, *El país charrúa*, p. 83.
[52] See Stephen Bell, *A Life in Shadow: Aimé Bonpland in Southern South America, 1817–1858* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Bonpland, 'que participó de idéntico amor, se lo dejó estropear por afanes académicos y utopías políticas' (112). Painting Sepé, Bernabé's likely murderer, as a romantic and almost heroic figure might lead some to argue that the author continues to view the Charrúas through an exotic lens. Nonetheless, as the novel presents different ways of viewing the Charrúas, this is arguably another attempt to alter how the nation remembers them.

Although there are various historical and literary depictions of the massacre of the Charrúas, their unfiltered point of view does not feature in any of them. In a representation unique to de Mattos, he fictionalises this previously repressed voice and provides the Charrúa cacique Sepé with a fictional space for his personal memory, simultaneously diversifying the cultural memory of the massacre. Earlier in the novel Sepé had denied that he was Polidoro, asserting that he had no hand in killing Bernabé, but later, in a drunken stupor, he confesses to the murder and describes the incident vividly. On listening to the cacique, Josefina's father and the other landowners were enraptured: '[s]us oyentes quedaron callados, pendientes de que prosiguiera su relato' (160). Whilst portraying Sepé as having more agency than he might have had at the time, the novel also points to how fiction can be used to recreate events in the face of archival gaps in history. Since there is no way to access the Charrúa experience of this historical period, the only way to approach it is via fiction.

Sepé nevertheless faces consequences for recounting his story when Josefina's father Máximo, in line with his nineteenth century ideals, refuses to speak with the cacique afterwards. At the time, a Charrúa would not have been spared if he had confessed to killing a national hero like Bernabé. Being ignored by Máximo was not the only consequence, however, as Josefina informs the reader that two weeks later Sepé was poisoned. According to Acosta y Lara, the historical Sepé may have been poisoned, but he does not confirm this as other sources relate that he died of natural causes.[53] On the other hand, in the novel, Josefina is certain that he died of poisoning, raising the question of whether de Mattos wishes to portray a tragic death for Sepé after having confessed to murdering Bernabé. Yet Sepé's death could also be interpreted as another example of the killing of a Charrúa cacique by deceit. As de Mattos uses strokes of fiction to add nuances

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[53] Acosta y Lara, *El país charrúa*, p. 79 and p. 84.

to history, the novel adds another dimension to the deceit involved in the Charrúas's obliteration. In other words, it further raises ethical questions about the treatment of indigenous peoples in Uruguay.

The narrator not only describes Sepé as a sympathetic character but also views the Charrúas who were captured at Salsipuedes through an empathetic gaze. As Josefina recounts the previously mentioned incident from Lavalleja's 'Memoria' when the unsuspecting Charrúas were tricked into entering Bonifacio's kitchen and then attacked by soldiers from outside, she asks the reader to imagine their situation: '[a]pretados entre muros, apuntados por enemigos impunes, encerrados sin salida, carentes de más recurso que arcos y flechas' (90). Similarly, she not only feels compassion for the four Charrúas who were sent to Paris but also for the ones who found themselves as servants in Montevideo, pondering upon their lives in the two cities: 'congénitamente enamorado de la inmensidad del campo, un laberinto de piedra y gente, sin pasto y sin cielo; una tumba precoz' (55). Making the reader emphathise with the Charrúas is a narrative device which elicits a process of identification. In other words, as the predominantly white Uruguayan reader identifies with the Charrúas, the text challenges the national myth of whiteness and critiques Europe's treatment of the Charrúas at the same time, presenting a more diverse racial collective identity for the present.

The novel further urges the reader to identify with the Charrúas when the narrator imagines herself to be an Indian soldier in the aftermath of the famous battle of Sarandí (1825). An important and decisive battle against the Portuguese which eventually led to Uruguayan independence, Josefina's re-enactment of it through an Indian soldier's eyes proposes that the Charrúas were a part of this battle, and therefore also of the origins of the nation. Suggesting that the Charrúas and white Uruguayans were brothers-in-arms fulfils the prologue's claims that in killing the Charrúas, Bernabé was guilty of fratricide (23). Using the term fratricide and portraying the Battle of Sarandí through a Charrúa perspective not only allows the reader to identify with the Charrúas but also draws connections with the internal violence in Uruguay during the dictatorship, thereby speaking to the present whilst challenging identity politics of the past.

Similarly, the novel highlights an inclusive tendency in identity creation as Josefina fondly remembers the surviving Charrúas' participation in cultural activities of the newly formed Uruguayan nation:

[u]no de los recuerdos más lindos que conservo de mi juventud son los desfiles que acá se organizaban todos los 18 de julio. Participaban no sólo el regimiento, los escolares y los vecinos disfrazados de gauchos, sino también la auténtica indiada de Sepé (108).

Notably, the national celebration of 18 July, the day the constitution was sworn in in 1830, reinforces the narrative of the nation's origins. On portraying the Charrúas as participating in this nation-building activity in the nineteenth century, in the present the novel attempts to expand the scope of collective memory by implying that like the regiment and gauchos, the Charrúas are part and parcel of the country, signalling a change in the national identity built upon their absence.

The novel's concern for this significant indigenous tribe of the Banda Oriental stands out in post-dictatorship Uruguay. Anthropologist Teresa Porzecanski, for instance, claims that, after the dictatorship, Uruguayan culture is characterised by an intention to 'pluralizar la autoimagen de la sociedad nacional a través del reconocimiento o de la incorporación de nuevos sujetos sociales'.[54] The inclusion of the Indian voice in de Mattos's novel is an essential part of this re-examination of national identity, leading Porzecanski to note that *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, with Alberto Restuccia's play *Salsipuedes. El exterminio de los Charrúas* (1985), signals the rise of 'un discurso neoindigenista' in Uruguay.[55] She labels these cultural texts 'mitologías de ausencia' which are 'construcciones ficcionales tendientes a hacer notar un lugar vacío dentro de la elaboración de una identidad nacional considerada incompleta y no exenta de un cierto sentimiento de culpa colectiva'.[56] Although it is debatable whether de Mattos considers identity to be lacking, it is clear that the author contrasts the dictatorship's idea of a fixed complete identity as his novel opens up historical discourses by reintroducing the Charrúa voice into the national imaginary.

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[54] Teresa Porzecanski, 'Nuevos imaginarios de la identidad uruguaya: Neoindigenismo y ejemplaridad', in *20 años de democracia, Uruguay 1985-2005: Miradas múltiples*, ed. by Gerardo Caetano (Montevideo: Taurus, 2005), pp. 407–26 (p. 407).
[55] Ibid., p. 410.
[56] Ibid., pp. 412–13.

A shift in historical memory regarding the Charrúas was also noted in a sociological survey undertaken by Isabela Cosse and Vania Markarian in the early 1990s. In the survey, when asked about when Uruguayan history began, 34% of the participants selected the option 'tribus indígenas' whilst 26% chose Artigas. For Cosse and Markarian,

> [e]l alto porcentaje de adhesiones que concitan, en cambio, los orígenes indígenas en un país que se supo proclamar "sin indios", que se vio a sí mismo como una amalgama de razas y culturas europeas, estaría indicando la remoción de algunos de los sustentos de la conciencia nacional.[57]

Since this survey took place after *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* was published, it is possible that de Mattos's work influenced this turn in the national consciousness. Yet, it is also likely that the author built upon an already existing, albeit dormant, national sentiment in his novel. Nonetheless, given that the above analysis of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* is compatible with Cosse and Markarian's empirical findings, one can surmise that in late twentieth century Uruguay there was a movement towards reinstating the Charrúa experience into the national imaginary. Furthermore, the congruence between this sociological survey and *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* also points to the significance of literature as a means to reflect on society as well as on the relationship between memory, identity and the historical novel.

From the Margins of History

Josefina

In the novel's present, the year 1885, when Josefina writes letters to Federico, the editor of *El Indiscreto*, women were not known to produce historical works nor were they viewed as participating in nation-building activities. These fields were dominated by men and women were relegated to the position of mere spectators of national culture. As he writes during the post-dictatorship period, the author is indicating a move towards the integration of the female voice into historiographical processes. Moreover, his choice of a female narrator serves not only to critique gender roles generally but also to provide a space for the narrator to rebel against the androcentric views of her contemporaries,

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[57] Isabela Cosse and Vania Markarian, *Memorias de la historia: Una aproximación al estudio de la conciencia histórica nacional* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 1994), p. 43. See also by the same authors, 'Entre "Suizas" y Charrúas', in *Uruguay hacia el siglo XXI*, pp. 13–28.

resulting in a personal memory narrative that attempts to become part of the overall cultural memory of nineteenth-century Uruguay.

Although Josefina is a woman, as the daughter of one of the elite families of Montevideo, she is also privileged in some ways. She is privy to conversations between the history-makers of the time, such as President Rivera, and to oral history from 'los de abajo' (151) such as Sergeant Gabiano and the Indian Sepé. The author's choice of narrator is an intelligent one: because of her class, she has access to historical documents and sources of oral history but as a non-participant she can take on the role of a critical bystander. De Mattos's choice is not merely about convenience, but it highlights the significance of women's stories as Josefina's perspective becomes a fresh critical view of the past. Along with being in a position of social privilege, Josefina's unconventional personality traits also make her a suitable narrator, as the prologist M.M.R. notes that although her works reflect 'el encanto de la originalidad y la pasión de la rebeldía,' it was a shame that 'le tocó a vivir el destino de toda mujer de su tiempo' (11). She was an open-minded and curious person who was in 'permanente búsqueda de un centro que, al menos, afirmase sus ideas', resulting in her acquaintances calling her eccentric and presumably ignoring her views. Nevertheless, to convince the reader of her reliability, M.M.R. reassures us that this judgement was neither fair nor true. De Mattos's narrator then is a complex woman on the margins of history because of her gender and beliefs but through her class privilege she is also in the centre of her society.

The novel uses Greek myths to generally critique nineteenth century gender roles. In her first letter to Federico, Josefina mentions her disillusionment with various Greek tragic heroes such as Agamemnon, Menelaus and Achilles: 'tal equiparación no me sabe a exaltación. El esplendor de los versos de Homero nunca me ha enceguecido. No olvido quiénes eran, en realidad, los aqueos: bestias depredadoras. Siempre los vi con los ojos de Andrómaca' (26). In Homer's *Iliad* (1260–1180 BC), the Greek heroine Andromache, who was married to Hector the Trojan prince, had the role of a bystander as her husband died during the Trojan War. Subsequently, as a victim of a war her husband lost, she was forced to become the concubine of the victor, Neoptolemus. Later, in Euripides's play *Andromache* (428-425 BC), she became a protagonist as her courage and valour were

emphasised.[58] By comparing herself to Andromache, Josefina firstly acknowledges women's roles as the one of the marginalised non-participant observers in the epic of Uruguayan history. Secondly, she also generally criticises the actions of the male heroes by comparing them to predatory beasts.

Josefina's criticism of male heroes remains undisputed only in her letters, however, since if she expresses a critical opinion in her conversations with men, they dismiss it highhandedly, repressing her voice in the process. When Josefina asserted that the Charrúas played a significant role in the independence of Uruguay, her father asked her to get this idea out of her head and commented, '[m]enos mal […] que no sos de mis hijos varones: no sabrías hacerte un lugar en la vida' (56). In another instance, Josefina overstepped the boundaries set for nineteenth century women when she informed Sergeant Gabiano that she did not understand how they could 'atacar a traición' at Salsipuedes (62). On being questioned for his ethics, Gabiano became furious and threw his recently lit cigarette to the floor to retort, '[e]stá bien que usted sea la hija del patrón pero ni él ni nadie jamás me habló así' (62). Josefina's opinion is thus ignored as she must then profusely apologise to the offended Gabiano who eventually calmed down to note, '[u]sted, señora Josefina, no entiende estas cosas porque es mujer y nuestras mujeres, las cristianas, nunca entendieron nada de la Guerra y está bien que sea así' (62-63). The men's passionate rejection of Josefina's opinions suggests that they recognise some truth in her comments. Interestingly then, although she identifies the deceit involved in the Charrúa massacre, in the context of the novel, she is not allowed to have a critical judgemental voice on it. Thus, by 'showing' women's subjugation in the intellectual sphere, the novel upturns nineteenth century patriarchy through its basic premise: a woman writing Uruguayan history.

Josefina's account of a conversation between Melchor Pacheco y Obes and her husband Narbondo demonstrates how in her letters she rebels against the authority of men. The two men argue about Bernabé's ethics when he deserted the Argentine Carlos María de Alvear's army to join his uncle Rivera's forces in 1826. Although Josefina was only a silent listener, in recounting the conversation to Federico, she presents her opinion

[58] See Euripides, *Children of Heracles. Hippolytus. Andromache. Hecuba*, ed. and trans. by David Kovacs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 267–389.

on the issue: '[y]o, en esa cena, guardé silencio, acatando, en homenaje a la ilustre visita, el tácito consenso de que una mujer no entiende de hechos de armas; pero aquí, ausente Melchor, debo expresar que…' (45). Josefina's letters then serve as a critical space to express her ideas whilst giving her a historiographical voice in prose that she was denied in direct speech.

Josefina's critical voice is further apparent at the end of the novel when she asserts that, given the lack of authenticity of official history, another version of Bernabé's story should be written. Aware of her powerlessness in society, she does not see herself as its author, '[j]amás me conferiría tal encargo porque nadie me conoce, soy mujer y a nada represento' (165). Yet, she dismisses this idea to muse: '[p]ero si se me embretara en tal tarea ¿cómo la afrontaría?' (165). In this way, de Mattos's Josefina goes beyond the restrictions placed on women in the nineteenth century and proposes a critical revision of history. *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* thus fictionalises inclusivity in creating knowledge of the past; the female narrator, by bringing all accounts of the Charrúa massacre together, produces a narrative that may become an addition to cultural memory, giving her a role in nation-building processes of the nineteenth century, albeit a fictional one.

Sergeant Gabiano and Oral History

¡Bernabé, Bernabé! depicts the subjective process of writing history as Josefina's historiographical venture not only questions documents such as letters and newspaper articles but also the official history that stems from them. History books like Díaz's *Historia política y militar de las repúblicas del Plata* propagated a fixed historical narrative and their dissemination was a process of top-down memory and identity politics. On the other hand, by highlighting the significance of oral history and by raising questions about archival sources, the author opens the past up to further interpretations.

In order to re-examine the historical archive, the novel fictionalises the oral narrative of a soldier in Bernabé's army called Sergeant Gabiano.[59] In her letters, in contrast to her husband Narbondo's archive which represents the nation's official history, Josefina favours Sergeant Gabiano's memory. Accordingly, Josefina and Narbondo's

[59] Although much is not known about him from historical sources, Gabiano, a sergeant in Bernabé's troops at Yacaré Cururu, was first mentioned in an article in Montevideo newspaper *El universal* and later in Antonio Díaz's account. Acosta y Lara, 'Periodo Patrio II', p. 141 and Díaz, *Historia,* II, 91.

often contradictory points of view of historical events allegorize the tension between oral history and written documents.[60] By favouring sources of memory rather than historical documents, she privileges the marginalised histories of Gabiano, the Charrúas and herself over official, often top-down, history. However, unlike Lockhart's interpretation of the novel,[61] de Mattos's intention is not to undermine Acosta y Lara's work, but rather to amplify it by pointing out gaps and incongruencies, resulting in a palpable tension between history, memory and fiction.

The narrator's distrust of official history is exemplified in her analysis of the Salsipuedes massacre. As she discusses the different historical sources available on the incident, she asserts that 'las versiones circulantes son contradictorias en aspectos esenciales' and points out that because contemporary newspapers were obsequious there is no 'base documental […] para acceder a la verdad' (74). Rejecting archival sources for their contradictions, Josefina also doubts Díaz's version because he was neither a participant nor a 'testigo presencial de los hechos' (74). Alternatively, privileging his allegiance to the Indians, she gives more credit to Lavalleja's narrative because he lived with the surviving Charrúas in 1833. But above all, she prefers Sergeant Gabiano's narrative because 'para creerle, [le] bastaría su sola palabra, porque fue un hombre bueno y sin mucha imaginación, que […] tenía pocas vergüenzas que ocultar' (74). Believing his account to be less ideological, Josefina idealistically favours it over other historical sources, highlighting her own motivations in the process. Given that even common soldiers may choose to hide the 'truth', Josefina's naïve trust in Gabiano is a narrative ploy to privilege oral accounts over the historical archive. Additionally, in suggesting that Gabiano does not view himself as culpable for his crimes because he was only a soldier following orders ('tenía pocas vergüenzas que ocultar'), the novel alludes to contemporary issues of impunity in 1988, its relation to the Nuremberg trials and the significance of soldiers' accounts for post-dictatorship Uruguay.

Josefina does not, however, dismiss written accounts without analysing them first, as the author unravels the historiographical process for the reader. After she describes the Salsipuedes incident, sometimes also known as Boca del Tigre, Josefina critiques Díaz's

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[60] Basile has also observed this point in her late 2018 monograph *El desarme*, p. 195.
[61] Washington Lockhart, '"Bernabé, Bernabé" Leído con lentes bifocales', *Cuadernos de Marcha*, March 1989, Tercera Época, 41, pp. 71–74 (p. 74).

version: 'me consta que el general Antonio Díaz reporta como dos de las bajas más importantes del combate de la Boca del Tigre a Venado y Polidoro. Por lo que venimos de ver, no fue así' (81). Interestingly, although in his historical account Díaz states that most of the Charrúa leaders including Venado were killed during this attack, he never explicitly mentions Polidoro.[62] In the novel, by portraying Josefina as distrustful of Díaz's version, the author is in turn critical of official, readily accepted, narratives of History. Inviting the reader to question these official narratives and to accept alternatives which stem from previously ignored sources such as Sergeant Gabiano, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* proposes a more egalitarian and pluralistic version of history in an attempt to expand the memory of this event.

Gabiano's memory is used to corroborate and complement historical sources as he gives us more sentimental information than newspaper articles. For instance, he describes the immediate aftermath of the Salsipuedes massacre to Josefina and notes the desolation of the remaining Charrúas who had been captured: 'nadie festejó; nunca vi sobrar más asado que esa noche. Usted no se imagina lo que era el llanto de la chusma' (83). Exemplifying the difference between emotional response and historical fact, Gabiano's narrative in turn highlights the conflict between memory and History. Although memory has often been viewed as unreliable, it is true in what it reveals about emotional responses to the past, which are usually lacking in historical discourses.

Historically, the Mataojo attack of August 1831 was a part of Bernabé's expedition to kill the Charrúas who had fled Salsipuedes. In the novel, Josefina reminds the reader that the press did not give this incident any importance and that its details are murkier than those of Salsipuedes. But she judges it to be 'mucho más demoledor' because after Mataojo only one small tribe of Charrúas was left in the Banda Oriental. As she uses archival sources to elaborate on the event, she discusses José Catalá's letter which magnified the facts claiming that 120 Indians died at Mataojo instead of the 80 mentioned by Bernabé. Pointing to how indigenous tribes were written out of historical discourses, this letter further asserted that the Charrúas had been obliterated at Mataojo. Furthermore, whilst noting the falsity and nationalistic jubilance of Catalá's letter, Josefina confirms some of its details through Gabiano's account: '[Catalá] [a]grega un

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[62] Díaz, *Historia*, II, 86.

dato capital, soslayado por Bernabé en su parte, y confirmado por la versión de oídas que me repitió Gabiano: el ataque fue *por la madrugada*' (96). In other words, Gabiano's oral confirmation is essential for Josefina to partly believe Catalá's letter as the novel challenges the archive to favour the common soldier's voice. Thus, Gabiano, who in 1832 was only mentioned in passing in the Montevidean newspaper *El universal*, in this twentieth century novel becomes a valid source of information.[63] Indeed, Gustavo Verdesio aptly notes that Sergeant Gabiano's oral version is assigned 'un valor de verdad superior […] al resto de la evidencia histórica'.[64] Similarly, Basile affirms the novel 'privilegia la "conversación" como modo de acercarse a la historia'.[65] Both these ideas can be taken further to argue that although the author acknowledges his debt to historical works, they only serve as scaffolding for a work of fiction that continually undermines them. De Mattos thus uses the theme of privileging oral history to add complexities to the historical narrative of the Charrúa massacre. This results in a fictional account that is critical of top-down versions of history as it attempts to nuance and expand the memory of this historical event.

Conclusion

The above analysis of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* demonstrates that the text's prolific representation of the nineteenth century past reveals many layers of meaning that not only question how the Charrúa massacre is remembered but also speak to contemporary issues of impunity and violence in Uruguay. The novel's popularity and critical acclaim have accordingly led many to recognise its value for the study of post-dictatorship identity.[66] For instance, Iain Stewart claims that de Mattos's novel 'lends a credible sense of continuity to the national consciousness' which is 'a key element in the forging of a well-rooted identity'.[67] According to Stewart, remembering the shared experience of the

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[63] The article is reproduced in Acosta y Lara, 'Periodo Patrio II', p. 141.
[64] Gustavo Verdesio, 'Revisión de la historia oficial en dos novelas "históricas" de la post-dictadura uruguaya', *Kipus: Revista andina de letras*, 5 (1996), 41–49 <http://hdl.handle.net/10644/1914> [accessed 8 April 2019], p. 44.
[65] Basile, 'La novela histórica', p. 115. A similar point is made in Basile's *El desarme*, p. 200.
[66] Garibotto, for example, writes: 'la novela de Tomás de Mattos registra las tensiones de su momento de escritura, especialmente la negociación de aquel ideologema decimonónico que ha entrado en crisis de cuya reformulación depende la redefinición de una identidad nacional en la posdictadura', *Crisis y reemergencia*, p. 65.
[67] Iain A. D. Stewart, 'Forgetting Amnesia: Tomás de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* and Uruguayan Identity', *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 24 (2000), 383–96 <www.jstor.org/stable/27763617>, p. 392.

Charrúa massacre, one which is 'wholly free from foreign intervention', ultimately reinforces national identity.[68] For Cristina Míguez, on the other hand, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* 'representa la crisis y las transformaciones de una identidad completa, donde retorna "lo rechazado" por las comunidades imaginadas hegemónicas del siglo XIX, para formar una nueva identidad'.[69] Although it is debatable whether de Mattos reinforces Uruguayan identity or if he proposes a new version of it, as he engages with the politics of identity formation, Basile's view that in the novel 'no hay una voluntad de refundar desde otra raíz la Nación, […] sino un intento de explorar una refundación plural y heteróclita del Uruguay' is more persuasive.[70] Indeed, as shown above, by bringing details of the Charrúa massacre to the foreground of the national imaginary, the novel directs the reader to question previously imposed cultural myths. As the text highlights the multiplicity of historical accounts to privilege voices from the margins as opposed to archival sources, it proposes a multifaceted and egalitarian view of national identity as a reaction to the dictatorship's abuse of memory politics.

¡Bernabé, Bernabé! also provides a nuanced representation of Uruguay's foremost indigenous tribe in an attempt to reintroduce a more realistic as well as positive portrait of the Charrúas into national memory. In doing so, it demonstrates how literature can compensate for gaps in historical discourse and how it can also stimulate future historical research and political thought on the topic. Consequently, after de Mattos's novel was published, in the 1990s organisations for the rights of indigenous peoples such as La Asociación de Descendientes de la Nación Charrúa (ADENCH) were established. Subsequently in 2002, the remains of Charrúa Vaimaca Perú were repatriated from France and buried at the national cemetery in Montevideo.[71] More importantly for this thesis, however, is how de Mattos's attempt to undo the dictatorship's top-down identity and memory politics influences other novels of the same genre. Indeed, through its reappraisal of national heroes, by bringing forward stories of previously marginalised peoples, engaging with archival sources to point on its gaps and fallacies, and a focus on the

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[68] Ibid., p. 393.

[69] Cristina Míguez, 'Ni blanquito ni civilizado: Posmodernidad uruguaya en "¡Bernabé, Bernabé!" de Tomás de Mattos', *ESTUDIOS: Revista de Investigaciones Literarias y Culturales*, 9 (2001), 147–66 (p. 148).

[70] Teresa Basile, 'Incursiones "bárbaras" en el Bicentenario'', *América*, 42 (2012), 187–96 <http://journals.openedition.org/america/1149> [accessed 8 April 2019], p. 194.

[71] San Román, 'La garra charrúa', pp. 646–47.

tension between oral and written narratives *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* sets a precedent for subsequent novels to engage with and emulate.

A Note on the Definitive Edition of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*

Although the focus of this chapter has been the 1988 edition of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, for de Mattos the 2000 version was the definitive one. In the latter version, in a note preceding the prologue, de Mattos also acknowledged his debt to Acosta y Lara but phrased it differently this time. As he distanced himself from Acosta y Lara's historical research, he emphasised the fictional characteristics of his own text:

> El autor – aclarando que no se ajustó al ejemplar rigor histórico del profesor Eduardo Acosta y Lara – reconoce que sin haber leído *La guerra de los charrúas* y las tres ulteriores separatas de la *Revista de la Facultad de Humanidades*: "Salsipuedes 1831 (los lugares)" (1985), "Salsipuedes 1831 (los protagonistas)" (1988) y "La campaña de 1831 contra los charrúas. (Revisión y comentarios)" (1993), no se hubiera sentido en posesión de documentos, datos e interpretaciones suficientes como para arriesgarse a escribir esta novela y la presente versión definitiva.[72]

This new version further diverges from the earlier one primarily in size and content; it is around a hundred pages longer and includes more details about the Salsipuedes massacre adding that there were two more attacks taking place almost simultaneously at the nearby locations of Paso del Sauce and Cueva del Tigre. It elaborates on the politics of the *misioneros* uprisings at Bella Unión and relates it to Juan Antonio Lavalleja's imminent armed rebellion. Unlike the 1988 version, however, in this edition the blame for the massacre is more widely apportioned to include Argentine General Juan Antonio Lavalle, who lived in Uruguay at the time, as well as Brazilian forces who also participated in the extermination of the Charrúas. As Basile fittingly asserts, the involvement of Argentinian and Brazilian forces reflects 'el carácter sistemático y premeditado por parte del poder'.[73]

Similarly, the extended prologue questions the role of the River Plate intelligentsia and holds them indirectly responsible for the massacre. For instance, M.M.R. mentions intellectuals and educators such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Catalá, Bartolomé Mitre and Juan Carlos Gómez, informing the reader that

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[72] Tomás de Mattos, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* (Montevideo: Ediciones Santillana, 2000), p. 9.
[73] Basile, 'La novela histórica', p. 118 and *El desarme*, p. 203.

> [j]amás les ha temblado el pulso cuando han firmado el decreto exterminatorio, la carta, y el libelo incitatorios o el parte de Guerra que informa lacónicamente la cruenta e inhumana victoria alcanzada. Pero nunca tomaron el sable o la lanza, el fusil o la bayoneta. Jamás estuvieron en la primera línea del combate.[74]

As it extends the scope of who is responsible for the crimes committed by the military in the 1830s, it raises the question of whether the theme of military obedience and culpability, which was present in the 1988 version, is expanded upon by representing intellectuals as also responsible for these crimes.

Arguably, de Mattos changes the plot extensively to render his novel more historically accurate, in many ways confronting issues raised by critics such as Washington Lockhart who had accused him of being unethical by fictionalising certain details.[75] This results in Sergeant Gabiano's role being sidelined to accommodate more historical accuracy, suggesting a different focus in the revised novel since it includes more scenes where Josefina studies and extensively quotes actual letters written by Rivera, Sarmiento and Laguna, amongst others. In conclusion, de Mattos's re-writing of this popular novel, updated for a later present, also reflects the previous arguments made about cultural memory and history in the 1988 version. Even though the 1989 referendum was no longer part of the novel's immediate paratext, since the revision happened within a decade of the plebiscite, the author possibly felt the effect of its result, which upheld the Ley de Caducidad. As he took his time in this latter version to corroborate the historical deed in more detail, in order to arguably strengthen the original condemnation of the protagonists, he also provided a calmer and more thorough version of the historical context. Indeed, in the words of Garibotto, the novel wishes to emphasise 'el cariz histórico del texto'.[76] The previous 1988 version written in the more immediate aftermath of the dictatorship was not only characterised by an urgency to raise certain ethical questions for the reader but also to reclaim the nation's indigenous past, thereby instilling it into the cultural memory of nation. For this new version, the historicity of these events is then favoured over its concern for this memory since the previous edition had already completed the task of reintroducing the Charrúas into the national imaginary.

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[74] de Mattos, *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* (2000), p. 27.
[75] Garibotto has previously noted this in 'Contornos en negativo', p. 120 and *Crisis y reemergencia*, p. 85.
[76] Garibotto, 'Contornos en negativo' p. 123 and *Crisis y reemergencia*, p. 88.

Chapter 2

Reviving the National Hero: Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band*

Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* was published in 1994 and focuses on the national hero José Artigas. Based in contemporary Uruguay, the novel interweaves stories with historical strands, including the reawakening of Artigas from his ashes; the adventures of Uruguayan academics in the United States writing a book about Artigas; and an iconoclastic cultural action group, ironically named Leyenda Negra. The figure of Artigas is at the apex of identity politics in Uruguay, and in 1994 a novel about the national hero inevitably deals with its questioning and reinterpretation. Accordingly, this chapter first considers Artigas's history and the creation of his myth as the national hero. It argues that through its abuse of Artigas's figure, the Uruguayan dictatorship attempted to impose a fixed image of him, in line with what Jeffrey Olick, a sociologist and memory theorist, has termed 'the archetypical collective memory'.[1] The ensuing textual analysis focuses on how the novel calls for a reassessment of this myth by deconstructing Artigas's historiography and by allowing his spectral self to 'speak'. The novel's engagement with material culture such as monuments is then discussed to demonstrate how the text rejects a fixed image of Artigas to propose a more fluid version of him. The analysis also explores how Hamed follows de Mattos's lead in representing an egalitarian version of identity as it portrays concerns of previously marginalised groups such as women, the Charrúas, and particularly, Artigas's Afro-Uruguayan companion, Ansina. Subsequently, a discussion of the text's contemporary characters demonstrates how this historical novel is haunted by the ghost of the author's immediate past: the military regime which held power for almost twelve years in Uruguay.

[1] Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: Collective Memory in the Age of Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 89.

Historical Background

Considered the father of Uruguayan nationhood, the figure of José Gervasio Artigas (1764-1850) is one of the cornerstones of national identity. His birthday (19 June) and his most famous victory of the Battle of Las Piedras (18 May) are commemorated as public holidays in Uruguay today. Since Artigas's image and ideas were useful during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries both in times of conflict and peace, his myth as the epitome of a national hero was constructed through ideological state apparatuses such as education, monuments and commemorations as well as by historians, writers and other cultural producers.[2] Keeping this in mind, the present section outlines Artigas's role in Uruguayan history and his myth's evolution from the Black Legend to the nation's hero.

A progeny of one of the first creole families of Montevideo, Artigas was born in 1764. As a young man, he left for the countryside in the 1780s where living with gauchos and indigenous peoples helped him to develop his knowledge of the interior.[3] In 1797, he returned to Montevideo to join the Blandengues, a recently formed Spanish regiment tasked with controlling smugglers and contraband. After his quick ascent to captain in 1809, he was soon to leave the Blandengues to participate in the May Revolution across the river in Buenos Aires. In May 1810, the creole elite in Buenos Aires, the capital of the Spanish Viceroyalty of the River Plate, formed a Junta to reject the authority of its Viceroy, although it continued to swear allegiance to Ferdinand VII of Spain.[4] This rebellious action against the Spanish Viceroy marked the beginning of the independence movement in the River Plate.

For its part, Montevideo stood by the Viceroy and continued to be under Spanish rule. As a part of the Buenos Aires patriot army, Artigas returned to the Banda Oriental to liberate it from the Spanish and laid siege to Montevideo in 1811. However, because of the imminent threat of Portuguese forces who had started to annex parts of the Banda Oriental along the river Uruguay, Buenos Aires signed a pact with the Spanish at

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[2] It was Louis Althusser who first labelled these mediums as ideological state apparatuses. See *On Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), pp. 15–22.
[3] John Street, *Artigas and the Emancipation of Uruguay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 49–53.
[4] David Bushnell, 'The Independence of Spanish South America', in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. by Leslie Bethell, 11 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), III (*From Independence to c. 1870*, 1985), 95–156 (pp. 104–05). The Viceroyalty of the River Plate was set up in 1776 and extended to present-day Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia.

Montevideo.[5] As part of this armistice, Buenos Aires agreed to withdraw their patriot forces from the region, a decision that Artigas understandably did not support. During this time, Artigas's leadership was clearly established in the Banda Oriental's countryside and subsequently, protesting against Buenos Aires's pact with the Spanish at Montevideo, he led his followers on the Redota. Named after the gaucho variant of the word *derrota*, the Redota was a spontaneous event in which a majority of the Banda Oriental population vacated the region and crossed the river Uruguay to set up camp in Ayuí (in present-day Entre Ríos, Argentina).[6] Despite the arduous journey to Ayuí, the Orientals, as they were known then, stood by Artigas, a decision which pointed to an evolving regional identity separate from Buenos Aires. As the Orientals further proclaimed Artigas 'Jefe de los Orientales' in 1811,[7] they confirmed his role in the formation of a national consciousness during this nascent stage, a decision at the root of his becoming, in due course, the founder of Uruguayan nationhood.

When Artigas was in Ayuí, the centralist elite in Buenos Aires believed that as part of the patriot army, he owed his loyalty primarily to them, and this led to a strain in their relationship which would eventually become hostile. Although both factions continued to fight for the patriot cause against the Spanish, their underlying ideologies often clashed, as demonstrated in the Instrucciones del año XIII, which is today viewed as one of the founding documents of the Uruguayan nation.[8] Composed by the Orientals with Artigas as their leader during the Congreso de Abril in 1813, their delegates carried it to Buenos Aires for the Constituent General Assembly of the River Plate. The Instrucciones del año XIII consisted of three fundamental ideas: independence for each province, a republic in opposition to a monarchy and, most importantly, a confederation between the provinces of the River Plate followed by the formation a federal state.[9] Buenos Aires, however, had inherited Spanish centralist tendencies after being the capital

[5] Street, *Artigas*, p. 144.
[6] The *redota* was later known as the Exodus of the Oriental People or Éxodo del Pueblo Oriental. Street, *Artigas*, p. 147. See also Lincoln R. Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales: Una historia política del Uruguay*, 5 vols (Montevideo, Uruguay: Planeta, 2005-10), I (2005), 81.
[7] Street, *Artigas*, p. 148.
[8] See Héctor Miranda, *Las Instrucciones del año XIII* (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1910) and more recently, *Las Instrucciones del año XIII: 200 años después* coord. by Gerardo Caetano and Ana Ribeiro, 2nd edn (Montevideo: Planeta, 2014) on various aspects of the document's conception, its reception in 1813 and its afterlife in Uruguayan politics today.
[9] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 99.

of the Viceroyalty for thirty-five years and was thus opposed to these federalist notions. Subsequently, the Oriental delegates were excluded from the Constituent Assembly in Buenos Aires who claimed that 'their papers were not in order,' a reaction which led to a more permanent split between the two River Plate factions.[10]

During this time, Buenos Aires had rescinded the previous armistice with the Spanish and in October 1812, the former's forces under General Rondeau sieged Montevideo for the second time. After a series of diplomatic missions, in February 1813, Artigas's troops joined Rondeau's siege in order to defeat the remaining Spanish forces in the River Plate.[11] However, this semblance of unity between them existed before the Oriental diplomats were rejected at the Constituent Assembly in Buenos Aires. Protesting their rejection, in 1814 Artigas withdrew his forces from the siege. Nonetheless, Rondeau's army was able to defeat the Spanish forces in Montevideo. Subsequently, the hostility between Buenos Aires and Artigas's troops led to various battles in which the Banda Oriental forces overcame their opponents. As a result, the Buenos Aires army retreated from the region and in 1815, for the first time, the Banda Oriental was free from foreign forces. This first independence, dubbed by historians the *patria vieja*, when the area was led entirely by Artigas and was untainted by the party divisions that would arise in post-1828 Uruguay, would be seen as the keystone that would establish him as the nation's hero.[12]

Although under Artigas's leadership an alternative government separate from Buenos Aires was established, he never ruled Montevideo directly; he elected Miguel Barreiro, his cousin and former scribe as his representative in the capital and set up a village camp for himself called Purificación, today located between the Uruguayan cities of Paysandú and Salto. Additionally, he formed a Federal League with the provinces of Entre Rios, Corrientes, Misiones, Santa Fe and Córdoba which recognised his leadership nominating him 'El Protector de los Pueblos Libres'.[13] Thus, although for many Artigas's governance would be viewed as the region's first independence, he in fact preferred a

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[10] Street, *Artigas*, p. 188.
[11] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 89.
[12] On the *patria vieja*, see Street, *Artigas*, pp. 202–42.
[13] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 114.

system closer to that of the United States.[14] In other words, ironically Uruguay's national hero never sought an independent nation status for the Banda Oriental.

Artigas's governance showed great promise through laws such as the 'Reglamento provisorio de la Provincia Oriental para el fomento de la campaña y seguridad de sus hacendados', a scheme based on democratic and socialist notions, which sought to bring about economic stability to the region through a reallocation of land to its poor subjects.[15] However, the Reglamento did not impress the Banda Oriental elite because it was also 'un cuestionamiento del derecho de propiedad'.[16] This progressive legislation could not materialise and Artigas's governance was cut short when extensive Portuguese forces invaded the region in 1816. For the next few years, Artigas and his relatively insignificant army of approximately eight thousand men tried to counterattack.[17] Although the Triumvirate of Buenos Aires promised to aid Artigas's meagre forces, their help never arrived (possibly because of a clandestine alliance with the Portuguese), leaving the Banda Oriental to fend for itself.[18] Finally, conceding defeat in 1820, Artigas went into exile in Paraguay where he remained until his death in 1850.[19]

As we have seen, Artigas's life story is an interesting and unique case, considering that he was a leader who failed to achieve his goals. Despite his defeat, Artigas's image and ideals would be used and abused by various political regimes. Firstly, he was a victim of a negative propaganda campaign during the Portuguese attack and in the Banda Oriental's subsequent years as the Cisplatina Province (1817-25). This Black Legend, which claimed that Artigas was a tyrant, was led by politicians from Buenos Aires, beginning with the circulation of Pedro Feliciano Saénz de Cavia's *El Protector Nominal de los Pueblos Libres, D. José Artigas* (1818).[20] It was not only the centralists in Buenos Aires who were opposed to Artigas; the urban elite at Montevideo also condemned his governance because they were against his egalitarian Reglamento. On the other hand,

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[14] For an analysis of Artigas's federalist notions see Pablo Blanco Acevedo, *El federalismo de Artigas y la independencia nacional* (Montevideo: Impresora uruguaya, 1939).
[15] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 14.
[16] Ibid., p. 14.
[17] Street, *Artigas*, p. 296.
[18] Ibid., pp. 296–99.
[19] See Ana Ribeiro's *El Caudillo* y *el Dictador*, 2nd edn (Montevideo: Planeta, 2003) on Artigas in Paraguay and his relationship with its dictator Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia.
[20] (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de los Expósitos, 1818).

although Artigas had left the Banda Oriental, the Federal League continued to exist in regions such as Entre Ríos and Santa Fe. Propagating the Black Legend was then also a means to neutralise the threat of his federalist legacy, thereby fulfilling a political need felt by the contemporary Buenos Aires government and Montevideo's elite.

After his image was distorted by the Black Legend, it is interesting to consider how and why Artigas was gradually established as the founder of the Uruguayan nation in the years following its official independence in 1830. The crucial steps in this process began when the news of Artigas's death in 1850 reached Montevideo. In the following years, his remains were repatriated to the city in 1855, and in 1856 they were reburied with the inscription, 'fundador de la nacionalidad oriental' in an official ceremony under the presidency of Gabriel Antonio Perreira.[21] After the civil conflicts of the twelve-year Guerra Grande in Uruguay (1839-1851), repatriating Artigas's remains in 1855 was a legitimising process for the precarious political order of a newly formed nation. Indeed, anthropologist Katherine Verdery, who has written on the political uses of dead bodies, considers that a reburial 'binds people to their national territories in an orderly universe'.[22] Verdery further affirms that '[b]odies have the advantage of concreteness that nonetheless transcends time', a concreteness that was certainly lacking in the contemporary Uruguayan society.[23] This was a turning point in Artigas's historiography, as his ideas (and indeed his body) became politically useful to a new generation of leaders wishing to define a national identity for Uruguay.

Other mechanisms of memory such as the print media and education also contributed to Artigas's myth. In 1860, Isidoro de María, in a positive reappraisal of the leader, published a biography called *Vida del Brigadier General D. José Jervacio Artigas. Fundador de la nacionalidad oriental* and its popularity led the newspaper *La República* to recommend it to be used in schools countrywide.[24] Although de María was biased because of his personal relationship with the Artigas family, *La República*'s proposal to

[21] Arturo Ardao, *¿Desde cuándo el culto artiguista?* (Montevideo: Biblioteca de Marcha, 2001), p. 33; Juan Pivel Devoto, *De la leyenda negra al culto artiguista* (Montevideo: Biblioteca Artigas, 2004), pp. 20–22.
[22] Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 49.
[23] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 27.
[24] Pivel Devoto, *Leyenda negra*, p. 65; Isidoro de María, *Vida del brigadier general D. José Jervacio Artigas. Fundador de la nacionalidad oriental* (Gualeguaychú: Imprenta de De-María y Hermano, 1860).

diffuse Artigas's positive image into the education system points to the use of the leader as a means of ideological inculcation.[25] In the following decades, Artigas's Black Legend continued to be refuted through works of historians such as Francisco Bauzá, Carlos María Ramírez and Clemente L. Fregeiro. In 1884, as part of the process of nation-building noted above, there was also a proposal to build a monument of Artigas in Montevideo during the presidency of Máximo Santos.[26] However, due to lack of funds, this monument was not built until 1923. Nonetheless, Santos's government was successful in appropriating Artigas's figure through art as it commissioned Juan Manuel Blanes in 1884 to paint a portrait of the national hero.[27] Today known as *Artigas en la puerta de la Ciudadela*, this iconic piece is omnipresent in Uruguayan society, from schools to government buildings to embassies across the world. Artigas's myth, thus, was established at the end of the nineteenth century through this highly politicised and influential triangle of education, art and print media.

The twentieth century continued the positive reassessment of Artigas with the aim of further consolidating him as the father of the nation. Foundational works such as Eduardo Acevedo's *José Artigas: Jefe de los orientales y protector de los pueblos libres* (1909) and Zorilla de San Martín's *La epopeya de Artigas* (1910) were published.[28] Along with these texts, in 1911 there was a nationwide celebration of the centenary of Artigas's military success of the Battle of Las Piedras.[29] In preparation for the 1911 celebrations, there was a call for sculpture designs for Artigas's monument.[30] Later inaugurated in 1923, the monument was placed in Plaza Independencia, located in the centre on a square flanked by the entrance to historical Montevideo and the then presidential house, Palacio Estévez. Monuments in public spaces, especially in the middle of the capital city, not only

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[25] De María's sister was married to José María Artigas, José Artigas's only son with his wife Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán. Pivel Devoto, *Leyenda negra*, p. 20.

[26] Washington Reyes Abadie, *Artigas: Antes y después de la gesta* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1996), p. 104.

[27] Ernesto Beretta, Mirtha Cazet, Fernanda González, and Ariadna Islas, *Un simple ciudadano, José Artigas* (Montevideo: Museo Histórico Nacional, 2014), pp. 270–271.

[28] 3 vols (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1909) and 2 vols (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1910) respectively.

[29] See Carlos Demasi's 'La construcción de un "héroe máximo": José Artigas en las conmemoraciones uruguayas de 1911', *Revista Iberoamericana*, 71 (2005), 1029–45 < http://revista-iberoamericana.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/Iberoamericana/article/viewFile/5402/5556> [accessed 9 April 2019].

[30] In fact, Zorilla de San Martín's *La epopeya* was commissioned to inspire sculptors who competed to design the monument. Reyes Abadie, *Artigas*, p. 106.

suggest a certain definiteness but also play a unifying role in the national consciousness. Memory theorist James E. Young affirms that

> in the absence of shared beliefs or common interests, art in public spaces may force an otherwise fragmented populace to frame diverse values and ideals in common spaces. By creating common spaces for memory, monuments propagate the illusion of common memory.[31]

Indeed, common memory was a significant concern in Uruguay in the early 1900s. It was a relatively new prosperous nation which, on the one hand, was recovering from the previous century's civil wars whilst successfully encouraging mass migration from Europe on the other. To unite this growing nation, Artigas was given a central role in Uruguay's collective memory and his image as the national hero was literally set in stone, or, to be specific, in bronze.

It is therefore interesting to consider how his figure was once again appropriated for political purposes during the military dictatorship (1973-85). By associating itself with this heroic figure, the regime attempted to harness the goodwill associated with Artigas for itself. Once again, public spaces were being redefined. In 1974, a call was made for architects for the construction of a mausoleum in Plaza Independencia which would house 'los restos del Fundador de la Nacionalidad, General Artigas, en donde recibir[ía]n sepultura definitiva'.[32] After architects were selected, the plans for the mausoleum were approved in 1975, the same year as the Año de la Orientalidad celebrations. Finally, during the dictatorship's zenith, on the 19 June 1977, the 213th anniversary of Artigas's birth, his remains were transferred from the National Pantheon to the mausoleum under the solemn protection of Artigas's own Blandengues regiment.

The previous reburial of Artigas's remains in 1856 was a fundamental act in Uruguay's nation-building process and almost 120 years later moving them to the Plaza Independencia for public veneration was a politically problematic gesture. A reaffirmation of the national collective narrative, the mausoleum functioned to remind people of the unity of the nation in times of turmoil, especially when a significant section of the population was in exile or imprisoned. Indeed, Young asserts that memorials

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[31] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 6.
[32] Reyes Abadie, *Artigas*, p. 111.

'provide the sites where groups of people gather to create a common past for themselves, places where they tell the constitutive narratives, their 'shared' stories of the past'.[33] Similarly, the military regime sought to legitimise its rule by associating itself with the sacredness of the national hero's corpse. This is in line with Verdery's assertion that 'political regimes benefit […] from the aura of sanctity the corpse is presumed to bear, and from the implicit suggestion that a reburial (re)sacralises the political order represented by those who carry it out'.[34] The building of the mausoleum can thus be viewed as the apotheosis of Artigas's cult as the military attempted to garner support by claiming his myth for their own purposes, and in doing so, they not only re-appropriated his image but also left their imprint on the nation's memory of him. For Amir Hamed's generation, then, his image was tarnished through its association with the military, raising the question of to what extent could *Artigas Blues Band* be viewed as a reaction to the dictatorship's appropriation of Artigas. Accordingly, we shall see in the following sections how Artigas, who was the cornerstone of the foundation of national identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, becomes in the post-dictatorship era an inevitable motif in its reassessment.

Amir Hamed and Artigas Blues Band

A Uruguayan of Syrian heritage, Amir Hamed (1962-2017) was born in Montevideo and studied literature as an undergraduate at the Universidad de la República, later pursuing a doctorate at Northwestern University in the United States. Besides being a novelist, he also published academic works such as the critical anthology *Orientales: Uruguay a través de su poesía - siglo XX* (1996) and *Retroescritura* (1998), a series of cultural essays that brings together nineteenth century poets such as Charles Baudelaire and Hollywood blockbusters like *Back to the Future* (1985) and *Aliens* (1986) to outline his poststructuralist view on literature and history.[35]

Although labelled a historical novel, *Artigas Blues Band*, published in 1994, is not a conventional example of the genre since it takes place entirely in the post-dictatorship

[33] Young, *Texture*, p. 3.
[34] Verdery, *Political Lives*, p. 32.
[35] (Montevideo: Editorial Graffiti, 1996) and (Montevideo: Fin de siglo, 1988) respectively.

present and does not depict a time frame prior to the author's life.[36] Nonetheless, it cannot be overlooked in a study of the post-dictatorship historical novel because, given its focus on the many avatars of Artigas, Uruguayan history comes through as its main theme. A substantial tome of approximately three hundred pages comprising of short non-chronological chapters often narrated by different characters, this polyphonic text is not a straightforward read, in part because the narrator's identity is never specified at the beginning of each chapter. Moreover, some sections are interior monologues whilst others include voices of various characters blending into one another, leaving the reader baffled as to when one conversation ends and when the other begins. Additionally, there are no speech indicators and many sentences continue for a page or two without any full stops or paragraphs. Engaging in many intertextual dialogues, each chapter usually begins with a quote by a historian, poet, novelist or musician referring to Artigas and sometimes cites Artigas himself. The relationship between the quote and the content of the chapter, however, is often ambiguous, leaving it up to the reader to ascertain its exact purpose and meaning.

The storyline of the novel has two strands. The first one narrates the tale of three friends: Ariel, Gustavo, and Pedro, nicknamed Curlie, Larry and Moe respectively after the slapstick comedy act, the Three Stooges. Ariel and Gustavo are academics in the United States and the former has decided to write a novel about Artigas.[37] Autobiographical in nature, this storyline reflects Hamed's own journey as an academic who completed his doctoral studies in the United States. Similarly, the fictional Gustavo is named after his friend Gustavo Verdesio, the author of the epilogue to the second edition and currently an academic at the University of Michigan.[38] The third character, Pedro, on the other hand, is a school teacher living in Montevideo who forms a cultural action group, Leyenda Negra, that defaces busts of Artigas and street signs dedicated to him, thus reenacting in a parodic form the Black Legend instituted by nineteenth-century detractors of the hero. Leyenda Negra's chief exploit is stealing Artigas's remains from

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[36] For Menton, historical novels are those 'whose action takes place completely (in some cases predominantly) in the *past* – arbitrarily defined here as a past not directly experienced by the author.' *Latin America's New Historical Novel*, pp. 15–16.

[37] The name of Hamed's protagonist Ariel echoes a famous personage of Uruguayan literature, namely from José Enrique Rodó's essay *Ariel* (see its 5th edn (Montevideo: Claudio García, 1944)).

[38] Gustavo Verdesio, 'ABB: Ten Years After', in *Artigas Blues Band* by Amir Hamed, 2nd edn (Montevideo: H. Editores, 2004), pp. 307–10.

his mausoleum to disperse them into oblivion. Subsequently, Juan José Artola, a civilian who pursues the group on behalf of the police, captures Pedro. At the same time, Ana, Susana, and Leda, the trio's wives, write a play about Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán, Artigas's cousin and wife.

In its second strand, the novel features a spectral Artigas rising from his ashes in the mausoleum at Plaza Independencia to join his Afro-Uruguayan servant Ansina who has remained alive throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The quixotic pair then travel through present-day Uruguay as they discuss Artigas's role in the independence movement and his exile in Paraguay. Thus, along with the contemporary narrative of Ariel, Gustavo, and Pedro, the novel is interspersed with a supernatural but historically based thread that fictionalises Artigas and Ansina's points of view.

A postmodern text, *Artigas Blues Band* deliberately shuns a linear and definitive structure, leading many to label it a neobaroque novel.[39] The adjective has been applied to a trend in twentieth century Latin American prose and poetry characterised by a dispersion and fragmentation of narrative which creates tension between different, often contradictory, styles present in the same text. Severo Sarduy, who coined the term, asserts that neobaroque writing reflects 'structurally the disharmony, the rupture of homogeneity, of the logos as an absolute, the lack that constitutes our epistemic foundation'.[40] Indeed, *Artigas Blues Band* uses this neobaroque trend in literature as a means to reflect upon Uruguay's crisis of identity which was outlined in the Introduction. Accordingly, Basile defines Hamed's writing as 'una máquina de guerra contra el Estado y sus variantes, el Espíritu, la ciudad, las letras sedentarias, las gramáticas lineales, la historia cristalizada, los géneros literarios, las tiranías de todo tipo; y un modo de abordar la historia'.[41]

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[39] Roberto Echavarren, 'Los diamantes de Artigas', *H Enciclopedia*, [dates not known] <http://www.henciclopedia.org.uy/autores/Echavarren/ArtigasBB.htm> [accessed 2 April 2019] The website *H Enclicopedia* was run by Amir Hamed himself and published critical works by academics and writers of his generation.

[40] Severo Sarduy, 'The Baroque and Neobaroque', in *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, ed. by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 270–91 (p. 289).

[41] Teresa Basile, 'La retroescritura de Artigas: A propósito *Artigas Blues Band* de Amir Hamed' [sic], in *Los héroes fundadores: Perspectivas desde el siglo XXI*, ed. by Carlos Demasi and Eduardo Piazza (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 2006), pp. 149–59 (p. 150). In her monograph *El desarme*, Basile paraphrases similar ideas: 'máquina de guerra contra el grafo sedentario, contra las apropiaciones de la historia, contra las memorias de la pedagogía estatal e incluso contra las busquedas genealógicas de las fallas en el pasado nacional'. p. 274.

Similarly, for Verdesio, Hamed's style also reflects contemporary concerns in Uruguay: 'ese caos mundial, esa pérdida de referentes tiene su correlato en la debacle económica y cultural […] de un país que alguna vez fue conocido como "la Suiza de la América"'.[42] Thus, rebelling against traditional historical and literary forms, Hamed's neobaroque style can be viewed as a suitable mode of expression to raise concerns related to history and identity in post-dictatorship Uruguay.

Reclaiming voices: Allowing the past to speak

This section first focuses on the novel's depiction of Artigas's ghost and elaborates on the connotations of making the national hero 'speak' in post-dictatorship literature. Secondly, it demonstrates how the text unravels different aspects involved in the creation of Artigas's myth: his mausoleum, his reburials, commemorations, literature and history, all combined in calling for a reassessment of the memory and identity linked with his figure.

A literal manifestation of the past in the present, Artigas's rising from his ashes in the mausoleum at Plaza Independencia represents the literary trope of ghosts haunting post-dictatorship nations. Drawing upon Jacques Derrida's 'hauntology' to study post-Franco fiction and cinema, Jo Labanyi refers to the literary portrayal of the *desaparecidos* as ghosts in Argentina and Uruguay as 'victims of history who return to demand reparation'.[43] Although Hamed's novel does not directly tackle the spectral presence of the *desaparecidos*, in representing the national hero Artigas as a ghost who has returned to haunt the present, it alludes to contemporary unsolved issues in Uruguayan society whilst also highlighting a concern for the previous abuse of historical figures. Consequently, on rising from his ashes at Ansina's beckoning, Artigas wishes to move away from the mausoleum as he informs his loyal companion: 'vamos Ansina, que nadie va a dejarme descascarado ante la miseria'.[44] As Artigas repeats the word 'vamos', he appeals to Ansina: 'vamos, que me trajeron a la ciudad que siempre, desde que soy quien

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[42] Verdesio, 'Revisión', p. 45.

[43] Jo Labanyi, 'History and Hauntology; Or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period', in *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, ed. by Joan Ramon Resina (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 65–82 (p. 66).

[44] Amir Hamed, *Artigas Blues Band*, 2nd edn (Montevideo: H. Editores, 2004), p. 10. Further references to this edition of Hamed's novel are given after quotations in the text.

soy, preferí vigilar desde lejos, no podemos quedarnos' (10). Historically, when Artigas governed the Banda Oriental he preferred to live in the village of Purificación and appointed Miguel Barreiro as his representative in Montevideo. In *Artigas Blues Band*, as the spectral Artigas pleads to move away from the city, the novel is critical of nineteenth century politicians who brought his remains to Montevideo in 1855 as well as the dictatorship's reburial of him in the mausoleum.

Similarly, Hamed's fictional Ansina informs Artigas about how his death and his remains were used by the State: 'todos querrán decir que usté está muerto, muy muerto, para eso en la dictadura le hicieron este mausoleo' (11). Then as the novel notes how Artigas's death meant that he no longer had a voice, allowing various governments to use and abuse his narrative, it echoes Verdery's view on the role of heroes' corpses:

> Dead bodies have another great advantage as symbols: they don't talk much on their own (though they did once). Words can be put into their mouths – often quite ambiguous words – or their own actual words can be ambiguated by quoting them out of context. […] Yet because they have a single name and a single body, they present the illusion of having only one significance.[45]

Although ironically Hamed also puts words in Artigas's mouth, in the novel the national hero's rebirth from his ashes suggests a rebellion against his silencing, and even his intended murder, by the State as he responds to Ansina: 'no van a lograr matarme, si yo quise morirme en mi chacra y no pude' (11). By presenting an Artigas who talks back, *Artigas Blues Band* defies the singular meaning that many states attempted to impose upon his dead body. In other words, despite Hamed's 'use' of Artigas in this novel, on reawakening him from his ashes, he proposes a multifaceted way of viewing the leader.

As it raises issues of the uses of his remains, the novel also 'uses' a spectral Artigas to denounce national celebrations and commemorations. For instance, Artigas first remains silent when Ansina informs him that in Uruguay 'está por ser 19 de junio, la fecha en que los compatriotas festejan su nacimiento' (106). Later, the leader philosophically questions this commemoration: 'cómo pueden festejar esos que dices, cómo es que no lo has evitado, si bien deberías saber que nunca hemos tenido cumpleaños, si yo jamás he nacido, porque siempre he estado en otra parte' (107). National festivities,

[45] Verdery, *Political Lives*, p. 29.

often at the core of memory politics, were rampant during the dictatorship as the military sought to legitimise its power, notably through the Año de la Orientalidad celebrations in 1975. The fictional Artigas's rejection of these festivities in the novel functions as a criticism, on Hamed's part, of the military regime's abuse of them as well as a general reappraisal of memory politics in Uruguay.

It is not only his mausoleum and festivities that Hamed's fictional Artigas confronts, but also his legacy in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. Cognisant of his literary avatars, Artigas first discusses the Cuban José Martí's (1853-1895) representation of him: '[e]se poeta y soldado José Martí sostuvo que fui el padre del panamericanismo, casi todos me han considerado demócrata, pero muy pocos se han acercado a la verdad' (32). Similarly, Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), who affirmed that Artigas 'no era hombre de exiliar[se]', as well as Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), for whom Artigas 'intuyó el entretanto de América', are also mentioned as part of the novel's intertextual dialogue with previous portrayals of the national hero (32). In order to separate the real Artigas from these images, the novel establishes that these writers lacked the knowledge of a secret that the leader carried with him. This raises the question of whether, for Hamed, Artigas's many representations distorted reality and made him unreachable. Despite the many interpretations of Artigas in *Artigas Blues Band*, what is arguably more important is that Hamed's representation diverges from the hero's previous literary avatars like Zorilla de San Martín's patriotic verses in *La epopeya de Artigas* (1910). Hamed's fictional Artigas, no longer the epitome of a national hero, then stems from an urgent need to question and deviate from the established ideal of the founder of Uruguayan nationhood.

Artigas Blues Band further deconstructs the national hero's past and unravels his myth as a politically astute Ansina recounts his historiography to the recently arisen Artigas:

cuando usté se murió vivió un rato la Leyenda Negra de sus enemigos, de los mismos que pusieron precio a su cabeza, pero al otro siglo lo transformaron por unanimidad en un santo, casi un santurrón, mi general, por la sencilla razón de que usté fue un gaucho sin pánico a los libros, distinto al resto, porque usté fue demócrata y vino antes de los partidos políticos […] y entonces

los socialdemócratas laicos de principios de siglo aprovecharon para recordarlo a usté, que no era figurón partidario y que mucho no hablaba de Dios, no importa lo que usté creyera (13-14).

Hamed, like historians such as Arturo Ardao and Juan Pivel Devoto, also attempts to make the reader aware of the artificiality of historical discourses.[46] Moreover, transposing Artigas into the post-dictatorship era and informing him of how his legacy has been abused by the state, a device reflective of the playful nature of the text, suggests a distrust of the ideological processes of writing history. Accordingly, Verdesio claims that in *Artigas Blues Band*, history is not viewed as 'algo dado, sino como algo construido [...] y, por lo tanto, como algo a deconstruir'.[47] Taking this idea further, one can argue that by 'showing' Artigas's historiography to the reader, given his status as the national hero, the novel highlights the inorganic nature of cultural memory and identity, thus denying them their assumed innateness; in other words, it demonstrates that they are created and recreated to speak to the political needs of different times.

This deconstructive impulse is also present in the discourse of Hamed's contemporary characters, Ariel and Pedro, who controversially compare Artigas to Lope de Aguirre, a conquistador in the sixteenth century, who was infamous for being 'a legendary tyrant, murderer and traitor'.[48] Pedro asserts that although we view the two historical figures as completely different, de Aguirre was in fact 'un individuo tan libertario como el prócer' (168). Moreover, whilst Artigas 'tal como nos ha llegado, era un buenazo enfrentado a un mundo que se abría ciego y promisorio,' Lope de Aguirre, in contrast with his historical image, was also 'el dorado redentor de unos conquistadores empantanados en el embrollo que ellos mismos inventaron, esta Ámerica de nosotros' (168). Emphasising that historians assign importance and values to individuals on a politically expedient basis regardless of their actual role in the past, the novel seems to dismiss Artigas's heroism. In a diatribe against Artigas's official historiography, Ariel similarly asserts: '[p]odemos decir que fue un héroe afortunado. Todos los inmigrantes que hicieron el Uruguay a inicios del siglo exhausto lo buscaron a él, como era

[46] See Ardao, *Desde cuándo* and Pivel Devoto, *Leyenda negra*.
[47] Verdesio also recognises the playful nature of the novel and its deconstructive attempts: 'la risa, el humor, son herramientas que la estructura de la novela pone en funcionamiento a fin de llevar a cabo esa empresa deconstructora (o deconstruccionista) de la historia oficial'. 'Revisión', p. 46.
[48] David H. Bost, 'Historians of the Colonial Period: 1620–1700', in *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, ed. by Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), I (*Discovery to Modernism*), 143–90 (p. 158).

predemocrático, prepartidario, prehistórico, como tótem legitimador de una sociedad derraciné' (191). Given that Ariel also views Artigas's myth as constructed and memory generally as manufactured, it raises the question of whether Hamed's novel is in fact anti-Artigas and whether it rejects not only constructed versions of him but also Artigas himself. Arguably, although the novel presents a rather bleak vision of the leader and does not sanctify him, it does not reject him entirely but instead attempts to bring about a change in how Artigas is viewed. The following analysis of his representation through the lens of material culture studies provides more answers.

Material Cultures and Iconoclasm

The present section discusses the novel's iconoclastic group Leyenda Negra in relation to memory studies and materiality. Bringing forward the theoretical term of 'memory landscape,' it argues that, whilst not dismissing the national hero entirely, the actions of of the group Leyenda Negra reject Artigas's imprint on the urban spaces of Montevideo and proposes that we view him as mobile and fluid.

The novel's cultural action group, Leyenda Negra, is playfully named after Artigas's early historiography which viewed him negatively as a tyrant and dictator. Ariel, the university professor in the United States learns about this group from 'CNN desde Montevideo' and informs the reader that it is '[u]n grupo –presumiblemente- [que] practica humor de pésimo calibre, malbaratando iconos patrios, principalmente los del general José Gervasio Artigas, prócer de la independencia de este país' (129). The group's most infamous act was that it 'había volado la carpa, con la carpa, el mausoleo' (131).[49] As their activities included 'ultrajando los iconos del prócer y cambiando el nombre de las calles y avenidas' (133), this group attacked not just monuments but everything that had Artigas's mark on Montevideo's urban spaces. In other words, they are preoccupied with what Rudy Koshar labels 'memory landscape' (*Erinnerungslandschaft* in German), a term which 'connotes the mnemonic qualities not only of architectural landmarks and monuments in the narrower sense but also of street names, public squares, historic sites'.[50] Leyenda Negra's subversive actions then are not merely an attack on his monuments and

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[49] The 'carpa' refers to a fictional awning that covered Artigas's mausoleum (which was presumably being repaired), p. 29.
[50] Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German memory, 1870-1990* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000), p. 9.

busts but more importantly on Artigas's memory landscape. Created by various governments throughout the twentieth century and culminating in the construction of his mausoleum by the dictatorship, Artigas's memory landscape was given a central role in the national building process symbolically but also literally through his monument at Plaza Independencia (as well as through a myriad of monuments, busts and portraits in the country and abroad). The fictional Leyenda Negra's actions then metaphorically attempt to assault, and thereby question, the collective memory imposed upon Uruguayans through material culture.

The Leyenda Negra's actions also challenge Artigas's association with the military. Pedro confesses that he first wished to write 'un himno servicial y poco galvanizado' dedicated to Artigas (142). But he realised that 'era mejor […] ayudarlo [a Artigas] a andar por ahí, menos aherrojado en bronce y en cemento' (142). Moreover, since Artigas 'siempre fue enemigo de dignidades y nunca le quedó cómoda la pompa militar', Pedro does not wish for the General to tolerate 'más traiciones' in the way of national festivities (142). Stemming from a need to be true to what Pedro and his group believe to be the real essence of Artigas, Leyenda Negra attacks the State's version of the leader and the national festivities which 'betray' him. Similarly, Pedro considers Artigas a great leader who '[h]izo la guerra con todo lo que tenía y con lo mucho que le faltaba' (142). But Artigas's monuments cannot capture the verity of his experience, as Pedro asserts: '[n]osotros le hicimos monumentos para embutirlo del más común de los sentidos: la inmovilidad. Quién podía temer ahora al general de granito que mira hacia abajo, hacia la tierra donde debieran estar sus protegidos' (142). Pedro then worships a different version of the leader, one that is deliberately not associated with the dictatorship. Thus, although the Leyenda Negra is anti-social and violent, it is clear that Pedro does not lack respect for the national hero. His iconoclastic acts then revolt against the immobility of Artigas's memory landscape as Leyenda Negra, and by extension Hamed, metaphorically reject a top-down version of cultural memory.

Pedro's attack on Artigas's memory landscape is a reaction to the large-scale celebration of national festivities and the construction of monuments and mausoleums during the dictatorship. When Pedro discusses what he teaches his students about Artigas, he elaborates on the leader's historiography and asserts:

> [d]espués […] vino la milicia antisufragista a liquidar salvajemente la barbarie marxista que se extinguía sola, y ahora, luego de que a su turno se han ido, dejando monumentos patrios y galones abandonados, vivimos en una negra paz telurista y nadie sabe a dónde vamos a llegar con ella (158).

Indicating uncertainty about the future, this statement suggests that patriotic monuments are the main traces of the recent military regime in national memory. Consequently, Hamed's depiction of an iconoclastic group points to a desire to destroy these traces. In most societies that have experienced a dictatorial regime, there is an urge to pull down monuments and alter architecture that reminds people of the immediate past. For instance, in post-soviet regions busts and monuments of Lenin have been removed. After the Second World War, architecture commissioned by Hitler and Mussolini was altered to change its significance.[51] In the case of Uruguay, in 1994 when this novel was published, there was no inclination to do so because Artigas had continued to be the nation's hero. In the absence of official action to revise the dictatorship's imprint on Artigas's memory landscape, by fabricating the Leyenda Negra group, Hamed does not suggest the elimination of Artigas but symbolically attempts to destroy the regime's traces.

Whilst rejecting the dictatorship's version of a fixed Artigas, the novel hints towards one that is mutable and open to interpretation. Pedro's friend Gustavo's destruction of a wax statue of Artigas in Madrid presents a telling example. In a letter, as Pedro orders Gustavo to destroy the statue, he asks him to 'dejar rastros suficientes para que se nos adjudique el atentado' (274). Pedro believes that the historical Artigas would appreciate the gesture as he continues in an encouraging tone: '[e]l prócer, Curlie, yo, todos estamos muy orgullosos de vos' (274). The subsequent attack on the museum is action-packed and humorous. In the first place, Gustavo thought that he would destroy the statue in the following way: 'acarrearlo hasta una salida, y hacerlo arder en la calle o en el monumento a Colón, que había visto en la plaza. Lo podía estaquear en la plaza, encenderlo y salir corriendo' (282). But it did not transpire as he hoped; as Gustavo quickly smokes a cigarette within the confines of the museum, he inadvertently ends up burning other wax figures around him. This leads to various smoke alarms going off in the museum and security guards entering the area to save the wax figures and find the

[51] See *Understanding Heritage and Memory*, ed. by Tim Benton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) on iconoclasm and architecture in post-Second World War Germany and Italy.

culprit. Luckily for Gustavo, one security guard faints due to the ensuing smoke from the fire, allowing him to steal the guard's clothes to make his escape. Gustavo then, dressed up as a security guard, picks up what is left of the burning Artigas and '[a] la gente que entraba corriendo en sentido contrario en total confusión, le grit[a]: voy a salvar a éste' (283).

Although Gustavo shouts that he wants to save Artigas's statue as a ruse to run away from the scene of the crime, there seems to be an ironic truth here. The author implies through Gustavo that his generation wishes to save Artigas from the constraints of material culture and thereby also of his association with particular myths, especially those imposed by the dictatorship. When Gustavo burns the rest of Artigas's wax figure, it melts into an unrecognisable form suggesting that Hamed represents an Artigas who can be altered and reformed. Wax is a substance that can be easily manipulated and changed by heat, but the wax museum solidifies it in order to make statues. Quite like Leyenda Negra's defacing of Artigas' monuments and street names, the burning of his wax figure is then a rebellion against material culture that has created a fixed image of him. Gustavo's assertion that he is going to 'save' the wax figure suggests that, whilst not completely rejecting him as the national hero, the novel presents an Artigas who is not set in stone. The idea of a mouldable Artigas then implies a movement towards collective memory, or rather memories that are not imposed upon the citizens but open to interpretation and reinterpretation.

Artigas Blues Band's dismissal of the immobility of Artigas's monuments has been previously noted by Basile as she claims that the novel wishes to 'desarmar la lógica del monumento, irrumpir para disgregar la letra muerta de la conmemoración, borrar el epitafio del mausoleo'.[52] Similarly, in another article, she states that the novel inverts the figure of Artigas, which had been petrified by the dictatorship, in a gesture that illustrates a 'principio de dispersión, en paradigma de posibles metamorfosis'.[53] Basile's close analysis of Hamed's aesthetics and its resulting multifaceted representation of Artigas viewed primarily as a reaction to the concreteness of official history is consistent with my analysis above. Nonetheless, the Argentine critic overlooks how a memory studies

[52] Basile, 'La novela histórica', p. 247 and *El desarme*, p. 278.
[53] Basile, 'La retroescritura de Artigas', p. 149.

approach can help us reach similar but more nuanced conclusions.[54] As the novel engages with Artigas's memory landscape and rejects its materiality, it points to two ideas that will also be reflected in the other historical novels studied in this thesis. Firstly, it demonstrates that although many historical novels fictionalise the past based on historical archives, they can also bring into question material culture created in the time frame between the archive and the literary work. Secondly, as Hamed reimagines Artigas's myth and indicates a move towards a multifaceted and fluid version of him, he observes society-wide reappraisal of the national hero, an idea which is further developed in Chapter 5 on Marcia Collazo Ibáñez's *Amores Cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas*.

Tracing the Dictatorship

Although the research question of this thesis considers the representation of the nineteenth century, an analysis of how *Artigas Blues Band* draws parallels with the recently ended dictatorship can prove insightful in understanding the novel's preoccupations with contemporary identity and memory. The conflict between Pedro, the leader of the Leyenda Negra, and his apparent nemesis Juan José Artola presents an apt example.

Juan José Artola is a simple bourgeois man who aids the police but does not have any strong political affiliations himself. Symbolising the everyday Uruguayan, on discovering that Artigas's bust has gone missing from the bank, he becomes disconcerted. Although the clerk reassures him that it will be replaced soon, Artola wishes that 'mientras tanto, pusieran algo en su lugar: una especie de mampara, una oscura prótesis contra el vacío' (156). Artola's discomfort at an empty bust and his insistence on replacing it with a prosthetic, reminiscent of the phantom limb syndrome, indicates his concern for what would be an 'empty' memory if Artigas had been removed from his role as the national hero in post-dictatorship Uruguay. Similarly, Artola muses that although he had never really liked Artigas, the absence of the bust reminded him of Leyenda Negra's attack on the mausoleum, explaining: '[e]s que siempre había estado ahí, el mausoleo (como el busto) y no podía desaparecer de cuajo sin que hubiera algo para sustituirlo' (156). Since he views the mausoleum as an organic object which was not

[54] Basile's work is not based on memory studies but she has briefly mentioned Pierre Nora in two articles about *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*: 'Incursiones "bárbaras" en el Bicentenario' and 'Memoria y olvido en la narrativa histórica de las posdictadura uruguaya', *Orbis Tertius*, 2.5 (1997) <https://www.orbistertius.unlp.edu.ar/article/view/OTv02n05a07/pdf_255> [accessed 9 April 2019].

created by anyone, for Artola the attack on Artigas's mausoleum is radical because it leaves behind a vacuum in the city's memory landscape.

Artola's insecurity with empty memory is contrasted with Pedro's attitude as the latter discusses the attack on Artigas's mausoleum and orders his group to steal Artigas's urn and destroy it in a public space so that 'se olviden de los restos del prócer de una vez y para siempre' (204). In contrast to Artola, who is afraid of a memory vacuum, Pedro's intention is the complete annihilation of the leader's remains, suggesting an end in the abuse of Artigas's image for political purposes, as well as of top-down memory. As we will discuss below, on highlighting the conflict between these two ideas in a conversation between Pedro and Artola, the novel also points to the traces of the dictatorship that plague present-day Uruguayan society.

Before Pedro was caught by the police, he walked around the city with his cultural action group to examine some graffiti on Artigas, demonstrating that Leyenda Negra's subversive actions had inspired others, some possibly unthinking and others politically motivated:

Artigas es un hijo de puta, esto no puede ser obra nuestra, o éste, en varios colores, **Artigas y la madre naturaleza**, este ecologista, no puede ser de los nuestros, **Artigas y tu madre**, tampoco, debe ser del mismo humorista (204).

When they come across another graffiti that reads 'Artigas es Gardel', they decide to amend it, and in this process the police catch them red-handed.[55] Artola, without knowing that Pedro is the leader of the Leyenda Negra, begins to question him on behalf of the police. As Hamed describes the interrogation from Artola's point of view, the latter affirms that he got along surprisingly well with Pedro who, in his view, had passed his first test. When asked if he knew the meaning of his name, the captive replied: '[t]u nombre es piedra, y sobre ella construirás mi iglesia' (215), a biblical phrase in which Jesus instructs Peter.[56] Artola thus realises that Pedro is in fact a university educated school teacher and not a hooligan. Ironically, it is Pedro, named after the Apostle responsible for constructing the institution of the church, who rebels against the

[55] Carlos Gardel (1890-1935), an iconic tango singer of French origins, had Uruguayan citizenship (he may have been born Tacuarembó in Uruguay) though he lived in Argentina for most of his life. See Nelson Bayardo, *Carlos Gardel: A la luz de la historia* (Montevideo: Biografías Aguilar, 2000).
[56] Matthew 16.18.

immobility of Artigas's monuments, reflecting not only the author's playful register but also his concern with memory.

In the following pages, as the interrogation starts to resemble a conversation between equals, Pedro informs Artola:

> [u]sted, señor, que no deja escribir en las paredes, aunque tal vez no lo sepa, participa del diuturno ejercicio de la represión. Salimos de una dictadura para que unos subnormales le den pretexto a los dictadores de todas las horas a ejercer su omnipotencia (217).

Pedro's allusion to the dictatorship's repression does not have a direct effect on Artola, who instead questions him about his friendship with Gustavo. When Pedro replies in a cryptic fashion, Artola goes on to explain:

> [a] mí, como a usted, me molesta profundamente lo que se está haciendo con Artigas. La diferencia reside en que, mientras usted se limita a escribir en la[s] paredes, yo estoy aquí tratando de hacer patria y atrapar a los culpables. […] ¿Qué esperan, que nos crucemos de brazos mientras afrentan a la población con inconductas y blasfemias? (217)

Artola's belief that he is engaged in 'hacer patria' whilst Pedro's behaviour is blasphemy is reminiscent of the dictatorship's discourse which prohibited any other associations of Artigas. Again, although Hamed does not engage with the dictatorship explicitly, its traces pervade the novel.

Artola's abstract and philosophical reminiscence about his daughter, María Pía, further attests to the dictatorship's presence in the novel. As the interrogation ends, Artola asks Pedro if he has any children and the future he wishes for them. When Pedro answers that his wife is pregnant, Artola reveals that he too has two children. Artola has lied, however, because he omitted his third child, María Pía: 'le había parecido que [Pedro] Castor se conmovía, o era porque él mismo se había consternado al haber mentido, al olvidar una vez más a María Pía' (218).[57] Artola then becomes very emotional and asks his secretary to take Pedro away as he continues to 'speak' to his daughter's ghost: 'nadie te dirá, niña muerta, tu padre ha sufrido grandemente por ti, nunca, María Pía, pensarás que tu padre ha llorado porque te has muerto' (218). Artola's subsequent interior

[57] María Pía, who has been mentioned before in the novel, was 'la hija rebelde, como una oveja negra o tal vez como la niña pródiga, se había ido, renegando de la educación familiar, a pesar de las premisas tenaces' (p. 155).

monologue is rather confusing for the reader who is unable to ascertain whether María Pía is actually dead or if she has fled from her family.

In the following chapters, as María Pía's ghost continues to haunt Artola, he is unable to sleep or speak to anyone; staying in his office through the night, he obsesses over the fact that Pedro knows his secret: the disappearance of his daughter. As he converses with María Pía's spectral presence, whom he also names Adela, the novel further indicates its concern for ghostly figures:

> [t]endría que volverte a matar, hija. Tendría que indicarle a Fonseca, rastreen por toda la ciudad, o por donde sea, a una muchacha de tantos años, que se llama Adela, que tiene mi apellido, porque con seguridad no te lo has podido quitar, y sin duda disfrutarías (230).

In a frantic stupor, Artola believes that María Pía is capable of being part of Leyenda Negra just because her father pursues them. If she is indeed a member, then Artola would ask his secretary to kill her again: '[b]astaría, niña vampiro, que no termina de morir, que yo le dijera, casi al pasar, búsquenla, rodeen su domicilio, elimínenlos a todos. Fonseca no pediría mayores explicaciones' (231). Since Artola does not view these brutal acts as extreme, the novel alludes to the violence carried out by the dictatorship as we suspect his involvement in it. Additionally, his attitude towards his daughter has parallels with the dictatorship: a paternalistic leadership attempting to control or eliminate the unruly black sheep of the family. In this way, the novel engages with images of missing people, ghosts and disappearances that are present in cultural works of many post-dictatorship nations.

Like in Section 3, Labanyi's literary analysis of ghostly presences is helpful in nuancing Hamed's representation of María Pía as the critic asserts that these revenants 'refuse to have their presence erased but insist on returning to demand that their name be honoured'.[58] Moreover, the image of the vampire is a recurring one in post-dictatorship fiction as Labanyi attests that 'the monster stands as the embodiment, which returns to haunt the present, of a collective living death'.[59] Artola's vision of María Pía as a ghost and vampire is likewise suggestive of the desaparecidos in Uruguay whose absence also 'haunts' the present. But since *Artigas Blues Band* does not follow the trauma pattern of

[58] Labanyi, 'History and Hauntology,' p. 66.
[59] Ibid., p. 76.

many post-dictatorship novels, Alexandra Falek's term 'mnemonic interventions' seems more appropriate in the case of Hamed's María Pía. Drawing upon Labanyi's work, Falek studies Uruguayan cultural texts and proposes the term mnemonic interventions as a way of calling upon the regime within a text whose presence 'illustrates the possibility for engaging the dictatorship without taking on the trauma model'.[60] These interventions invite the reader 'to consider remains of the dictatorship still present in contemporary society'.[61] Although Falek does not study Hamed's 1994 novel, *Artigas Blues Band's* representation of María Pía echoes the definition of mnemonic interventions and becomes a way of engaging with the dictatorship's traces in the present without making the disappeared daughter a central figure in the narrative. More importantly, it also highlights the novel's concern with memory, both private and public, in engaging not only with history but also with the recent hitherto undocumented past. Thus, although the novel does not explicitly comment on the Uruguayan dictatorship, it shows that the phrase 'post-dictatorship' defines the period as haunted by a spectral dictatorial past.[62]

A Novel Approach: Ariel and Artigas

In an interior monologue at the beginning of *Artigas Blues Band*, Ariel awakens from a dream about Artigas rising from his ashes and laments the loss of his academic work due to a computer virus. Discussing his future projects, Ariel considers writing about the national hero: 'algún día habría que garrapatear sobre Artigas, alguien lo hará, o alguien lo ha hecho, o si no, mejor sería escribirse algo liviano como una novela porno' (18). After comparing works on Artigas with pornographic texts, pointing to how Hamed's narrative could be controversially viewed as anti-Artigas, Ariel eventually decides to write a novel about him. A few pages later, he presents a *reparto*, an outline of characters which includes Artigas, Uruguayans (whom he calls Ur-uguayos), Ansina, Miguel Barreiro and 'Curlie, Larry & Moe,' the nicknames of Ariel, Gustavo and Pedro (22-23). The *reparto*, exemplifying the novel's self-referentiality, also includes Amir Hamed who plays the role of an '[e]scritor francés nacido en Narbonne en algún resquicio del siglo

[60] Alexandra Falek, 'Forms of Memory in Recent Fictional Narratives from Uruguay: Summoning the Dictatorship in "Mnemonic Interventions"', *MESTER*, 36 (2007), 86–107 <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7mn148rq> [accessed 23 March 2016], p. 91.
[61] Falek, 'Forms of Memory,' p. 90.
[62] According to Labanyi, '[t]he phrase "post-Franco era," after all, defines it as a period haunted by a spectral Francoist past.' 'History and Hauntology,' p. 68.

XX' (23). On playfully portraying Hamed as a protagonist in Ariel's novel, *Artigas Blues Band* reminds the reader that the text has been constructed through a creative process undertaken by an author, suggesting that like the creation and recreation of any myth (in this case Artigas's myth), all texts are tainted by the prejudices of their authors. As *Artigas Blues Band* draws attention to the process of writing, it reflects a trend of metafiction in Uruguayan historical novels in the post-dictatorship era; for instance, both *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* by de Mattos and, as we shall see in Chapter 4, Delgado Aparaín's *No robarás las botas de los muertos* feature protagonists writing about historical events.

In the aftermath of the dictatorship and of its appropriation of Artigas, Ariel highlights the difficulty in writing a novel about the national hero. Like Pedro, he also notes the fixed image of Artigas as a national hero as well as his Black Legend, lamenting that the leader cannot be fictionalised in a novel:

> este Artigas es inamovible. Es que no parecía un hombre, cosas de un siglo antes. Era más bien un ideal. Si hasta los indios lo seguían. […] Está el otro, el de los argentinos, el bandido furioso y bárbaro, el transgresor, el contrabandista: mercachifle de su propia cólera y luminaria del desorden (143).

For Ariel, the Black Legend and the idealised Artigas are immutable because they have previously been used for political ends. He is anxious about his novel because if he uses these already established images, his Artigas will continue to be politically charged. This raises the question of whether Ariel searches for a new Artigas, like the author Hamed inevitably attempts to do, or whether he rejects Artigas altogether. Arguably, it is the former, as Ariel confronts the national hero's myth when he looks for inspiration for his novel whilst also alluding to *Artigas Blues Band*'s already established image of Artigas as a ghost: '[d]ónde está tu falla, José Gervasio, padre pepito de la patria. […] Eras demasiado noble, momia de mi novela, […] Artie, necesito que me des otro perfil. Algo más darkie' (143).

Similarly, Hamed's Ariel confesses to the constraints of the narrative genre in writing about Artigas: 'no se escribe una novela en nombre de nadie. Se escribe un himno, una hagiografía o una epopeya. Y estos no son tiempos para epopeyas' (168). Referring to many previous governments' use of Artigas to propagate an idealised version of him, Ariel then attempts to de-politicise the national hero by choosing to write a novel about

him. In other words, Ariel's novel reflects the concerns of the cultural action group Leyenda Negra: it is a rebellion against the static cultural memory of Artigas comprised not only of material culture but also of idolatry literature. *Artigas Blues Band* reaffirms this argument when Ariel is resentful that '[su] novela va a estar demodé' after the attack on the mausoleum (186). Viewed as a metanarrative comment, Ariel's concerns echo Hamed's experience and apprehensions in writing about the national hero, providing an insight into the creative process and suggesting that we perceive these cultural texts as constructed. Thus, diverging from previous linear and often idealised representations of the leader, *Artigas Blues Band* not only functions as a comment on the historical novel genre but it also becomes a means to critique official history and cultural memory.

The Marginalised

Hamed's representation of the role of the marginalised in history and their relationship to Artigas begins with the hero's faithful Afro-Uruguayan servant Ansina, who accompanied him to Paraguay until the former's death in 1850. Ansina's role, characterised by servility and loyalty, has been acknowledged in Uruguay in foundational historical works such as de María's *Vida del Brigadier General José Jervacio Artigas*.[63] Ansina was first believed to be a soldier in Artigas's army called Manuel Antonio Ledesma.[64] As a tribute to his loyalty, Ledesma's remains were repatriated to the National Pantheon in Montevideo and in 1943 a monument to Ansina was built at the Plaza de la Democracia, near the Tres Cruces shopping centre and bus terminal today. In 1951, however, Daniel Hammerly Dupuy and Víctor Hammerly Peverini published two volumes called *Artigas en la poesía de América* containing verses by Joaquín Lenzina, a former slave Artigas had freed, whom they proposed as the real Ansina.[65]

When Hamed was writing, Ansina's real identity was still a contentious issue and presumably he had to choose between two images of Artigas's companion: the lyrical poet or the monumentalised military soldier.[66] In the aftermath of the dictatorship, it is

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[63] De María, *Vida*, p. 37. The image of Ansina in Uruguayan culture is studied in detail in Chapter 3.
[64] Ledesma is mentioned in passing in *Archivo Artigas* in volumes XXII, XXIV, XXIX, XXXIV.
[65] Daniel Hammerly Dupuy, and Victor Hammerly Peverini, *Artigas en la poesía de América*, 2 vols (Buenos Aires: Editorial Noel, 1951), I. Pages 23–34 make a case for Ansina's identity as Lenzina.
[66] In a newspaper article from March 2018, it was confirmed that Ansina was in fact Lenzina, and not Ledesma, leading the council of Montevideo to decide to change the name of his statue at Tres Cruces. Andrés López Reilly, 'Reparación histórica: cambiarán nombre a monumento de Ansina', *El País*, 20

unlikely that he would adhere to a militarised version of Ansina. Furthermore, in keeping with the novel's fashion of rebelling against Artigas's memory landscape, Hamed chooses to fictionalise the lyrical Ansina as he quotes verses from Dupuy and Peverini's compilation (148). In the same vein, Alejandro Gortázar, an expert on Afro-Uruguayan literature, notes that Lenzina's poetry in the novel 'no solamente impugna el relato oficial sino que […] plantea un Ansina distinto al soldado criollo del monumento'.[67]

The focus on the relationship between Artigas and Ansina is apparent from the beginning in *Artigas Blues Band* as it is Ansina who awakens Artigas from his ashes in the mausoleum.[68] For Gortázar, the subsequent fictional wanderings of Artigas and Ansina which include the latter explaining the status-quo to the national hero 'inviert[en] la relación tradicional de servidumbre con Artigas'.[69] Gortázar's claim is not entirely convincing, because although Hamed overturns the idea of loyalty associated with Ansina, the novel arguably represents a dialogue between the two as equals. Moreover, as Hamed depicts a fictional Artigas who confides in Ansina above everyone else, it re-consolidates the Afro-Uruguayan's importance for the leader, and thereby also his role in the national imaginary.

At the same time, Hamed's portrayal of Ansina attributes more agency to the Afro-Uruguayan. Acutely informed of Artigas's feelings and sentiments, Ansina tells Miguel Barreiro about the leader's exile in Paraguay:

> [c]uando depués del treinta supo que no le quedaban ni los indios de Andresito ni los charrúas, y había un país chico y dividido, con la misma inflexibilidad dijo aquí nos quedamos, Ansina, y ahí se quedó él y su sombra (161).

As Hamed portrays the former slave as one who understands the leader better than anyone else, the novel questions official versions of history to suggest further possible interpretations of the past. This is in line with Gortázar's claim elsewhere that

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March 2018, section Sociedad <https://www.elpais.com.uy/informacion/sociedad/reparacion-historica-cambiaran-nombre-monumento-ansina.html> [accessed 1 April 2019].

[67] Alejandro Gortázar, 'Versiones de Ansina en la ficción uruguaya contemporánea (1993-2001)', *Cuadernos LIRICO*, 10 (2014) <http://lirico.revues.org/1706> [accessed 8 April 2019], p. 5.

[68] Ibid., p. 8.

[69] Ibid., p. 5.

> luego de la "euforia" posdictatorial los uruguayos se han encontrado con *historias menores* que [...] ya no se ven representadas en esa Historia Nacional. En muchas oportunidades estas historias se cruzan, se enfrentan, o corren paralelas, y no siempre rechazan el relato nacional, reescribiéndolo y releyéndolo con énfasis en diferentes voces menores.[70]

As *Artigas Blues Band* echoes Gortázar's words, Ansina's previously marginalised voice becomes part of the nation's memory narrative. Moreover, like Josefina in de Mattos's novel, on recounting Artigas's past, Ansina takes on a historian's role and adds nuances to official history, in an attempt to expand the nation's memory of this period. For instance, he refers to the betrayals Artigas faced as he battled against the Portuguese from 1816. Part of the Federal League, Estanislao López and Francisco Ramírez, the governors of Sante Fe and Entre Ríos respectively, initially helped Artigas's forces against the Portuguese. But in 1820, they signed a peace treaty with the governor of Buenos Aires, Manuel de Sarratea, declaring that they would not participate in any conflict in the Banda Oriental. According to the historian Street, Ramírez and López were 'playing the Protector false' because of 'their personal ambition' and because 'they had no wish to become involved in a war with Portugal over the Provincia Oriental'.[71] In the novel, Hamed's politically astute Ansina compares Ramírez and López's betrayals to the loyalty of the Indians against the Portuguese: 'más indios, hasta el último momento, se ofrecían a matarse por él, porque era mejor antes que después en los tiempos tan mezclados que le tocó vivir al continente' (161). Although historians acknowledge the Charrúas' significant role in Artigas's forces, the novel's comparison between the betrayals of white River Plate leaders and the undeterred allegiance of the indigenous peoples is indeed unique. *Artigas Blues Band*'s reappraisal of marginalised figures in Uruguayan history then has a dual function: firstly, as it portrays Ansina retelling history, it brings forward the Afro-Uruguayan voice and secondly, in highlighting the Charrúas' role in the independence movements of the Banda Oriental, it challenges official versions of history, albeit in a playful manner.

Following the example of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, *Artigas Blues Band* also denounces the massacre of the Charrúas by referring to Artigas's relationship with the

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[70] Alejandro Gortázar, 'Del aullido a la escritura: voces negras en el imaginario nacional' in *Derechos de memoria: Actas, actos, voces, héroes y fechas: Nación e Independencia en América Latina*, ed. Hugo Achugar (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 2003), pp. 189–263 (p. 191).
[71] Street, *Artigas*, p. 324.

indigenous group. As Ansina further recounts Uruguayan history, he explains why Artigas went into exile in Paraguay rather than Europe or the United States: 'es que en realidad nunca los quiso, porque sabía que ellos [los europeos y los estadounidenses] no querían a sus indios y sus negros, ni tan siquiera a sus gauchos' (162). Moreover, Artigas, who used to baptize indigenous peoples of the Banda Oriental, did not return there once it became an independent nation, because, as Ansina relates, 'a quién iba a bautizar' (162). Alluding to the massacre of the Charrúas in 1832, this rhetorical question implies that they were Artigas's main priority, a concept entirely of Hamed's fabrication. On the other hand, the historian Street's estimated guess of Artigas's reasons for not returning is more historically convincing:

> it seems likely that he realised that he had lost touch with affairs in his own country and had no wish to be there as a useless show-piece, or worse, to have his name and prestige used to support some party.[72]

Nonetheless, Hamed's proposal that the Charrúas were Artigas's primary concern renders a renewed image of him as an egalitarian leader of different marginalised groups. As the novel hints at the creation of a new myth of Artigas for new times, it foreshadows further reinterpretations of the national hero which will be consolidated in the twenty-first century in works such as Collazo Ibáñez's *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas*.

As the novel does not focus on Artigas's political ideology, nor on his polemical relationship with Buenos Aires's leaders such as Manuel de Sarratea or Juan Martín de Pueyrredón but rather highlights his interaction with Ansina and the Charrúas, it raises the question of whether Hamed, deliberately fictionalising an aspect of Artigas that has received less attention, proposes to view Artigas as a human being fraught with contradictions and faults. An analysis of *Artigas Blues Band*'s representation of his relationship with women provides a suitable answer.

Although Artigas had many partners who bore him children, his wife and cousin Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán, whom he married in December 1805 in Montevideo, is frequently mentioned in historical works and textbooks. When Artigas left the city for the May Revolution in 1810, he also left Rafaela (also called Rosalía) and their son José

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[72] Ibid., p. 372.

María behind in the care of her mother Francisca Artigas de Villagrán. A woman of delicate disposition, Rafaela suffered many miscarriages and mental health issues, and passed away in 1824. In *Artigas Blues Band*, Ansina briefly discusses Rafaela's miscarriages and laments Artigas's abandonment of her in Montevideo. Unlike historians before him, Ansina shows concern for Rafaela and blames Artigas for her suffering: 'Rafaela no escribía para decirle, mi general, me estoy volviendo loca y muero por su carajo espectral' (58).[73] As it continues to portray Artigas as a ghost, quite crudely in this case, the novel points to his lapses of judgement and views historical women in a sympathetic light.

The next chapter in the novel, from the perspective of Artigas's scribe Miguel Barreiro, is preceded by an authentic letter from Artigas to his mother-in-law Francisca. Often quoted by historians to highlight his dedication to his wife, Artigas wrote in this letter: '[s]iento en el alma el estado de mi querida Rafaela. Venda Ud. cuanto tenga para asistirla, que es lo primero, y atender a mi querido José María que para eso he trabajado' (99).[74] As a contrast to this historical quote, Hamed's Miguel Barreiro confides to his wife that 'a nadie se le escapaba cómo sufría la prima [Rafaela] Rosalía' (100). This historical conversation then flows into a contemporary dialogue between Ariel and his wife Susana who discuss Artigas's irrational behaviour when he refused to take his next partner, the Paraguayan Melchora Cuenca, to Paraguay when he went there in exile. Similarly, Leda, who joins the conversation, imagines 'la amargura de la paraguaya que se quedaba por alguna parte con su hijo sin poder acompañar a su hombre, sin cruzar con él el Paraná' (100). By referring to Artigas's abandonment of both Rafaela and Melchora, once more the novel deviates from the sanctified version of Artigas that many textbooks and literary texts have propagated. Contrasting these comments with Artigas's historical letter expressing deep concern for Rafaela counters official history to present a multifaceted image of Artigas and implies that it is up to the reader to interpret these facts and opinions. Moreover, like *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, this novel indicates a concern for women's roles whilst symbolically pointing to their exclusion from the archive.

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[73] This is clever on Hamed's part, because in the archive there are no letters written by Rafaela nor are there any addressed by Artigas to her. Artigas's letters are always addressed to his mother-in-law, Francisca Artigas de Villagrán.

[74] *Archivo Artigas,* III (1952), 312.

Artigas's relationship with three groups of marginalised people from Uruguayan history, women, Afro-Uruguayans and indigenous tribes, is thus a major theme in *Artigas Blues Band*. This topic is not unique to Hamed's work but is reflected in many traditional historical novels such as Milton Schinca's *Hombre a la orilla del mundo* (1988) and, more recently, Jorge Chagas's *La Soledad del General. La novela de Artigas* (2001) and *La Sombra: La novela de Ansina* (2013). This section, however, has shown that even a non-traditional work of historical fiction such as *Artigas Blues Band* demonstrates that cultural revisions of history in post-dictatorship Uruguay, showing the past squarely from the perspective of the present, becomes a means to recover concerns and voices of previously silenced groups.

Conclusion

The above analysis of Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* first postulated that Artigas's ghost is a means to unravel his myth as the national hero. Secondly, in a criticism of memory-making institutions, the novel views not only memory but also any written accounts as manufactured, encouraging the reader to do the same. As it rejects Artigas's memory landscape, it proposes a more fluid version of the leader, suggesting a society-wide reappraisal of him. Although Hamed's representation of Artigas can be viewed as the immediate reaction to the dictatorship's appropriation of him, it is also critical of the use and abuse of his image by various governments throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This view is consistent with that of Basile, for whom Hamed's Artigas is 'un héroe mutante, inapropiable no solo por un sistema dictatorial sino por cualquier instancia de poder que imponga una práctica de clausura'.[75] Yet, as the novel's Artigas gives the impression that figures of authority can no longer use his image, Basile overlooks the fact that Hamed also appropriates the national figure for his own, differently political, purposes. For Garibotto, on the other hand, by presenting all of Artigas's avatars, the novel '[h]ace estallar, por saturación, el significado del signo Artigas y lo convierte en puro significante'.[76] According to this critic, the novel succeeds in 'quebrar con coordenadas colectivas de identificación – aunque paradójicamente gran parte de la interpelación del texto depende de que el lector se reconozca en el imaginario nacional

[75] Basile, 'La retroescritura de Artigas', p. 150.
[76] Garibotto, 'Contornos en negativo', p. 247.

uruguayo'.[77] Although Garibotto acknowledges that the novel is dependent on the reader engaging with Uruguayan culture, it seems drastic to argue that it destroys or devaluates the national imaginary. By parodying the collective memory of Artigas, Hamed problematizes his status as the father of the nation, which to some extent reinforces the national imaginary. Moreover, the novel does not empty Artigas of all his significations, leaving behind a vacant signifier; but by highlighting Artigas's different images throughout history, it wishes to deconstruct his appropriation not only by the dictatorship but also by previous Uruguayan governments.

In its representation of the contemporary characters of Pedro and Artola, the novel both directly and indirectly engages with the unsolved issues of Uruguayan society in the wake of the dictatorship. Furthermore, as it highlights Artigas's relationships with Afro-Uruguayans, indigenous people and women, it demonstrates how fictional revisions of history can become a means to recover stories and voices of previously silenced groups, an aspect common to all the historical novels studied in this thesis.

In my interview with Amir Hamed, similar ideas were echoed by the author whilst others were rejected. Hamed, for instance, agrees that his novel focuses on subjects hitherto ignored in history but maintains that his intentions were not political. For him, bringing forward marginalised figures is 'una obligación del escritor en general' and it is the 'condición del arte' to notice 'aquello que es dejado de lado por la historiografía'.[78] Arguably, despite the author's intentions, his representation of women, Ansina and the Charrúas have political and cultural repercussions. Likewise, in contrast to the research questions of this thesis, he finds identity politics 'repugnante' and labels the discussion of post-dictatorship identity in the 1980s and 1990s 'una torpeza'.[79] In spite of the author's reservations about the existence of national identity, any novel based on the national hero, especially *Artigas Blues Band*, is inevitably associated with collective memory and its resulting identity politics. Moreover, as Hamed instead views personal identity as a continuous process, 'dejar de ser para devenir otra cosa', in his novel he proposes a similar representation of Artigas that signals movement as opposed to the immobility of his monumentalised version. Thus, although the author is averse to the term

[77] Ibid., p. 250.
[78] My interview with Amir Hamed. 10 November 2016, Montevideo.
[79] Ibid.

identity, a thorough analysis of *Artigas Blues Band* reveals it to be one of its major concerns.

Figure 2 Daniel Tomasini's painting *José Artigas* displayed at the Museo Histórico Nacional in Montevideo for the exhibition 'Un simple ciudadano, José Artigas'.

Hamed's novel therefore is a key text in the development of the post-dictatorship historical novel as it shifts from the genre's previous task of propagating a unified version of national identity and instead views it as fluid, multifaceted, and open to interpretation. After its publication in 1994, the way Artigas was represented and interpreted in a variety of media continued to reflect this fluidity; these included rock songs about his drunkenness ('El día que Artigas se emborrachó' by Cuarteto de Nos, 1996) and comics portraying him as a zombie resurrecting from his ashes at the mausoleum (Silva Bros, 2016, 2018) as well as films about his monument being destroyed by giant robots (*Ataque de Pánico* by Fede Alvárez, 2009). It is not only cultural producers who recognised and celebrated Artigas's various avatars but also state-mandated exhibitions such as the Museo Histórico Nacional's ongoing installation 'Un simple ciudadano, José Artigas' which focuses on how his image has developed through the ages, including recent abstract versions of him such as Daniel Tomasini's *Jose Artigas* (see Figure 2). As we shall see in Chapter 5 below, on a novel that has been one of the greatest bestsellers in recent times, Artigas continues to be a major source of interest and fascination to Uruguayans.

Chapter 3

Reclaiming Afro-Uruguayan Memory in Susana Cabrera's *Las esclavas del Rincón*

Susana Cabrera's novel *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001) recounts the historical murder of Celedonia Wich by her African slaves María, Encarnación and Luciano in 1821 in Montevideo. Focusing on the African experience of early Montevideo, this novel stands out from the other works studied here because it fictionalises a crime not recorded in history books. *Las esclavas del Rincón* does not concern itself with one of the pillars of national identity but with people who were marginalised from it. By unearthing this incident from the archive, the novel takes on the task of reclaiming both Afro-Uruguayan history and women's experiences of early nineteenth century Montevideo. Published at a time when issues of racial discrimination were being raised in Uruguayan society, Cabrera's work is also informed by the post-dictatorship period's reassessment of identity with a focus on race and ethnicity through both indigenous and African groups.

This chapter first discusses the role of Afro-Uruguayans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as their marginalised positions in Uruguayan society. Then, from a historical perspective, it considers the implications of Celedonia Wich's murder and its omission from history books. Moving on to Susana Cabrera's novel, the textual analysis demonstrates how the perspective of three female slaves engages with trends of oral history and material culture whilst problematising the ethical complexities of their actions. Subsequently, the analysis examines who is denounced and who acquitted, in the accepted narrative of Uruguayan identity and race. Finally, it examines how Cabrera's engagement with other literary texts not only highlights the themes of vengeance, rebellion and freedom, but also questions myth-making and cultural memory in contemporary Uruguay. Drawing upon Alison Landsberg's notion of prosthetic memory as an experience 'through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger

history',[1] the above ideas are then brought together to consider how the novel speaks to memory and identity.

Historical Background

With the aim of discussing racial politics in Uruguay and the marginalised place of Afro-Uruguayans in the national imaginary, this section first focuses on the history of slavery to demonstrate how the state used its relatively early abolition laws to portray itself as more progressive than its neighbours. Then on examining the role of Artigas's companion Ansina, it shows how his representation continues to associate values of servility and loyalty with Afro-Uruguayans. Next, it discusses Afro-Uruguayan literature and the popular African-origin dance candombe to postulate that although the latter is a significant aspect of national culture, its position in the carnival compartmentalises black Uruguayans to the role of its performers. This broad survey of the Afro-Uruguayan past argues that they are not completely absent in Uruguayan culture, yet they are marginalised from mainstream society, with the implication that issues of racism are overlooked. Finally, this historical overview examines why Celedonia Wich's murder, the incident fictionalised in Cabrera's novel, does not feature in any significant narratives of Uruguayan history.

The history of slavery in the River Plate began with the Portuguese who first brought African slaves to the region in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Later, from the 1750s, slaves were systematically introduced into the Spanish Viceroyalty of the River Plate to further colonise the region and provide labour for its Spanish inhabitants. In the following years, despite Buenos Aires being its capital, Montevideo slowly became the most important port for slave trade in the Viceroyalty. In 1787, at the behest of the Montevidean municipality, the Philippines Company built the Caserío de los Negros to quarantine the newly arrived slaves and protect the city's habitants from contracting diseases.[2] In 1791, although many slaves were still brought to Buenos Aires illegally, Montevideo was declared 'the only authorized entry point for slaves' in the River Plate.[3] Subsequently, in 1805, a third of Montevideo's population was of African

[1] Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, p. 2.
[2] Hermano Damasceno (known as H.D.), *Ensayo de historia patria*, 10th edn, 2 vols (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1955), I, 218.
[3] Alex Borucki, *From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Río de la Plata* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015), p. 8.

descent, and 86 percent of them were slaves.[4] First contributing to the city's development as labourers and domestic workers, many Africans also formed a significant part of various River Plate armies during the Wars of Independence (1810-1830).[5] In 1812, the revolutionary leaders banned slave trade in the River Plate which meant that no new slaves could be brought to and sold in the region. A year later, they passed also the Free Womb Law, stating that anyone born in the Banda Oriental would be free.[6] Although these laws were progressive, they did not free those who were already enslaved. In other words, the 1812-13 laws did not abolish slavery entirely but paved the way for a gradual dying out of the institution. From 1816 onwards, however, when the pro-slavery Portuguese annexed the Banda Oriental, they soon repealed these laws. Eventually, when the Banda Oriental leaders declared independence in 1825, as a reflection of their anti-slavery ideals, the slave trade was banned again and the Free Womb law was reinstated. In 1835, to commemorate its tenth anniversary, the noteworthy poet Francisco Acuña de Figueroa even wrote a poem celebrating the Free Womb Law.[7]

Almost a decade later, slavery was completely abolished as enslaved people were freed throughout Uruguay during the Guerra Grande; the Colorado government at Montevideo first abolished it in 1842 and in 1846 the Blancos at the Cerrito and the countryside did the same. By freeing Afro-Uruguayans and giving them more rights, Uruguay became one of the first countries in Latin America to ban the institution entirely, much earlier than Brazil for instance, which made it illegal forty-six years later in 1888. However, abolishing slavery in Uruguay was not entirely altruistic because the newly freed slaves could then be conscripted into both Colorado and Blanco armies.[8] Although black freedmen had previously participated in the military willingly, as the abolition forced even male domestic workers to serve in the army, it divided up many families, since black women had to continue working for their previous masters under the guise of a fixed-contract apprenticeship.[9] Thus, although slavery was formally abolished, for

[4] George Reid Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), p. 23.
[5] Borucki, *From Shipmates*, pp. 117–25.
[6] Ibid., p. 116.
[7] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 25.
[8] Presumably as slaves they would also be forced to join the fighting, but this would have been the decision of their master or mistress.
[9] Borucki, *From Shipmates*, p. 136.

many Afro-Uruguayans the reality was the continuation of their servitude under another name.

Uruguay's relatively early abolition of the slave trade and slavery would later be used for identity-forming purposes because the country could view itself as more progressive than its neighbour Brazil. For instance, in H.D.'s history textbook, whilst discussing treaties signed with Brazil after the Guerra Grande, he writes: '[a]dviértase que la esclavitud, abolida en el Uruguay desde la declaratoria de 1825, se practicó todavía en el Brasil hasta 1888'.[10] Similarly, *Democracia*, a reader published for schools from the 1920s until the 1960s, focuses on Uruguay's egalitarian ideals and, in Andrews' words, asserts that '[o]ne of the indicators of that democratic spirit […] was the country's relatively early abolition of slavery in 1842'.[11] Thus, although abolishing slavery was not entirely positive for many Afro-Uruguayans because of conscription and the division of families, the state would use it to promote the nation as a forerunner in human rights.

Interestingly, in the same textbook by H.D., slave resistance during the early 1800s was viewed as a hindrance to peace. Discussing an unsuccessful slave rebellion in 1803, it describes how the rebels were executed:

> El plan de los sublevados era asesinar a sus amos y luego huir a la campaña para formar una población separada. Ya habían empezado los asesinatos, cuando fue descubierto el plan. Arrestados los malhechores en Minas por una columna de blandengues, levantose una horca en la plaza, con lo cual pronto volvió a reinar el orden.[12]

Thus, echoing its representation of the killing of another racial minority, the Charrúas (see Chapter 1), this textbook also views slave rebellions as a deterrent to domestic peace whilst not mentioning the slaves' names, nor giving an indication of the circumstances that led to their actions. Thus, even in the 1930s and 40s, as this school textbook suggests, like in many other Latin American countries, cruelty against slaves during the colonial period was side-lined to highlight their violent actions and propose an unflattering image of the Afro-Uruguayan.

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[10] H.D., *Ensayo*, II, 115. Here, by 'esclavitud' H.D. mistakenly refers to the abolition of the slave trade and not slavery.
[11] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 4.
[12] H.D., *Ensayo,* I*,* 230.

As part of their early twentieth century nation-building schemes, using school textbooks and commemorations, the Uruguayan state portrayed itself as a white nation with only a few people of colour in Montevideo and in the border region with Brazil. Significantly, *El libro del centenario del Uruguay, 1825-1925*, commemorating the Cruzada Libertadora and the declaration of independence, emphasised the country's demographic constitution as almost entirely white European:

Puebla el Uruguay la raza blanca, en totalidad de origen europeo. […] La pequeña proporción de raza etiópica introducida al país por los conquistadores españoles, procedente del continente africano, a fin de establecer la esclavitud en estas tierras, disminuye visiblemente hasta el punto de constituir un porcentaje insignificante en la totalidad de la población.[13]

Whilst the book denied the existence of a significant black population, it also asserted that the constitution treated everyone equally, hinting that racism did not exist in the country, a myth that persisted throughout the twentieth century:

En el territorio de la República nadie nacerá esclavo, quedando prohibido para siempre su tráfico e introducción en el país. Los hombres son iguales ante la Ley sea preceptiva, penal o tuitiva, no reconociéndose otra distinción entre ellos sinó la de los talentos o las virtudes.[14]

Since Uruguay had no institutional racism in the form of state mandated segregation, as was the case in the United States, it was indeed more progressive than its American counterparts. This constitutional equality then fed into the assumption that racism did not exist in the country, fostering the identity myth that Uruguay was more democratic than other nations. Yet, despite the above book's claims, Afro-Uruguayan newspapers targeted at black audiences in the first half of the twentieth century reported multiple instances of racism.[15] Moreover, recent works of oral history such as Teresa Porzecanski and Beatriz Santos's *Historias de exclusión: Afrodescendientes en el Uruguay* (2006) further challenge the official consensus that racism did not exist in Uruguay.[16] Thus, there was a

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[13] *El libro del centenario del Uruguay, 1825-1925: condiciones y riquezas naturales, historia, demografía, finanzas y economía, navegación, puertos y comunicaciones, régimen político y social, legislación, industrias rurales y manufactureras, cultos, previsión -- social e higiene pública, enseñanza primaria y superior, comercio, estadística, centros de cultura, instituciones públicas y privadas, vida departamental*, comp. by Perfecto López Campaña and Raul Castells Carafi (Montevideo: Agencia Publicidad Capurro, 1925), p. 307.
[14] Ibid., p. 329.
[15] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 85.
[16] (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2006).

complex message about the past: slave rebellions were portrayed as a hindrance to domestic peace in the national imaginary, and at the same time, overlooking instances of racism in the early twentieth century, Uruguay prided itself for its egalitarian ideals as one of the first nations to free enslaved people.

Yet Afro-Uruguayans are not entirely absent in the nation's collective memory. The myth of Ansina, Artigas's black companion in Paraguay, associates ideas of servility and loyalty with Afro-Uruguayans. Although slavery was still legal during Artigas's revolutions, he was sympathetic to the abolition cause.[17] Like many armies at the time, Artigas led several black battalions and many even followed him to Paraguay in exile. Probably one of these soldiers, or a domestic servant, Ansina, stayed with Artigas in Paraguay until the latter's death and is revered by Uruguayans today for his devotion to the father of the nation, thus reinforcing the notion that the worth of the Afro-Uruguayan lay in his loyalty (and hard work) rather than any agency of his own.

In the early twentieth century, whilst books such as the *Libro del centenario* denied the existence of a significant black population, the Afro-Uruguayan community sought to repatriate Ansina's remains from Paraguay. In the 1920s, the 'Comité Patriótico Ansina', consisting of Afro-Uruguayan men, lobbied the municipality of Montevideo for the repatriation of his remains.[18] Due to their efforts, in 1939, Ansina was not only brought back to Uruguay but later in 1943, as previously noted in Chapter 2, a monument was also dedicated to him in Montevideo.[19] Thus, the emerging Afro-Uruguayan intelligentsia, with a small degree of influence in the city, were partly responsible for

[17] Borucki provides a more nuanced evaluation: 'Artigas never insisted on the complete abolition of slavery in the Banda Oriental, but he consistently ordered the recruitment of slaves by emancipation.' *From Shipmates*, p. 120.
[18] Romero Jorge Rodríguez, *Mbundo, malungo a mundele: Historia del movimiento afrouruguayo y sus alternativas de desarrollo* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 2006), p. 94.
[19] Ibid., p. 95. For more on the polemic of Ansina's identity, see Chapter 2.

Figure 3 Ansina's monument outside the Tres Cruces Terminal.

negotiating Ansina's place in the national imaginary. Nonetheless, whilst it altered the city's memory landscape, the monument to Ansina literally fixed Afro-Uruguayans' place in collective memory. This in line with Kirk Savage's claim that monuments 'served to anchor collective remembering, a process dispersed, ever changing, and ultimately intangible, in highly condensed, fixed and tangible sites'.[20]

Indeed, Ansina's monument conflated Afro-Uruguayans' lived experiences and, viewing them myopically through values of nineteenth century slavery, associated them with servility and loyalty. Compared to Artigas's monument in Plaza Independencia, where he is on horseback, Ansina's statue is located away from the city's historical centre and shows him seated in casual garb holding a stick (see Figure 3). Portrayed as an old man, Ansina is barefoot and at his side there is the shadow of a young Artigas in military clothing carved into the stone. Thus, whilst Artigas is connected to war and commemorated as an active agent, Ansina is portrayed as passive. Ansina's national virtue is then his loyalty to Artigas, which reinforces the master-slave relationship of the early nineteenth century. An earlier

Figure 4 Artigas dictando a su secretario José Monterroso (circa 1919) by Pedro Blanes Viale.

[20] Kirk Savage, 'The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument' in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 127–49 (p. 130).

artwork by the renowned painter, Pedro Blanes Viale, also confirms this view of Afro-Uruguayans (see Figure 4). Called 'Artigas dictando a su secretario José Monterroso', it shows a black man who is presumably Ansina, not at the decision-making table, but instead working on the fire in the corner. Held at the Museo Histórico Nacional today, this painting demonstrates that, in Uruguay's collective memory, Ansina, representing Afro-Uruguayans, has a subordinate role characterised by servility.[21] Notably, the Afro-Uruguayan woman is absent in this narrative. Like in many other American nations, the Afro-Uruguayan woman then seems to be doubly invisible for her race and her gender, making the subject of Cabrera's novel a vital one as it attempts to fills a void in Uruguayan historiography about black women.

Like a lot of Afro-Uruguayan history, its literature has been excluded from the nation's canon. One of the earliest writers is the recently rediscovered author Jacinto Ventura de Molina (1766-1841). Born free to African parents, Ventura de Molina was educated by his guardian Don Josef Eusebio de Molina and later earned a law degree that permitted him to practice the profession, leading many to call him 'el licenciado negro'.[22] His versatility, however, is illustrated through his writing on religious, philosophical and juridical matters.[23] Yet he also worked as a shoemaker, suggesting that he was not accepted by his peers and was unable to earn a living as a lawyer. Indeed, Isidoro de María, his contemporary, describes him in a condescending manner:

hacía por presentarse de gran parada, con sus grandes cuellos, sus anchos pantalones, su chaleco de pana y su frac azul más que raído, y con muestras de cernidor, teniendo la santa paciencia de pegarle parches de pedacitos de paño en los agujeros hechos por la polilla; y adelante el Licenciado Molina, muy orondo, que si le faltaba el color sobrábale la honradez y las maneras corteses, como al mejorcito blanco.[24]

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[21] Marvin A. Lewis affirms how Ansina's image is detrimental to Afro-Uruguayans: 'this image of loyality, servility and submissiveness in relation to Uruguayan blacks incarnates social attitudes that they have historically been unable to divest to this day.' *Afro-Uruguayan Literature: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003), p. 39.
[22] Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan*, p. 28. Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 29. Isidoro de María, *Montevideo antiguo: Tradiciones y recuerdos*, 2 vols (Montevideo: Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 1976), I, 240.
[23] See *Jacinto Ventura de Molina y los caminos de la escritura negra en el Río de la Plata* ed. by William G. Acree, Jr. and Alex Borucki (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2008). Ventura de Molina's works were published for the first time in *Jacinto Ventura de Molina: Antología de manuscritos, 1817-1837* ed. by Alejandro Gortázar, Adriana Pitetta and José Manuel Barrios (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 2008).
[24] de María, *Montevideo antiguo*, I, 242.

Thus, although Ventura de Molina had an 'honourable' profession, he was mocked by the Montevidean gentility because of his skin colour and ragged clothes. Moreover, his works do not form a significant part of the nation's historical nor its literary canon, perhaps because of his colour but also for his royalist leanings, as many saw him to be 'a relic of colonialism condemned to oblivion'.[25]

Subsequently, although a small but not insignificant black intelligentsia emerged in the late nineteenth century with newspapers such as *La Conservación*, established in 1872, they were never part of mainstream Uruguayan culture.[26] As small-scale black newspapers continued into the next century, writers such as Ildefonso Pereda Valdés (1899-1996) and Lino Suárez Peña (1890-1942) also contributed to cultural production about Afro-Uruguayans. Pereda Valdés, a white man, with the support of the then growing black intelligentsia, wrote literature about them in the 1940s and 50s and highlighted the importance of studying the Afro-Uruguayan past.[27] On the other hand, Afro-Uruguayan Suárez Peña wrote for black newspapers and published works such as a leaflet called *La raza negra en el Uruguay. Novela histórica de su paso por la esclavitud* (1933) which focuses on the Afro-Uruguayan contribution to Uruguayan nationhood.[28] Whilst both Pereda Valdés and Suárez Peña portrayed Afro-Uruguayans, the former is a recognisable name in the literary canon whilst the latter is not. Lewis identifies a possible reason for Suárez Peña's exclusion; according to him, Afro-Uruguayans are often 'not perceived as serious contributors to the cultural evolution of Uruguay. Their omission is evident in any history of Uruguayan literature'.[29] Thus, like in many other aspects of Uruguayan culture and society, Afro-Uruguayans were marginalised from the literary canon.

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[25] Borucki, *From Shipmates*, p. 214.
[26] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 37.
[27] Andrews, *Blackness*, pp. 99–100. Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, *Negros esclavos y negros libres: Esquema de una sociedad esclavista y aporte del negro en nuestra formación nacional* (Montevideo: Gaceta comercial, 1941).
[28] Alejandro Gortázar, 'Miradas cruzadas. La emergencia de los discursos sobre el aporte "afro" en Uruguay (1925–1945)', *Academia.Edu*, 2005 <http://www.academia.edu/5589048/Miradas_cruzadas._La_emergencia_de_los_discursos_sobre_el_aporte_afro_en_Uruguay_1925_1945_> [accessed 28 March 2019], p. 6.
Suárez Peña's works are almost inaccessible today, except for his articles in the newspaper *Nuestra Raza* which have been digitalised. For example, 'A la juventud de nuestra raza', *Nuestra Raza*, 25 August 1933, 4–5 <https://autores.uy/obra/14181/1> [accessed 28 March 2019].
[29] Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan*, p. 9.

Whilst Afro-Uruguayans were excluded from more elite art forms, their dance, candombe, on the other hand became an intrinsic part of Uruguay's carnival. Candombe has its roots in the practice of African culture in the early 1800s and can be traced to Montevideo's *salas de naciones* which were spaces where black people gathered to perform celebratory dances, funeral rites, and other aspects of the culture they had been forced to leave behind. In the first half of the nineteenth century, although these customs were not forbidden by the government, they were tolerated and monitored, echoing Bakhtin's theory of carnival as a controlled acting out of rebellion before a return to order.[30] In the latter half of the same century, despite Afro-Uruguayans being free, dance troupes called *comparsas* were also subject to government regulations and traditions such as the throwing of water during carnivals were banned.[31] Not only did Afro-Uruguayans dance in these *comparsas* but so did white Uruguayans who wore blackface in groups such as 'Negros lubolos'.[32] Historically, blackface in the Americas, especially in Cuba and the United States, has been significant in reasserting racial boundaries because it caricatured black people by viewing them as the 'other'. Although it probably had similar implications in Uruguay, it also allowed white Uruguayans to participate in a dance that would soon become an essential part of national popular culture. Similarly, in the early 1900s, candombe attracted recently arrived European immigrants who lived in the same housing blocks as Afro-Uruguayans called *conventillos*.[33] For Andrews, the interaction between Afro-Uruguayans and recent migrants demonstrates candombe's significance in national culture:

> In the *conventillos* the newly arrived immigrants listened to and learned, through direct contact, the music and dances of the Afro-Uruguayans. The immigrants learned as well that African-based music did not belong only to African-descended people. […] Under these circumstances, one way to be, or to become, Uruguayan was to take part, either as a performer or onlooker, in an African-based cultural form.[34]

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[30] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
[31] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 56.
[32] Ibid., p.16.
[33] Ibid., p. 62.
[34] Ibid., p. 62.

As candombe became popular enough to be closely associated with being Uruguayan, it also meant that blacks were slowly losing control of their culture making it susceptible to appropriation and commercialisation.

The significance of candombe was further consolidated in the 1940s and 50s as the formation of the Asociación Cultural y Social Uruguay in 1941 led to the *Llamadas*, parades of people performing candombe, to become a permanent feature of the carnival celebrations. For many Afro-Uruguayans, however, Lewis writes, performing candombe during these festivities was not only 'cultural appropriation' but also a 'commercialisation' of Afro-Uruguayan culture.[35] Arguably then, candombe's permanent inclusion in the carnival fixed the place of Afro-Uruguayans in the Uruguayan imaginary as its performers and creators. In the same vein, Andrews duly asserts that candombe allowed the state 'to project an "official story" of how th[e Afro-Uruguayan] past and these people had been peacefully and successfully integrated into modern, twentieth century republics'.[36] Taking this idea further, one can argue that historical violence upon those of African origin and their rebellions against it were forgotten, or disremembered, by relegating their contribution to national identity to two aspects, dance (through candombe) and loyalty (via Ansina).

Along with commercialisation, candombe also reflected the exotification of Afro-Uruguayan women through the figure of the *vedette*, the most important female dancer in a candombe troop. Initially not a part of the Llamadas, the *vedette* was introduced in the 1940s. Inspired by French cabaret, this role had no direct connection with Afro-Uruguayan culture, yet, until 1980 only black women played *vedettes*, famous amongst them being Martha Gularte (1919-2002) and Rosa Luna (1937-1993).[37] The ahistorical figure of the *vedette* then often objectifies women as they are dressed up in feathers, a colourful embellished bikini and high heels.[38] The *vedette*'s presence then is quite

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[35] Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan*, pp. 62–66.
[36] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 113.
[37] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 81. See Adela Dubra, 'Rosa Luna', in *Mujeres uruguayas: El lado femenino de nuestra historia*, intro. by Blanca Rodríguez and Lil Bettina Chouhy, 2 vols (Montevideo: Santillana, 2005), I, 229–253; Lewis also recognises both Luna and Gularte's poetry about candombe in *Afro-Uruguayan*, pp. 75–76 and pp. 20–22, respectively.
[38] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 79.

problematic because the few black women who supposedly represent Afro-Uruguayan culture are sexualised and objectified.

During the recent dictatorship, the carnival as a public spectacle, and especially candombe, played a significant role in symbolically resisting the authoritarian regime. Historically, it had always been the *murgas*, sketches performed during the carnival whose history can be traced to Cádiz in Spain, that satired current politics. However, along with the *murgas*, candombe's loud drum culture became a symbolic way to rebel against the dictatorship's policies of censorship. Indeed, Andrews highlights how the drums of candombe countered the silence of public spaces:

> during the years in which the dictatorship silenced most of Uruguayan civil society, the thundering drums of candombe were the antithesis of that public silence. And in a society in which it had become forbidden to meet in groups and to discuss collective issues publicly, the concept of the llamada, of calling people into the street to drum, dance, and become part of a public celebration, was a direct denial of the authoritarian project.[39]

Whilst candombe became a symbolic means to resist the dictatorship, the emblematic housing blocks where the contemporary form of the dance originated, namely the Medio Mundo and Ansina *conventillos,* were in danger of being demolished. Although these buildings had been in a dilapidated condition for several years, the dictatorship gave the municipality special powers to evacuate any buildings without going through the due paperwork.[40] The first to be evacuated was the Medio Mundo, which accommodated many Afro-Uruguayans and a variety of low-income groups. Once evicted, the community was dispersed as those who could not find a place to live were housed in an old factory in the Capurro area of the city.[41] For many, such as Rodríguez, the demolitions were an example of the dictatorship's violence against the Afro-Uruguayan community, whilst others like Andrews claim that because of the dilapidated condition of the *conventillos* and previous cave-ins at similar buildings, the evacuations were not racially motivated.[42] Regardless of the dictatorship's intention, this evacuation was an assault on

[39] Ibid., p. 123.
[40] Ibid., p. 143.
[41] Ibid., p. 141.
[42] Andrews, *Blackness*, p. 142–43. Rodríguez, *Mbundo*, p. 159. For a photographic essay on life in Mediomundo before its demolition**,** see Milita Alfaro and José Cozzo's *Mediomundo: Sur, conventillo y después* (Montevideo: Medio & Medio, 2008).

the black community, as Lewis asserts that although it no longer exists, 'Medio Mundo is etched in the collective memory of Afro-Uruguayans'.[43]

The treatment of Afro-Uruguayans during these evictions and their poor living conditions before and after the dictatorship led them to further mobilise in the post-dictatorship period. A trend in many Latin American societies, the revisiting of multicultural aspects of the nation through race is a crucial step in re-evaluating identity in the continent.[44] In Uruguay, a key step in this process was the formation of Mundo Afro in 1988, an activist group who would later campaign for the inclusion of the category of racial origin in the forthcoming census. This request pointed to Afro-Uruguayans' agency in making themselves visible in a society that had sought to conceal them for the past century and a half.[45] Subsequently, for the first time since the nineteenth century when there were categories such as African freedmen and slaves, race was included in the 1996 census which found that 5.9% of Uruguayans claimed to be of African origin.[46] Challenging the identity-forming claim that Uruguay was a white nation, the census also questioned its democratic ideals by highlighting the marginalised condition of Afro-Uruguayans in society. For instance, in his analysis of the data, Andrews attests that Afro-Uruguayans were more likely to be unemployed and tended to be less educated than their white counterparts.[47]

Five years on, the debate was still ongoing when Susana Cabrera published *Las esclavas del Rincón*, a novel which deals with the murder of Celedonia Wich de Salvañach by her slaves María, Encarnación and Luciano in 1821 in Portuguese-ruled Montevideo. A woman of high Montevidean society, originally from La Coruña in Spain, Celedonia Wich married Cristóbal Salvañach in 1795.[48] Her husband, also from Spain, came to

[43] Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan*, p. 26.
[44] On identity and multiethnicity in Latin America, see *Race, Colonialism, and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean* ed. by Jerome Branche (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2008).
[45] Mara Loveman examines the significance of counting race in national censuses in *National Colors: Racial Classification and the State in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). George Reid Andrews devotes a chapter to black invisibility in Latin America in *Afro-Latin America: Black Lives, 1600-2000* (London: Harvard University Press, 2016).
[46] Andrews, *Blackness*, pp. 6–7.
[47] Ibid., p. 150.
[48] Aníbal Barrios Pintos 'Historias privadas de la esclavitud: Un proceso criminal en tiempo de la Cisplatina' in *Historias de la vida privada en el Uruguay: Entre la honra y el desorden 1780-1870*, ed. by José P. Barrán, Gerardo Caetano and Teresa Porzecanski (Montevideo: Taurus, 1996), pp. 172–195 (p. 180).

Montevideo as a businessman in 1786 and played a key role in the development of city; first he became a member of the city council and later its mayor in 1810 and 1812.[49] Like other elite families of the time, the Salvañachs had slaves for domestic work. Their treatment of the slaves, however, was questionable. For instance, María Francisca Candelaria ran away from their household because of their brutality and opposition to her marriage.[50] Later, she even went to court to seek her young daughter's freedom from the Salvañachs.[51] But Cristóbal refused to hand over her daughter and denied any charges of brutality in court alleging 'no habérsele castigado jamás'.[52] It is not only María Francisca's case that suggests that they mistreated their slaves but also the fact that a neighbour, Bartolomé Domingo Bianqui, later asserted: '[l]a voz pública, en la vecindad […] era que la señora era muy cruel con los esclavos'.[53] Soon after the Portuguese took over Montevideo, Cristóbal left for Africa, presumably as a slave trader, never to return to the Banda Oriental again.

After his departure, Celedonia seems to have continued to mistreat her slaves, following which three of them rebelled and murdered her. To cover up their crime, they pushed her from the balcony of the house and claimed that she accidentally fell off it.[54] The local authorities then arrested the culprits, María (also known as Mariquita), Encarnación and Luciano. In the court case that followed their arrest, they were defended by the acclaimed upper-class lawyer, Lucas Obes. Although Obes's intentions in taking up the case are not clear, Barrios Pintos asserts 'el expediente pasó al Defensor General de Pobres, Gonzalo Rodríguez de Brito, quien encomendó la redacción de la defensa al doctor Lucas José Obes'.[55] His subsequent defence of the slaves' actions, not only condemned slavery generally but also highlighted Celedonia's many instances of cruelty towards her slaves.[56] Obes's standpoint was striking, however, because he and his family had previously engaged in slave trade themselves. [57] Such a spirited defence then arguably

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[49] Ibid., p. 179.
[50] Arturo Ariel Bentancur and Fernando Aparicio, *Amos y esclavos en el Río de la Plata* (Montevideo: Planeta, 2006), pp. 185–87.
[51] Ibid., p. 31 and pp. 184–88.
[52] Ibid. p. 185.
[53] Quoted in Barrios Pintos, 'Historias privadas', p. 190.
[54] de María*, Montevideo antiguo*, I, 251.
[55] Barrios Pintos, 'Historias privadas', p. 184.
[56] Ibid., pp. 184–90.
[57] Ibid., p. 184.

demonstrates changing attitudes towards slavery in Montevideo. Despite Obes's efforts, Mariquita and Encarnación were sentenced to death. The only women to be executed in nineteenth century Montevideo, they were hung from the gallows in 1824.[58] Because the third culprit Luciano was a minor, he was made to first witness their execution before being exiled to Africa for ten years and as a further deterrent he was prohibited from entering the Banda Oriental again.[59]

Celedonia's murder, which highlights the mistreatment of slaves in Montevideo and their rebellion against it, does not feature in many historical texts. Amongst nineteenth-century works, it is only mentioned once in Isidoro de María's *Montevideo antiguo*, which chronicled daily life in the city. In this work, de María calls Wich's murder 'un crimen alevoso' and only recounts it because he wishes to explain why the gallows of Montevideo were named 'La Mariquita'.[60] As discussed in Chapter 2, de María is a significant figure because he was the first historian to contest Artigas's Black Legend. But as for the origin of the name of the gallows, scholarship from the 1940s has proven de María wrong because they were called 'La Mariquita' even before Celedonia's homicide.[61] Similarly, in the post-dictatorship period in Uruguay, before the novel's publication, the incident was mentioned only once in historical works, namely in a specialist chapter in *Historias de la vida privada en el Uruguay*, demonstrating that it was a largely forgotten event.[62]

This domestic murder stood out from other historical incidents because it was the only time women were executed publicly in the Banda Oriental; for this reason perhaps it deserved a mention in more general works of Uruguayan history. Moreover, Obes's defence of the slaves, which demonstrated the anti-slavery ideals of Montevideo's elite, could have served to highlight Uruguayan progressiveness in school textbooks, for instance. Yet, like a lot of the Afro-Uruguayan past, this incident is not part of the national memory narrative. One can conjecture several reasons for this. Firstly, because it took

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[58] Ibid. p. 193.
[59] Ibid. p. 192.
[60] de María, *Montevideo antiguo*, I, 250–51.
[61] Barrios Pintos, 'Historias privadas', p. 173; Carlos Ferres, *Época colonial: La administración de justicia en Montevideo* (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1944), p. 248.
[62] Notably, Carlos Demasi's book chapter from 1997 does not discuss Celedonia's murder but focuses on the Salvañachs' court case with María Francisca Candelaria. 'Familia y esclavitud en el Montevideo del S. XVIII', in *Sociedad y cultura en el Montevideo colonial*, ed. by Oribe Cures and Luis Ernesto Behares (Montevideo: Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo, 1997), pp. 55–70.

place when the Banda Oriental was ruled by the Portuguese and later the Brazilians (1817-1825), which means it was not viewed as a Uruguayan event and therefore could not feature in national narratives. Secondly, this incident highlighted instances of violence between European descendants and a race they considered inferior to them, which contradicted the desired notion of pacific assimilation of the black population into Uruguayan culture. Thirdly, since Obes's defence also showed that it was Wich's brutality that instigated the slaves to rebel and kill her, this would not fit into the national narrative of slavery being milder in Uruguay as opposed to other countries. Thus, Celedonia's murder was left out of historical narratives and a historically significant case of violence against black women in Montevideo was disremembered. At the turn of the millennium, therefore, *Las esclavas del Rincón* builds upon current debates on race and identity in Uruguay and unearths this previously forgotten incident from the nineteenth century archive to, this chapter will argue, not only create a space for Afro-Uruguayan women within national material culture but also to propose a personalised, more empathetic memory of slavery for Uruguayan readers.

Susana Cabrera and *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001)

Born in Montevideo in 1938, Susana Cabrera has lived in Tacuarembó for many years where she worked as a teacher of philosophy and psychology. On her retirement from teaching, she started publishing novels and essays. Although her novels are historically orientated, as a reflection of her previous career path, they often delve into the psyche of her characters. Her first novel, *Los secretos del coronel* (1997), deals with the life of the tango singer Carlos Gardel (1890-1935). The most prominent tango artist from the early twentieth century, Gardel is an important figure in Uruguayan identity.[63] He has latterly become a contentious issue between Uruguayans and Argentinians; whilst Uruguayans claim his memory because he was allegedly born in Uruguay, Argentinians appropriate it by the fact that he was later naturalised in their country and further contend that he was born in Toulouse, France. Thus, even in her first novel, Cabrera's writing is informed by

[63] See Carlos Maggi's essay on Gardel in *Gardel, Onetti, y algo más: Ensayos y escritos humorísticos* (Montevideo: Editorial Alfa, 1964).

the foci of this thesis, namely history, memory and identity and *Las esclavas del Rincón* (2001), in particular, also speaks to these strands.[64]

Las esclavas del Rincón (henceforth, *Las esclavas*) fictionalises the perspectives of the three slave-women Graciosita, Mariquita and Encarnación, the teenager Luciano and their mistress Celedonia Wich. It is divided into five numbered sections with an additional part in the middle called 'Reconstrucciones'. As each part is preceded by literary or historical quotes, the novel engages in an intertextual dialogue with previous works to nuance its own representation of the past. The first two sections are testimonies of Graciosita, who is fictional and was in church when Celedonia was murdered, and Encarnación, who was complicit in the crime. This is followed by 'Reconstrucciones' which consists of Celedonia's fictional first-person narrative as well as communication between her brother Joaquín Wich and the slaves' defence lawyer Lucas Obes. The third and fourth parts are Mariquita and Luciano's testimonies where they corroborate how they murdered Celedonia and explain how her violence precipitated their actions. The novel ends with Lucas Obes's historical defence of the slaves and archival documents relating to their sentencing and execution.

Las esclavas is thus an amalgamation of individual fictional and historical voices as well as intertextual references to literary works and historical documents. Reminiscent of the twentieth-century genre of documentary fiction, its intertextuality and polyphonic narrative not only echo the structural features of the other novels studied in this thesis but also challenge the traditions of written history. Likewise, the language used in *Las esclavas* differs from nineteenth-century representations of Afro-Uruguayans. For instance, Acuña de Figueroa's poems about them are mostly in pidgin Spanish: '¡Viva len constitusione!/ ¡Viva len leye patlisia!/ Que ne tiele del balance/ Se cabó len dipotima'.[65] Although Acuña de Figueroa was probably being sarcastic and his rendering was not true to life, if Cabrera had reproduced such language, it would be difficult for present-day readers to emphasise with the slaves and they would perhaps continue to view them as the 'other'. Accordingly, in *Las esclavas*, the slaves' testimonies are reported in

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[64] This chapter uses the original title which capitalised the word 'rincón', to denote the Rincón street in Montevideo. The following editions, however, were called *Las esclavas del rincón*.
[65] This extract is from 'A la Jura de la Constitución', reproduced in Ildefonso Pereda Valdes's *Raza negra* (Montevideo: La Vanguardia, 1929), p. 65; Acuña de Figueroa, *Obras completas*, XI, 12.

everyday Spanish, as the author makes a deliberate political point by rejecting the 'othering' of the slaves and instead portraying them as Uruguayans, or rather, as precursors to Uruguayan nationhood just like the white population of the time.

The novel's title and cover page highlight two significant themes: women's histories and historical Montevideo. Disregarding grammatical convention, the author does not name the work *Los esclavos del Rincón* despite Luciano's presence. Instead, Cabrera uses *Las esclavas del Rincón* as the title to arguably draw attention to the female experience of slavery in Uruguay's past. Furthermore, Rincón Street reminds the Uruguayan reader of Old Montevideo and of historically significant buildings that stand there today. The novel's cover is similarly striking. The first edition had a purple background on the cover with a photo of two women of African descent, one holding two talismans in her hand and the other gazing in another direction (see Figure 5).[66] Moreover, the picture of the two women was juxtaposed with a drawing of Old Montevideo at the bottom, and like its title, the cover directed the reader towards two main themes of the novel: slavery in early nineteenth century Uruguay and the representation of Montevideo through the slaves' perspectives. These themes, it is argued below, serve the purpose of reclaiming the forgotten Afro-Uruguayan past and creating a space for it within national memory and its mnemonic landscape.

Figure 5 Cover of the first edition of *Las esclavas del Rincón.*

The following textual analysis considers several key aspects that make this a significant novel for our understanding of the cultural representation of Uruguayan

[66] The cover of the subsequent editions, however, has two nooses, each with an image inside it. The first noose portrays someone fallen on the floor, whilst the other has two women on a terrace, looking at the fallen woman. Although we do not know why this cover was changed, it does not highlight the slaves' African origins but in fact their execution by the gallows.

memory and identity. Firstly, the novel has its own contradictions, as it denounces certain historical figures whilst acquitting others for their role in the slave trade, which in turn echoes the nation's identity myth of its egalitarian traditions. Secondly, its use of intertextuality and documentary fiction highlights the theme of vengeance and questions myth-making. Thirdly, this thesis argues that in the absence of historical slave narratives in Uruguay, the novel also provides a 'prosthetic' memory of slavery for present-day Uruguayans. Prosthetic memory, according to Landsberg, is what 'emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past'; on account of this memory the person attaches or 'sutures' themselves into a wider historical context.[67] The person, here the reader, does not just understand a historical event, but 'takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live. The resulting prosthetic memory has the ability to shape that person's subjectivitity and politics'.[68] Prosthetic memory therefore does not refer to a mere rewriting of the past, but to a visceral representation that induces affect in the reader, making them emphathise with its subjects, which may potentially alter a group's notions of collective identity. Although Landsberg analysed contemporary works from the United States and published her monograph after *Las esclavas*, her theoretical suggestions are helpful in relation to the Uruguayan Cabrera's text. Accordingly, this chapter examines how the novel proposes a prosthetic memory of slavery for the Uruguayan reader and to what extent it attempts to alter their subjectivity.

Reclaiming Slave Narratives

As the novel highlights Celedonia's violence against her female slaves, by fictionalising their voices it also proposes a new perspective on the Uruguayan past. It portrays the capital city of Montevideo through their eyes and demonstrates their historical presence in buildings of national significance such as the Iglesia Matriz and Casa Rivera. The following analysis, echoing the structure of the novel, first focuses on the narratives of the female slaves, Graciosita and Encarnación.

As noted in the Introduction, inherent in processes of collective remembering is the idea of disremembering information that does not contribute to a specific image of the

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[67] Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, p. 2.
[68] Ibid., p. 2.

past. Along with top-down politics, cultural memory is often determined by what is written down, and what falls through the gaps are stories of marginalised people who did not have the means to write them. This was one of the many reasons why early African slave narratives were not part of national history in Uruguay. Cabrera's novel, as a contrast to written versions of history, recovers the Afro-Uruguayan past by depicting instances of oral history especially through Graciosita, who is presented as the first witness to and object of Celedonia's punishments. Her character serves to present an Afro-Uruguayan view of old buildings in Montevideo in order to mediate a new space for them in mainstream national culture. For instance, during her interrogation, Graciosita recounts how the Caserío de los Negros, where recently arrived slaves would be quarantined before being sold, came to be:

> Segundo les contó que cuando llegaron los primeros esclavos a San Felipe y Santiago eran negros de África, la mayoría murió por una epidemia y se contagiaron los habitantes de la ciudad, los bisabuelos de Segundo y Encarnación vinieron en ese cargamento y fueron de los pocos que se salvaron, en cambio los padres de Mariasinha, la cocinera, desembarcaron diez años después de un buque de negros de Brasil, las autoridades temieron otra epidemia y los confinaron en extramuros en una fábrica de adobe pero el vecindario temía una nueva peste, entonces el Cabildo consiguió que se obligara al capitán de la nave a llevarlos a la costa del Cerro, ahí quedaron todos en cuarentena y en barracas hasta su remate.[69]

Segundo, also one of Celedonia's slaves, narrated the story to Graciosita, who then retold it to the interrogating lawyers. Unlike school textbooks, which give only facts about how the Company of the Philippines set up the Caserío de los Negros, through Graciosita's character the novel gives personal information about the victims of the slave trade. In other words, it individualises history, creates a space for the Afro-Uruguayan voice within it and privileges the oral, private narrative over the written, public one. As has already been mentioned, recovering memories of marginalised racial groups through oral history is a trend in post-dictatorship Uruguay through works such as Porzecanski and Santos's *Historias de exclusión*. Furthermore, in many post-dictatorial Latin American and European countries, studies of oral history focus especially on women's memories of authoritarian regimes, in order to both contest official history and highlight the

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[69] Susana Cabrera, *Las esclavas del rincón*, 11th edn (Montevideo: Fin de Siglo, 2012), p. 27. Further references to this edition of Cabrera's novel are given after quotations in the text.

relationship between private and public memories.[70] *Las esclavas* then speaks to both these contemporary trends as it uses fiction to reclaim both black and female voices to expand upon the historical archive.

Through Graciosita's testimony, the novel also comments on memory-making and material culture regarding Afro-Uruguayans. The text begins with her recalling that when the murder took place, she was inside the Iglesia Matriz, a significant location in the country's memory landscape today. She also recounts during her interrogation that she remembered the building's inauguration: 'recuerda, a pesar de ser muy pequeña, la solemne inauguración con gente muy importante' (24-25). On representing the cathedral through Graciosita, especially through the repeated use of the word 'recuerda', the novel attempts to recover her personal memory. Graciosita further recalls that seated in the cathedral, as she recovered from Celedonia's latest brutality, she empathised with Tomás Toribio, the cathedral's architect who died in 1810: 'pensando en el señor arquitecto, ella cree que los recuerdos que la asaltaron se deben a que unió el sufrimiento de él al de ella, le dolía tanto la herida que decidió sentarse en el suelo' (25).[71] The description of Graciosita as metaphorically united with Toribio's suffering within the space of the cathedral he designed directs readers to empathise with her individual story. The novel then uses not only an important figure in Uruguayan history such as Toribio, whose house in Montevideo today is the Museo de la Construcción, but also a significant monument like the Iglesia Matriz to demonstrate how historical narratives concealed cruelty against people of African origin.

Apart from being the actual burial place of the novel's aggressor Celedonia Wich, many prominent figures such as Presidents Fructuoso Rivera and Joaquín Suárez (1843-52) were also buried at the Iglesia Matriz.[72] Located in Old Montevideo in the Plaza Matriz, the cathedral was named a National Historical Monument in 1975 as part of the

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[70] An example is *Memory, Subjectivities, and Representation: Approaches to Oral History in Latin America, Portugal, and Spain* ed. by Rina Benmayor, María Eugenia Cardenal de la Nuez and Pilar Domínguez Prats (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
[71] Toribio's house is the Museo de la Construcción today. Although not much is known about Toribio, preliminary details can be found on Montevideo's municipality website: Oribe Cures and Gerardo González, 'Tomás Toribio (1756-1810)' <http://cabildo.montevideo.gub.uy/sites/cabildo.montevideo.gub.uy/files/articulos/descargas/tomas_toribio.pdf> [accessed 11 April 2019].
[72] Goldaracena, *El libro*, p. 264.

Año de la Orientalidad celebrations.[73] The description of this building in *Las esclavas* connects different periods in Uruguayan history through a focus on material culture: the late 1700s when the cathedral was built; the dictatorship when it was named a national monument; and the present when the novel was published. Indeed, the novel (set in 1821) cannot allude to buildings traditionally associated with Afro-Uruguayans and candombe, such as the Medio Mundo and Ansina *conventillos* because they were only built in the late nineteenth century. And notably, although both Medio Mundo and Iglesia Matriz were named National Historical Monuments in 1975, through the former's destruction in many ways Afro-Uruguayan memory was dismantled.[74] In the absence of Medio Mundo in the present, by portraying Graciosita inside Iglesia Matriz in *Las esclavas*, Cabrera relocates Afro-Uruguayan memory to the cathedral, thereby placing it within the context of national memory. This diverges from the stereotype that black Uruguayans were only creators of candombe who often inhabited poor dwellings and through Graciosita's personalised narrative, *Las esclavas* symbolically negotiates a space for them within mainstream discourse.

Graciosita also takes on the role of an oral historian when she describes the city council to her interrogators and discusses her master Cristóbal Salvañach's role in it to display her know-how of Montevidean politics:

> había alcaldes importantes y cabildantes […] pero para ella el más importante era el Alférez Real encargado de portar el Estandarte Real en las fiestas y solemnidades, acá Graciosita agregó que ella conocía muy bien esta función porque don Cristóbal había tenido el honor de serlo […], también conocía al Fiel Ejecutor a quien se le encomendaba el cuidado de la ciudad (33-34).

Giving evidence of Graciosita's intelligence, the text suggests that African-origin women were not passive in their participation in Uruguayan history. Cabrera then gives Graciosita political insight and a capacity for analysis that is rare in a portrait of an Afro-Uruguayan woman. However, as she discusses the city council, the unimpressed interrogators interrupt her because they already know this history and do not value her

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[73] 'Resolución N° 1097/975: Declaración de monumento histórico nacional. Montevideo', *Centro de información oficial* <https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/resoluciones/1097-1975> [accessed 28 March 2019].

[74] It is indeed quite ironic that the dictatorship was to soon destroy Medio Mundo because of its dilapidated state. The ruling that made Medio Mundo a monument: 'Resolución N° 1941/975: Declaración de monumento histórico nacional. Montevideo', *Centro de información oficial* <https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/resoluciones/1941-1975> [accessed 28 March 2019].

opinion: 'los señores abogados la interrumpieron para decirle que esa historia ya la conocían, pero ella les explicó que todo esto venía a cuento' (35). As they attempt to supress Graciosita's voice, the interrogators are reminiscent of the male characters' dismissal of Josefina in *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*. Yet, in de Mattos's novel, despite being told not to comment on the politics of war because she was a woman, Josefina continues to do so. Similarly, in *Las esclavas*, although the lawyers do not want to listen to Graciosita, she demands to be heard by them, as she resists the official masculine and white narrative and instead puts forth a feminine African one. Whilst the other characters in the novel are based on real historical persons, there is no evidence that the Salvañachs had a slave called Graciosita.[75] Seemingly created by the author, Graciosita as a witness to the construction of Uruguay's capital city reflects previously mentioned trends of privileging oral history over written narratives.

Like Graciosita, Encarnación also highlights an impulse and a need to tell her story, as the novel writes both their identities into history. During her interrogation, Encarnación informed the lawyers about her origins, beliefs and culture:

> Nosotros los esclavos tenemos creencias, mis bisabuelos vinieron con el primer cargamento de esclavos, llegaron de África y no murieron a pesar de la epidemia, nosotros tenemos la orden de contar nuestra historia, mis abuelos lo hicieron y yo se la hice conocer a mis hijos (66).

When one of the lawyers asked her to clarify these beliefs, she was happy to do so:

> se sintió feliz de hacer conocer la vida de sus antepasados, el padre de su bisabuelo fue un conocido hechicero, curandero, y mago de las lluvias, todos los hombres de su familia lo fueron y llegaron a ser ricos en rebaños (66).

As Encarnación noted that slaves have the duty to recount their story, the novel, challenging official history, suggests that the Afro-Uruguayan past is worthy of remembering and therefore democratises historiographical processes by fighting back against their silencing.

In her testimony, Encarnación describes Celedonia's house, the scene of the murder, which has special significance in Uruguay today. After her death, Celedonia's descendants sold the house to Fructuoso Rivera, Uruguay's first President, who lived

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[75] Barrios Pintos provides a list of Celedonia's slaves in 'Historias privadas', p. 181.

there from 1834 until 1849.[76] Given that Rivera was a substantial figure in national history, his house has been the Museo Histórico Nacional as well as a national monument since 1942 and 1975 respectively.[77] Known as the Casa Rivera today, the museum literally houses the nation's memory with paintings featuring pre-independence and post-independence scenarios, the first copy of the constitution and memorabilia from important battles. Likewise, museums are also directly linked to national identity through memory and, as Silke Arnold-de Simine writes, they are 'responsible for transforming living memory into institutionally constructed and sustained commemorative practices which enact and give substance to group identities and foster memory communities'.[78] Inherent in Arnold-de Simine's statement is the idea that within the space of a museum governments carefully select a historical narrative of the nation in order to put forth their version of identity. In the case of Casa Rivera, this selective memory side-lines the fact that the house was the site of not only a brutal murder but also of continued violence against people of African origin. Today the incident is not mentioned on the museum website nor through its exhibits but there are small placards about it near the basement, where the slaves used to sleep, and in the patio where Celedonia's body fell after her murder. In *Las esclavas*, Cabrera, on the other hand, brings this event from the periphery of the Casa Rivera into the centre of her narrative in order to question the top-down version of history that museums often embody. Accordingly, Encarnación describes Celedonia's house to the interrogators at length; she not only witnessed its construction but also lived through its development:

> Dice Encarnación que […] al principio la finca tenía una sola entrada por la calle San Felipe, con dos patios llenos de flores, las habitaciones de la familia separadas por arcos, una cocina muy grande y el patio rústico, dice Encarnación que ese patio era la zona más conocida, daba […] a las dos escaleras de piedra de la casa, una subía hacia la azotea donde ella colgaba la ropa […] la otra bajaba hacia los sótanos donde se ubicaban las pequeñas barracas para los esclavos' (80-81).

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[76] Dirección Nacional de Cultura, 'Casa De Fructuoso Rivera', *Museo Histórico* <http://www.museohistorico.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/42193/33/mecweb/casa_de_fructuoso_rivera?contid=42192&3colid=16978> [accessed 28 March 2019].
[77] Ibid.
[78] Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 1–2.

Further recounting how the house gradually became a mansion, she demonstrates her knowledge of its development:

> Con el tiempo don Cristóbal fue comprando otras fincas linderas y la casa de [sic] transformó en un palacio que ocupaba toda la esquina con entrada por la calle San Gabriel. […] Dice Encarnación que lo más bonito fue la galería del primer piso con las nuevas habitaciones iluminadas por grandes ventanales (81).

Here, the repetition of 'dice Encarnación' highlights that it is her perspective of the Uruguayan past in a bid to unearth black women's memories through fiction as she describes a building that today houses the nation's collective memory. Thus, by personalising black women's experiences of historically significant places in the nation's memory landscape, the novel not only reclaims their voices but through this process also generates a prosthetic memory of Uruguayan slave narratives that sutures itself to its national counterpart.

Mariquita, the Murderess

Described as a murderess in de María's *Montevideo antiguo*, Mariquita was the primary perpetrator of Celedonia's murder. In *Las esclavas*, whilst maintaining that role, the novel nuances Mariquita's narrative by describing her long-suffering experience at the hands of Celedonia and another minor character, Countess of Alfonso. Mariquita's back story also connects her to the global resistance to slavery in early nineteenth century Latin America.

In *Las esclavas*, Mariquita's past can be traced to Cuba and is recounted through two sources: Mariquita herself and her previous owner in Havana called María de las Mercedes, also known as the Countess of Merlín.[79] Despite being a slave, Mariquita claimed in her testimony that she was never treated as such: 'Era tan fácil vivir con María de las Mercedes rodeadas de flores, pintando en la playa, eligiendo los vestidos para nuestros paseos en quitrín y ver a mi padre conducir la carroza' (169). But, on leaving Cuba for Paris, María de las Mercedes handed Mariquita to the Countess of Alfonso who abused her physically and mentally. The novel thus draws attention to the double

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[79] In the novel, María de las Mercedes used to write chronicles about her daily life in Havana and Celedonia's brother Joaquín Wich sends these papers to Lucas Obes from Cuba to describe Mariquita's life before she was sent to Montevideo. Historically, María de las Mercedes (or the Countess of Merlín), wrote memoirs about her life in Havana and in France. Sylvia Molloy discusses her writing in *At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 79–96.

standards of the time: even though her mistress María de las Mercedes treated her well, Mariquita had no agency over her destiny and was viewed as property to be passed on. Moreover, as this back story highlights her suffering at the hands of abusive owners, it depicts Mariquita as a sympathetic character, as a means to emphasise the ambiguous nature of her murderous actions later in her life.

Mariquita's interaction with the other slaves in the Countess of Alfonso's house connects her to slave resistance in Cuba and foreshadows her rebellious actions. On her first evening, when she was left starving in the cold, a young slave girl gave her some leftovers and a book of verses to read. In her testimony, Mariquita described this incident and quoted a poem from this book:

> cuando le pedí un libro me trajo los versos de un negro esclavo que los escribía durante la noche para no ser descubierto. Nunca olvidé uno de ellos. Cuando miro el espacio que he recorrido / Desde la cuna hasta el presente día / Tiemblo y saludo a la fortuna mía / Más de terror que guerra / Que en vano suspirar he soportado / Si la comparo ¡oh Dios! con lo que falta. Esos versos me auguraban que lo peor estaba por venir (171).

Although the novel does not explain the choice of poem nor does it specify the poet, the extract is from black Cuban slave poet Juan Francisco Manzano's (1797-1854) 'Mis treinta años'.[80] The novel reproduces the first four lines of the poem where the slave poet laments his destiny, and the last two lines, where he foreshadows that the worst is yet to come, a prophecy repeated by Mariquita in her testimony and a means to justify her later rebellion against Celedonia's cruelty. This episode is rather ahistorical however; Manzano was born in 1797, this poem about the first thirty years of his life was probably written around 1827, that is after Mariquita was executed in Montevideo. Additionally, since the real Mariquita was born in the Banda Oriental,[81] it is worth considering the reasons for such a fictional digression. By quoting Manzano's poem, perhaps the only known slave writing in the Hispanic world,[82] I argue that Cabrera attempts to link Cuban

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[80] Juan Francisco Manzano, *Poems by a Slave in the Island of Cuba, Recently Liberated: With the history of the Early Life of the Negro Poet* trans. by R. R. Madden (London: T. Ward and Co., 1840), p. 101. Sylvia Molloy also has a chapter on Manzano's autobiographical writing in *At Face Value*, pp. 36–54.
[81] Barrios Pintos, 'Historias privadas', p. 181.
[82] Robert Richmond Ellis, 'Reading through the Veil of Juan Francisco Manzano: From Homoerotic Violence to the Dream of a Homoracial Bond', *PMLA*, 113 (1998), 422–35 (p. 422).

slave resistance to the Afro-Uruguayan one and highlights the complex web of experiences of enslaved peoples throughout Latin America.

As she further criticises the ruling class, Cabrera demonstrates that Mariquita was an object of their wishes and had no control over her destiny. In an unlikely romanticised view, once María de las Mercedes found out that Mariquita had been treated badly, she removed her from the Countess of Alfonso's care. However, as María de las Mercedes moved to Paris permanently, her family handed over Mariquita to Joaquín Wich, who sent her to Montevideo as a wedding present for his sister Celedonia. Given that this reconstruction of Mariquita's previous life in Cuba is fictional, it arguably serves to place Uruguayan slavery within the Latin American context and highlights the migration of slaves within the continent.[83] Moreover, the contrast between Mariquita's treatment in Cuba – which oscillates between pampering by María de las Mercedes and cruelty at the hands of the Countess of Alfonso – and the brutality she faced in Montevideo brings into question the Uruguayan myth that slavery was milder in the country compared to the rest of the world. Furthermore, it links Uruguay to the Latin American experience of slavery, and in doing so, it contests previous historical versions that highlighted Uruguay's exceptionality from the rest of the continent. Indeed, this is part of the contradiction of the novel as through the slaves' fictional narratives it unearths the violence against them and questions Uruguay's self-image but, as we shall see later, it does not challenge it entirely.

In the novel, Mariquita's character demonstrates the complexities of black women's experiences in nineteenth-century Uruguay and highlights the ambiguities of being an object of Celedonia's punishments versus becoming a subject through the act of voicing her experience of the brutality and rebelling against it. The slaves' testimonies as narratives of oral history also attest to how normalised her punishments were as well as their lack of resources to rebel against them. For instance, the morning of Celedonia's murder, she punished Mariquita and Graciosita because the artichokes for lunch were sweet instead of savoury. She is described as first whipping Mariquita and when Graciosita tried to intervene, 'la furia del ama la alcanzó y el latigazo abrió la carne de su

[83] Borucki has discussed the historical migration of slaves within Latin America, especially from Rio de Janeiro to the River Plate. *From Shipmates*, pp. 37–56.

brazo desprendiendo una lonja sangrante, el dolor fue desgarrador' (21). The injured Graciosita then ran away to get help but Mariquita continued to be punished, as the latter testifies: 'los latigazos en su espalda le iban desgarrando la carne hasta que los huesos aparecieron como testigos de una crueldad enfermiza, se desmayó oyendo los gritos de Luciano y Encarnación' (175). Such a graphic and visceral description individualises women's stories and proposes a personalised counter-history, in other words, a prosthetic memory of violence, which is especially significant when compared to previous historical versions that failed to allude to slavery's brutality. At the same time, pace de María who called the incident 'un crimen alevoso', the novel manipulates the reader to sympathise with the slaves (as victims) rather than the women who was murdered (their victim).[84] The reader is thus encouraged to justify the slaves' actions, a reaction which creates a tension between the reader's sympathies and the official version of events told in historical documents.

Mariquita's ultimate rebellion in killing her mistress is significant in viewing her as an agent of action as she alludes to the injustices of slavery and testifies to killing her mistress to the lawyers that interrogate her:

> por la galería venía el ama látigo en mano, al primer latigazo caen los cubiertos, ella había aprendido a ser humilde a través de tanto sufrimiento, como una esclava servil se agacha a recogerlos pero en realidad no los ve, lo que ve es una larga fila de cadenas que la torturan y que en ese momento están rompiéndose sobre su espalda despellejada, entonces todo sucede a la sombra de mil años de esclavitud: le quita al ama el látigo de las manos, la arrastra hasta el piso de la cocina y se sienta sobre ella para romper sobre su cabeza la damajuana de agua vacía (176).

Similarly, Mariquita's agency also frees her as she 'se detuvo a contemplar su obra, no por maldad sino porque a pesar del horror vivido se sentía libre' (177). As the novel emphasises this crucial link between slave rebellion and freedom, it overturns the image of violence done unto slaves and projects them as perpetrators of it. This interpretation of Mariquita as an agent of action is consistent with Liliam Ramos da Silva's discussion of *Las esclavas* amongst other Latin American novels, where she identifies

[84] de María, *Montevideo antiguo*, I, 250.

uma tentativa das autoras em desconstruir a concepçáo de história tradicional, na medida em que (re)contam uma outra história, náo utilizando apenas a temática negra (o negro como objeto) e sim retratando-o como agente ativo nesta nova realidade.[85]

Although the analysis that blacks are no longer just objects in this novel rings true, one can also argue that they are both objects and subjects in the novel, thus portraying them as complex characters in the historical zeitgeist that they live in. Arguably, these complexities produce affect in the reader, in other words, empathy for the character and the past, essentially resulting in prosthetic memory.

This complexity becomes clearer when the novel questions whether Mariquita had a choice in killing Celedonia. On her way to her sentencing, in a first-person narrative, Mariquita pondered:

mientras caminaba vi la mirada de doña Celedonia y sus intenciones de morir y supe que desde que me conoció me eligió para matarla, su muerte en manos de una esclava haría olvidar tanta violencia contra ellas, sería una esposa respetable y nunca nadie más la criticaría con encono y horror (233).

In suggesting that Celedonia was responsible for her own demise, the novel not only seeks to acquit Mariquita's crimes but also highlights the lack of agency she attributes to herself despite taking action and killing her mistress. Echoing Albert Camus's thoughts on the rebel slave as one who is 'willing to accept the final defeat, which is death, rather than be deprived of [...] freedom', the novel suggests that Mariquita does not inhabit the same moral universe as she is not herself treated with the same dignity of non-slaves.[86] As *Las esclavas* then raises ethical issues of rebellion and freedom, it explores the complexities of black women's experiences, instead of merely situating them as agents or objects in the novel. At the same time, Mariquita's awareness of how she will be slighted in history whilst Celedonia will be remembered as an honourable woman functions as a comment on the politics of forgetting and criticises memory-making institutions that have ignored violence against African slaves because it did not fit the political needs of the time.

[85] Liliam Ramos da Silva, 'O protagonismo da mulher negra no romance histórico hispano-americano' *Revista de Letras*, 53.1 (2013), 101–124 <https://periodicos.fclar.unesp.br/letras/article/view/6072> [8 April 2019], pp. 120–21.

[86] Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. by Anthony Bower (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 21.

As the novel fictionalises Mariquita and Encarnación's execution, it fills in gaps in Uruguayan history and further nuances their experiences of early nineteenth-century Montevideo. In other words, it does what only fiction can do: it gives the reader the human narrative and asks us to identify emotionally with someone else's story. In doing so, it not only provides more information compared to official documents but also shows that the African population was a significant part of the city. When the execution was about to begin, the Africans, both slaves and freedmen, crowded the plaza, at first making some noise but later becoming silent:

> nada de esto es suficiente para hacer callar esa multitud vengativa que poco a poco deja de gritar, es la dignidad negra frente al asesino de su raza y es también la vergüenza del blanco por lo que es capaz de hacer' (238).

Raising the question of who the actual murderer is, whether the black women or the white race as a whole, the omniscient narrator divides the population into binary notions of black and white and, bringing forward the author's present-day perspective, portrays the execution as an embarrassment for the white population. After narrating their execution, the novel presents a copy of a official document called 'Acta de ejecución' which simply attests: 'se ha ejecutado en la forma ordinaria en las personas de María Mariquita y Petrona Encarnación' (239). Juxtaposing the slaves' fictional execution with its official historical version suggests that official documents ignored the complexities and injustices of the black experience in early nineteenth-century Montevideo. The novel viewed as a counter-history then seeks to justify Mariquita's actions and succeeds in highlighting their ethical ambiguities. Furthermore, viewed through the lens of Landsberg's theory, as it follows the conventions of its genre, Cabrera's work echoes the definition of prosthetic memory as it draws an emotional response from the reader by personalising historical narratives via fiction.

Celedonia: the Spanish Adversary

Like de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, *Las esclavas* resembles a courtroom: it deals with a historical murder and presents various perspectives, many previously silenced, on the issues at hand. One of these viewpoints is of the murder victim Celedonia as the novel delves into her psyche to explain her behaviour. Blaming Celedonia exclusively for the violence against slaves, *Las esclavas* paints her as a pariah in Montevidean society to

differentiate her from others who are sympathetic towards them. Furthermore, we do not know if it was the author's intention, but Celedonia's character displays a feminist agenda as her rejection of the church and other authorities in Montevideo stand out as rather radical for a woman of her time.

The novel traces Celedonia's childhood in Spain to explain how her individual experiences led her to mistreat her slaves. Born in La Coruña, Celedonia had an aversion to African slaves because as a child she found out that her father had sexual relations with one called Marina. Celedonia concluded that her father's infidelity resulted in her mother's mental illness, which in turn led to her confinement in a mental asylum. In this way, Celedonia's continued mistreatment of slaves is explained by a traumatic event from her childhood rather than the social norms of the day. Blaming Marina for her father's infidelity, Celedonia gradually began to mistreat her. Later, when her father chastised her for abusing Marina, she feigned a friendship with the slave. Once she won Marina over, Celedonia convinced her to engage in outrageous behaviour including dressing up bizarrely for special events such as a ball. This was followed by other ominous occurrences as Marina went missing, only to be found ravaged by dogs without any memory of how she got there (133). Subsequently, we are told, Celedonia even orchestrated Marina's murder, making it look like suicide (137 and 149). Interestingly, although historians have mentioned that Celedonia was Spanish, she was in fact only a year old when her family moved to Montevideo.[87] Keeping this in mind, as Cabrera provides fictional explanations for Celedonia's cruelty, the novel makes it clear that her pathological anger for Marina was later displaced upon Mariquita. On emphasising that Celedonia's childhood experiences led her to be violent towards her slaves, *Las esclavas* differentiates her from the rest of the Banda Oriental population.

Celedonia is further distinguished from her peers as the novel elaborates on her poor mental health. She first victimises herself as someone who is unable to control her fits of anger against the slaves as they represent the original trauma in her life, her father's infidelity to her mother. Mirroring the nineteenth-century slave owner's narrative that slaves were a threat to order, Celedonia's doctor in Montevideo also echoes her sentiments of being a victim:

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[87] Barrios Pintos, 'Historias privadas', p. 180. Goldaracena, *El libro*, p. 259.

No solo es un placer sino una liberación, usted les está pegando no a sus esclavas sino a lo que ellas representan, a alguien que odia o rechaza por algo muy doloroso, usted señora mía no es la culpable sino la víctima (95).

On hearing this, she dislikes feeling vulnerable in front of the doctor and prohibits him from entering the house again, turning herself into a recluse in Montevidean society whilst rejecting the male authority of the doctor and the conventions of acceptable female behaviour. Yet, she continues to perceive herself as a victim when, after attacking the slaves, she feels that '[e]l dolor de cabeza era insoportable, ella sabía que era el precio que tenía que pagar después de tanta descarga emocional' (95-96). Furthermore, Celedonia views her actions as vengeance against her enemies, stating that after her husband's death 'le fue imposible controlar el deseo de venganza […] empezando por las esclavas, pero los castigos […] la desgastaban' (96). The novel therefore fictionalises her perspective to propose that her mental health led her to view violence as catharsis for the wrongs she believed herself to have endured.

Likewise, the novel portrays Celedonia as a recluse, when she not only banned the doctor from her house but also rejected the authority of the church. For instance, after her slaves Juan and Nicasia ran away because of her punishments, the priest condemned her actions: 'Padre Severino […] la visitó serio y circunspecto, ella negó y blasfemó, pero el cura acostumbrado a leer las mentiras hasta en los ojos cerrados de sus parroquianos, la obligó a prometer que se confesará' (130). Celedonia, however, ignored him and never returned to church again. In taking an unpopular stand and rejecting the church's authority, she asserts her choice in a patriarchal society, quite a radical action for a woman in the early nineteenth century. Although we cannot ascertain the author's intention, Celedonia's character comes through as a villainess with a feminist agenda. Moreover, by focusing on how Celedonia's individuality, stemming from her childhood experiences in Spain, makes her brutal, the author does not seem to condemn Uruguayan society as a whole for her attitudes, which results in a problematic representation of her character who becomes a scapegoat in this rewriting of Uruguayan history. Thus, although Celedonia is portrayed as a steadfast woman who follows her ideals despite the limitations for women at the time, she is villainised for her attitudes towards the slaves whilst, as we shall see below, the novel is more forgiving of historical Uruguayan elites.

Representing Elite Uruguayans: Lucas Obes and Cristóbal Salvañach

In contrast to Celedonia's cruelty in *Las esclavas*, not only are everyday people shown to be sympathetic to the slaves' trials, but so too are patriarchs from elite families such as Lucas Obes and Cristóbal Salvañach who are portrayed as defending the slaves against the Spanish Celedonia's crimes. Despite their intentions towards the slaves being doubted, such as Obes's role in the slave trade and Cristóbal's attraction to his female slaves, these ideas are never fully developed. The result of such a representation is that the novel reinforces identity myths that Uruguayans were egalitarian and progressive in their anti-slavery ideals.

Along with the priest's disapproval of Celedonia's behaviour, the novel represents other figures who were sympathetic towards the slaves and highlights the conviviality between the two races in Montevideo. For instance, when the slaves Juan and Nicasia absconded because of Celedonia's cruelty, they were given refuge by the candlemaker Santiago Apóstol. Similarly, Graciosita recounts how Luciana, the slave of Doña Esperanza, is not treated badly: 'la esclava negra nacida en esa casa, […] ama mucho a toda la familia y jamás le pegaron, ahí no hay látigos ni jaulas de tortura y los dormitorios de las esclavas son confortables y acogedores' (42). Although the novel has previously challenged assumptions about the lack of brutality in Uruguay, in suggesting that the violence was not omnipresent, it conforms to the accepted narrative of the pacific nature of slavery in Uruguay and reasserts a positive feature of national identity. Some masters might, undoubtedly, have been kind towards their slaves, but the novel seems to overlook other instances of violence against them as well as the general societal conflict between the two races, a significant characteristic of the time which is elaborated in Bentancur and Aparicio's recent historical work, *Amos y esclavos en el Río de la Plata* (2006).[88] Given that Bentancur and Aparicio only published their research in 2006, it is likely that Cabrera was not aware of other instances of violence when she was writing the novel. Yet, this results in a central contradiction that seems to define the novel: slavery is criticised through Celedonia but Uruguayans are viewed as generally good.

[88] They write for instance that '[t]ambién en Montevideo colonial los castigos fueron cosa natural y aceptada si de esclavos se trataba, ya que los infligieron fundamentalmente los amos, pero también sus vecinos, el Estado, los funcionarios reales, los ejércitos….'. *Amos y esclavos*, p. 184.

In keeping with some historical facts as well as the identity myth that Uruguay was a forerunner in anti-slavery ideals, Lucas Obes's defence of María, Encarnación and Luciano shows that slavery was condemned by many individuals at the time. For instance, paraphased from the original plea, in the novel Obes affirmed: 'El comprar una mujer, diez mujeres, cien mujeres y disponer de ellas al mínimo precio, es inmoral y peor aún no es religioso' (215).[89] Also sourced from his actual defence, in *Las esclavas*, he compared Celedonia's murder to the violence of slavery and highlighted its irony: 'ellas por fin, Excelentísimo Señor, han quitado de la tierra un amo, nosotros ¿cuántos esclavos hemos vendido a la muerte en el dilatado espacio de tres siglos' (224).[90] Following his passionate defence, the novel reproduces an official-looking document that questions Obes's motives and mentions evidence from 1810 about 'la españolización de la fragata americana Laura comprada por Don Lucas José Obes con el fin de destinarla al comercio de negros' (226). This mention of Obes's role in the slave trade could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it highlights the ambiguous nature of his anti-slavery ideals, guiding the reader not to take Obes's defence literally and to doubt his intentions.[91] On the other hand, it could be read as alluding to Uruguayan uprightness by portraying changing attitudes towards slavery through someone who was once a slave trader but who now condemns the whole institution. Given Cabrera's tendency to focus on the complexities of historical discourse, one can argue that it is both. Interestingly, the author only reproduces this document and does not elaborate on Obes's possible hypocrisy. Taking into consideration the significance of the Obes name, it is perhaps an attempt to be less controversial by protecting his historical standing in society. In the 1800s, Obes and his brothers-in-law were called 'Los cinco hermanos Obes' and their influence led historians such as Ricardo Goldaracena to attest that '[e]ran ni más ni menos que los dueños de la República'.[92] Later, Obes was the progenitor of what Goldaracena terms 'la nobleza republicana' and amongst his descendants were many ministers and presidents of Uruguay.[93] Considering this context, Cabrera's standpoint is understandable because if

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[89] Obes' actual defence asserted: 'el comprar una mujer, dos mujeres y cien mujeres a 4 pesos con derecho a disponer de ella por el mismo o mayor precio, y en favor del primer licitador no es conforme a ninguna moral; pero menos a la evangélica'. Quoted in Barrios Pintos, 'Historias privadas', p. 186.
[90] Ibid., p. 188.
[91] Indeed, Bentancour and Aparicio claim that Obes defended the slaves 'por motivos de conveniencia' without explaining why it was convenient for him. *Amos y esclavos*, p. 11.
[92] Goldaracena, *El libro*, p. 185.
[93] Ibid., p. 182.

she had outrightly condemned Obes for his role as a slave trader, it would have been a symbolic criticism of the nation's past leaders and by extension of national cohesion and identity. Instead, Cabrera partially reinforces this identity by focusing on Uruguayans as the 'good' masters of slaves. *Las esclavas* then echoes de Mattos's *Bernabé, Bernabé!* as the latter is critical of the lesser known hero Bernabé but not so much of more significant figures such as Rivera and Artigas.

Similarly, in the novel, Cristóbal Salvañach's historical role in the slave trade and his ambiguous treatment of slaves is disregarded, and alternatively he is portrayed as being sympathetic towards them. He had, for instance, prohibited Celedonia from hurting the slaves (26), and they were happier before he left for Africa (26 and 31). Additionally, he took Encarnación to the doctor after Celedonia attacked her against his wishes, which became an issue of continued dispute between them (70-71). He even encouraged the slaves to learn to read and his support led one of them to admit that 'la presencia de don Cristóbal era una seguridad para todos los esclavos' (51 and 81). In a rather problematic fashion then, Cristóbal is portrayed as the contrasting angel to Celedonia's devilish attitudes.

At the same time, the novel alludes to Cristóbal's illicit attraction to Mariquita, which, like Obes's connection to the slave trade, is only hinted at but not developed further. As Graciosita reports to her interrogators, Cristóbal complimented Mariquita's looks, resulting in Celedonia's ire, since it echoed her own experience with her father and his slave lover: 'Mulata de ojos verdes y porte de reina, dijo un día en La Valenciana don Cristóbal y el ama nunca se lo perdonó' (53). Later, Graciosita remembers his affection for Mariquita 'una noche de verano en La Valenciana vio a don Cristóbal acariciar el cabello de Mariquita mientras ella besaba con respeto su mano' (54). Although the novel implies that he was taking advantage of his female slaves, it does not elaborate on this idea, raising the question of whether, like Obes, Cabrera partially protects Cristóbal's standing in society. Although the Salvañachs were not as influential as the Obes, they were one of the patrician families of Uruguay.[94] Goldaracena, for instance, writes that Cristóbal was the 'perfecto ejemplo de lo que fue un gran señor en tiempos del coloniaje'

[94] See Goldaracena's, *El libro* and Carlos Real de Azúa's *El patriciado uruguayo* (Montevideo: Ediciones Asir, 1961).

and during the British Invasions of the early 1800s, 'se había portado como un héroe'.[95] *Las esclavas* then to some extent conforms to this view of Cristóbal with regards to his treatment of slaves.

Since Obes and Cristóbal's actions take place under the domination of Spain and Portugal, when slave trade and slavery was legal, many might view their owning of slaves as less problematic than if it had occurred under a government run by Orientals. Similarly, one could argue that because of Spanish and Portuguese rule, Obes and Salvañach might have not considered themselves Uruguayans, thus undermining the argument that the text reinforces identity by portraying Uruguayans as 'good'. Yet, as patriarchs of elite families of Old Montevideo, their influence has continued into the present where they are considered progenitors of many noteworthy Uruguayans. For this reason, I argue that *Las esclavas* does view them as Uruguayans and in absolving their participation in slavery, because 'they were men of their time', it partially reinforces the identity myth that Uruguay is a progressive nation due to its democratic and egalitarian ideals.

Intertextuality: Revenge and Memory

Examining violent episodes from Uruguayan history is a recurring feature in post-dictatorship historical novels; as they allude to the ethical complexities involved, these instances are often a metaphor for the recently ended dictatorship. De Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, for instance, portrays violence not only against the Charrúas but also on their own part as Sepé's murder of Bernabé is brought into question. Similarly, in *Las esclavas*, violence, rebellion and freedom as well as the inevitability of vengeance are consistent themes as Cabrera engages with previous literary texts to investigate them. On exploring these themes, the novel also comments on their relation to memory-making and its politics to highlight how marginalised figures have been slighted in history. Such an engagement with previous literary works, its intertextuality, is based on the assumption that 'a writer is a reader of texts before s/he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind'.[96] Moreover, in the case of historical novels, using intertextuality in the form of citations

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[95] Goldaracena, *El libro*, p. 261.

[96] Michael Wharton and Judith Still, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 1.

from previous texts, not only guides readers towards certain interpretations of the novel and of the past, but also challenges the linear traditions of writing official history.

From the beginning, the title page directs the reader to the theme of vengeance. Under the title, for instance, there is a citation in italics from Aesop's fable 'The Eagle and the Beetle': 'No hay nadie tan débil que, ultrajado, no sea capaz un día de vengarse' (3). This fable tells the story of an eagle who kills a hare despite a beetle begging her not to. To avenge the hare's death, the beetle destroys all the eagle's eggs by rolling them downhill.[97] This cycle, as a reversal of the myth of Sisyphus, continues as the eagle tries to protect her eggs but the beetle repeatedly destroys them. As the novel cites this fable, it both alludes to the idea of a weaker entity confronting a much stronger one and points to the ethical issues that it will tackle, i.e. whether the beetle is right to avenge the hare's death by any means possible. Moreover, it implies that in contrast to historical works that condemned slave rebellions, the novel will reflect upon how they are viewed today and highlight the complexities of their vengeful actions.

Likewise, the citation before Graciosita's testimony also intertextually refers to violence and revenge. From Act V, Scene 1 of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1599-1602), Cabrera cites: 'Pronto va a llegarnos la hora de sosiego' (13).[98] With vengeance as its main theme, *Hamlet* is based on the eponymous Prince's wavering intent to avenge his father's death by murdering his uncle Claudius. This scene in particular deals with the funeral of Hamlet's love interest, Ophelia, and his ensuing quarrel with her brother Laertes. Taking place at the end of the scene, in the above dialogue Claudius warns Laertes to be patient and his words foreshadow Hamlet's as well as his own death in the play. Here, 'hora de sosiego' refers to the possible peace in Denmark after the conflict between Claudius and Hamlet has been solved. In *Las esclavas*, in a similar vein, it becomes a metaphor for the death of the avengers, Encarnación and Mariquita, as well as the victim Celedonia. Furthermore, it alludes to the innocent Graciosita's –whose testimony follows this quote– moment of rest after the conflict is resolved. Moreover, in Shakespeare's play although Hamlet is the protagonist and Claudius the supposed villain,

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[97] Aesop, *The Complete Fables*, trans. by Olivia Temple and Robert Temple (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 4–5.
[98] The original is: 'An hour of quiet shortly we shall see'. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. by Philip Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 237.

the former's actions are not entirely scrupulous as he knowingly leaves his childhood friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to die at the hands of the King of England. Alluding to the ethical ambiguity of revenge in its own plot, the novel's message thus becomes further nuanced as issues of violence and revolt in the context of slavery can be viewed as more substantial than an individual's revenge. The author then directs the informed reader to question these issues as they might have done with canonical texts such as *Hamlet*.

The last section, 'Defensa y sentencia', which consists of Lucas Obes's plea, is preceded by a quote by Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) from his acclaimed short story 'Emma Zunz' (1948). Highlighting the tension between history and fiction, the quote also emphasises the novel's theme of revenge: 'La historia se impuso a todos porque sustancialmente es cierta. Verdadero es el tono, verdadero el odio, verdadero el ultraje que había padecido, sólo son falsas algunas circunstancias, la hora y uno o dos nombres propios' (210).[99] Like *Hamlet*, Emma Zunz also avenges her father's death by killing his supposed murderer, Aarón Loewenthal. By quoting this short story then, Cabrera engages with another canonical author who portrays women carrying out acts of vengeance as justice. Referring to her own novel, it proposes that even though some of *Las esclavas* is fiction, the historical offense and the hate – both Celedonia's and the slaves' – is true. In using previous texts to raise issues of vengeance, the novel highlights its own complexities, questions how violence is remembered and whether it is justifiable in the act of resisting slavery. As it again attempts to contradict historical works such as de María's that viewed the slaves as cold-blooded murderers, through the perspective of the present, it nuances our remembering of the past.[100]

Likewise, Cabrera's intertextual allusions comment on the politics of memory and myth-making as the middle section 'Reconstrucciones' is preceded by two quotes, one in a bigger font by Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866-1936) and the other by Borges again. Valle Inclán's quote first highlights the artificiality of what is recalled, implying that certain realities have been forgotten: 'Nada es como es, sino como se recuerda' (83). The quotes uses the passive voice to reject the idea of an ultimate truth, and suggests that

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[99] Jorge Luis Borges, *El Aleph* (Madrid: Alianza, 1976), p. 68.
[100] De María, *Montevideo antiguo*, I, 251.

collective memory transcends it. Placed at the beginning of a section which includes narratives by Joaquín Wich, Lucas Obes and Celedonia that allude to the unreliability of memory, it directs the reader to doubt what is remembered from the ruling class' point of view. At the same time, it raises the question of whether the slaves' memories fictionalised in the novel could also be unreliable. Accordingly, Borges's ensuing citation casts further doubts on the idea of truth as it emphasises the artificiality of memory: 'El mundo entero es solo un juego de símbolos y todo significa otra cosa' (83). A metaphor for Celedonia's murder and other slave rebellions during the early nineteenth century, this quote asks the reader to challenge what they read and see. As we have discussed, the myth in school textbooks postulated that the rebellions were a hindrance to domestic peace when in fact it was the lack of freedom and, many times, violent masters, that caused the slaves to revolt. At another level, Borges' citation can be viewed as a metafiction; the novel, referring to itself, recommends the reader to doubt its own content and therefore by and large also that of all historical texts, fiction or non-fiction.

Cultural memory with regards to slavery is further brought into question in the quote that prefaces Luciano's testimony. Presumably by the author herself, it highlights the deep-rooted collective memory of slavery:

> Podrán desaparecer todos los libros sobre la esclavitud y todos los esclavos, pero la imagen de un esclavo encadenado y con grilletes camino del patíbulo no se borrará jamás, porque como bien dice Borges, esa imagen es ya parte de la memoria de los hombres (183).

Although this evocative quote can be interpreted in many ways, two ideas stand out. Firstly, undermining written history, it implies that even if we try to forget the horrors of slavery, downplay them or write them out of textbooks, it still exists in people's living memory as well as in its traces such as oral history, which cannot be erased. Secondly, by suggesting that slavery has become part of a world memory, it echoes Landsberg's term, prosthetic memory, through which the reader 'takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event' not directly experienced by them.[101] Cabrera's use of intertextuality in *Las esclavas* thus highlights two significant concerns that are a recurring feature in other historical novels in this thesis: violence that represents both vengeance and rebellion against oppressive regimes; and the questioning of the politics of myth-

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[101] Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, p. 2.

making and memory. As we have seen, memory is at the core of these historical novels, as they both reclaim the individual memories of those marginalised in history whilst challenging memory structures and suggesting new ones for post-dictatorship Uruguay.

Conclusion

Along with its use of intertextuality, *Las esclavas* rewrites History to present new histories of African-origin women in Montevideo. Through its polyphony, it questions how a singular 'white' version of history has been used for identity-forming purposes in the past. By portraying the Iglesia Matriz and Casa Rivera in Old Montevideo, it situates Afro-Uruguayan memory within the national one, resulting in a renewed version of collective memory that includes previously silenced voices. Landsberg's analysis of African-American Toni Morrison's writing further helps us understand the issue at hand, as the memory theorist asserts that 'while the black characters in Morrison's novels acquire memories that might be considered their cultural inheritance, she intends white readers to take on those memories too'.[102] Building on Landsberg's analysis of Morrison's works, it can be argued that *Las esclavas* intends for Uruguayan readers to acquire prosthetic memories of not only slavery through Graciosita, Encarnación and Mariquita, but also of other women's experiences of early Montevideo via Celedonia. It further demonstrates that slavery is part of the Uruguayan experience regardless of one's race. Moreover, prosthetic memory is capable of disrupting previous notions of identity, as Landsberg writes of 'their power to unsettle, to produce ruptures, to disfigure, and to defamiliarize the very conditions of existence in the present'.[103] The novel, then, by endowing the reader with a prosthetic memory of Uruguayan slave experiences, attempts to expand cultural memory and alter notions of identity. The question remains, however, to what extent does the text succeed in altering identity and in fact whether it proposes a new one. Although the novel situates Afro-Uruguayans within the national discourse, it still does not persistently challenge identity but instead provides a complex and ambiguous message. In other words, as it negotiates a space for the Afro-Uruguayan in identity discourses, it does not entirely displace its essential pillars such as the elite first families of Montevideo.

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[102] Ibid., p. 98.
[103] Ibid., p. 106.

Chapter 4

Memorialising the Siege of Paysandú in Mario Delgado Aparaín's *No robarás las botas de los muertos*

No robarás las botas de los muertos (2002) by Mario Delgado Aparaín fictionalises the Siege of Paysandú (1864-65), one of Uruguay's major civil conflicts between the Colorados and Blancos during the nineteenth century. An attack against a city with little resources to defend itself, many historians mythologised Paysandú's defenders as an example of the values of resistance and fighting for one's sovereignty. In the late nineteenth century, the Blancos first used the memory of the siege for nation-building purposes and later the Colorados, the political descendants of those who laid the siege, attempted to do the same. Delgado Aparaín therefore chose to fictionalise a historical event whose memory was complex and conflicted and which in fact often divided the nation instead of unifying it. Along with being based on a divisive narrative, *No robarás las botas de los muertos* (henceforth, *No robarás*) also stands out in this corpus as the only text which fictionalises nineteenth-century events that followed the emergence of the Colorados and the Blancos. In other words, it does not recount the origins of the nation, but the conflicts that defined it after its independence. Nonetheless, as we shall see below, the text diligently follows the themes of the 'new' historical novel that we have noted so far: it challenges identity myths by questioning historiography, it puts forth alternative perspectives on the past by providing outsiders' views; and it incorporates long-silenced voices of women and racial minorities, encouraging the reader to piece together their own version of history and national identity. Additionally, as it attempts to bypass partisan politics, in a context where the left was beginning to play a significant role in the political landscape, it proposes a new memory narrative of the Siege for present-day readers whose identity may no longer be defined by allegiance to either of the two parties.

The chapter first considers the history of the Siege of Paysandú to highlight its place in Uruguayan cultural memory and its role in identity formation. Then it discusses the significance of the non-Uruguayan voices in the text, namely the Andalusian protagonist Martín Zamora and the Englishman Raymond Harris. Next, the multifaceted representation of the Blanco leader of the defensive forces, Leandro Gómez, is analysed. Subsequently, the analysis focuses on the depiction of the leaders sieging Paysandú: the Uruguayan Venancio Flores, the Brazilian Barón de Tamandaré and the Argentine Bartolomé Mitre. Finally, the novel's portrayal of Afro-Uruguayans and women is highlighted. The conclusion brings these strands together to examine how *No robarás* reinterprets history and memory in the post-dictatorship period to put forth a more pluralistic version of national identity.

Historical Background

Lasting from 2 December 1864 until 2 January 1865, the Siege of Paysandú was a significant event in the intermittent civil conflicts in nineteenth-century Uruguay. In the siege, a small Blanco army defended the city against their Colorado compatriot Venancio Flores who was supported by Argentina and the Imperial troops of Brazil. After a month-long battle, the sieging forces captured the city, and the defending leader Leandro Gómez was executed. The causes of the siege were both domestic and international: it was a civil conflict between the two leading parties, the Colorados and the Blancos and it was part of the wider conflict that would become the War of the Triple Alliance (1865-70) between Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay on one hand and Paraguay on the other. This section first discusses the emergence of the two political parties in post-independence Uruguay and the civil conflicts that led to the siege of Paysandú as well as its often-contentious details. Secondly, focusing on the siege's representation in historical and cultural works, it demonstrates how in the late nineteenth century Blanco historians first viewed the defence as a heroic resistance and proposed it as an identity forming event. Later, it argues, even Colorado historians appropriated it as a patriotic gesture, viewing the siege as a foreign invasion because of the participation of Argentina and Brazil. In the twentieth century, although both factions would attempt to portray it as a milestone in Uruguayan nationhood, it is argued that its representation in historical and cultural works would continue to be defined by party allegiances.

The 1830s in Uruguay were marked by the advent and consolidation of two political factions, the Blancos and the Colorados. Significant in their emergence was the Battle of Carpintería in 1836, fought between Generals Manuel Oribe and Fructuoso Rivera's armies, which adopted white and red insignias respectively.[1] Ideologically, the Blancos stood for conservative rural values favouring the federal political model of decentralisation and were aligned to Argentine federals such as Juan Manuel Rosas (1793-1877). The Colorados, on the other hand, defined themselves as liberal, urban and embraced European values. Advocating the concentration of power at the capital city, they were affiliated to the unitarians in Argentina. Following their emergence and for the rest of the nineteenth century, identity in Uruguay would be defined by allegiance to either of the two parties.

Because of their opposing ideologies, the two sides clashed on many occasions, in a conflict that peaked with the Guerra Grande. Lasting for twelve years (1839-1851), the Guerra Grande divided the country into two parts with the Colorados at Montevideo and the Blancos in the countryside.[2] From 1843 onwards, in a foreshadowing of the role-reversal of Paysandú, Blanco forces sieged the Colorado-held Montevideo.[3] When the Guerra Grande finally ended in 1851, it was due to the threat of invasion by Brazil and the Argentine Justo José de Urquiza, the Governor of the Entre Ríos province. Internal politics in Uruguay were then put aside to protect national sovereignty. In order to avoid the Brazilian attack, however, Uruguayan leaders had to sign several treaties with them, giving them the right to interfere in government affairs at Montevideo. Brazilian intervention in domestic matters and a fear of invasion were thus urgent concerns in post-1851 Uruguay, which would be further confirmed thirteen years later during the Siege of Paysandú.

To avoid another civil war after the Guerra Grande, the Colorados and Blancos collaborated in a government called the 'política de fusión'.[4] Party allegiances had not

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[1] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 23. Also see Juan E. Pivel Devoto, *Historia de los partidos políticos en el Uruguay*, 2 vols (Montevideo: Cámara de Representantes, 1994).
[2] Nahum, *Breve historia*, p. 27.
[3] In literature, this siege of Montevideo was portrayed in Alexander Dumas's novel *Montevideo ou une nouvelle Troie* (1850). In post-dictatorship Uruguay, the title of Amir Hamed's historical novel *Troya Blanda* (1996) is a play on Dumas's work.
[4] Benjamín Nahum attributes the origins of 'política de fusión' to Andrés Lamas who proposed 'la formación de un partido nuevo, desechando las divisas, y atribuía la principal responsabilidad del

weakened, however, and identity continued to be defined by them. Following the deaths of their leaders Rivera and Oribe in 1854 and 1857 respectively, the two parties lacked united fronts and this led to the gradual fracturing of the 'política de fusion'. Subsequently, during the presidency of Colorado Gabriel Antonio Pereira (1856-60), César Díaz, also a Colorado exiled in Buenos Aires, rebelled against the government in January 1858 and disembarked in Montevideo to capture the city. A violation of the 'política de fusión', Díaz's actions threatened domestic peace. The invasion was unsuccessful, however, and as his troops retreated to the interior, they were arrested at Paso de Quinteros on the river Negro. On arresting Díaz, officer Anacleto Medina promised him immunity, but later President Pereira ordered the Colorado rebels to be executed. Although Pereira soon changed his mind and sent a courier to Quinteros, by the time the messenger arrived, in an unfortunate turn of events, 152 Colorados, including César Díaz, had already been executed. Despite Pereira's involvement, many Colorados accused Blanco intellectuals such as Antonio de las Carreras and Luis de Herrera of orchestrating the massacre.[5] Later dubbed the Hecatombe de Quinteros, this incident deepened the existing divide between the two parties, and six years later, the Siege of Paysandú, in its own brutality, would be viewed as the Colorado response to the Quinteros massacre.

The Siege of Paysandú also reflected a wider conflict between the alliance of Argentina, Brazil and the Colorados on the one hand and Paraguay and the Blancos on the other. In 1860, when Blanco leader Bernardo Prudencio Berro (1860-64) became the President of Uruguay, many dissenting Colorados under the leadership of Venancio Flores exiled themselves in Buenos Aires under the protection of Unitarian Argentine president Bartolomé Mitre (1862-68).[6] Similarly, as Berro refused to renew many post-Guerra Grande treaties on the grounds of national development, Brazil became wary of

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desorden nacional al caudillismo […]. Para los doctores, esa política de fusión permitiría, al superar las discordias partidistas, lograr la paz interna…'. *Manual de historia del Uruguay: 1830-1903*, 16th edn, 2 vols (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2006), I, 110.

[5] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 277.

[6] Born in 1808, Venancio Flores participated in the Cruzada Libertadora of 1825 against Portuguese rule in the Banda Oriental. After independence, he became an important leader in the Colorado faction and in Uruguayan politics generally. After the Guerra Grande, he led negotiations between the two parties, and held provisional presidency between 1853-56. His significant role in Uruguay's nineteenth-century history, even led Blanco historians such as Maiztegui Casas to recognise his importance and call him 'el conciliador'. *Caudillos*, I, 159. See also Washington Lockhart, *Venancio Flores: Un caudillo trágico* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1976).

his Blanco government and instead sided with the exiled Colorados. Flores, therefore, could count on the support of two giant states: Brazil and Argentina.

Alienated by his neighbours, the Blanco President Berro then consolidated ties with Paraguay.[7] Under Carlos Antonio López between 1841 and 1862, Paraguay had modernised, expanded its military power and, following isolationist policies, had aimed for self-sufficiency by controlling its imports. Paraguay's military advancements inevitably threatened neighbouring countries such as Argentina and Brazil who joined forces to counter it. Likewise, Paraguay's policies disrupted British trade interests in the region, resulting in their tacit support for Argentina and Brazil.[8] Uruguay's next president, Atanasio Aguirre (1864-65), also a Blanco, sought to maintain his predecessor's relations with Paraguay, and this encouraged Argentine and Brazilian support for Venancio Flores in his ambition to liberate Uruguay from the Blancos. In brief, both Latin American and European interests were involved in the complex circumstances that led to the Siege of Paysandú.

With the backing of Argentina and Brazil, in 1863 Flores led the so-called Cruzada Libertadora. Named after the 1825 Cruzada, which sought to liberate the Banda Oriental from the Portuguese, Flores's expedition also had religious dimensions. President Berro's policies had clashed with the Catholic church as he attempted to secularise cemeteries in Montevideo, leading many to view Flores as 'reinvindicando presuntos derechos eclesiásticos mancillados'.[9] Despite his actions being against the elected government, Flores counted on the support of many Colorados in Uruguay. Accordingly, when he first crossed the Argentinian border into Uruguay (as in the 1825 Cruzada), he was joined by Colorado leaders such as Gregorio Suárez and Fausto Aguilar.[10] With their help, by 1864 Flores was able to capture the cities of Florida, Trinidad, Mercedes and Salto. In December of the same year, as he marched towards Paysandú, he had obtained ammunition from Argentina and was accompanied by Brazilian Admiral Baron de Tamandaré's squadron on the River Uruguay. Additionally,

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[7] Thomas L. Whigham, *The Paraguayan War*, 2 vols (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), I, 139–40.
[8] Nahum, *Manual*, I, 140.
[9] Ibid., p. 134.
[10] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 283.

Flores was later joined by another Brazilian, José Luís Mena Barretto and his army of 10,000 men.[11]

Paysandú, on the other hand, was a strong Blanco foothold with a small army led by Colonel Leandro Gómez accompanied by General Lucas Píriz and Colonels Emilio Rana and Tristan Azambuya. Since the Blanco forces comprised of a mere 1080 soldiers, many of the city's inhabitants volunteered to defend it. Coronel Gómez also expected aid from two federal Argentines whose allegiances lay with the Blanco government at Montevideo: the exiled General Juan Saá and the caudillo of Entre Rios, Justo José de Urquiza. Their armies, however, would not be able to arrive at Paysandú because of logistical difficulties and time constraints.[12]

A well-known incident of the siege occurred at the beginning on 3 December 1864 when Venancio Flores wrote a letter to Leandro Gómez asking him to surrender. If Gómez surrendered the city by 5 December, Flores offered to let the defending officers to go free; but if the city were to be captured by force, he warned that it would be disastrous for them. Gómez did not reply to the note, but instead added the sentence 'cuando sucumba' and returned it to Flores.[13] For historians such as Thomas L. Whigham this was an example of Gómez's stubbornness, but for others it was a heroic gesture.[14] In Uruguayan historiography, however, the dramatic nature of this exchange would later be used to mythologise Gómez as a brave and fearless underdog.

The siege that followed was long and brutal. As December came to an end, because of dwindling ammunition and an increasing number of casualties, the circumstances of the besieged forces worsened. Subsequently, on 1 January 1865, after conferring with his officers, Gómez sent a Colorado prisoner to Flores requesting him for eight hours of ceasefire to bury the dead and take care of the wounded. When the prisoner failed to return, Gómez sent another with the same letter. By the time Flores's negative reply arrived, however, Brazilian soldiers had already captured Paysandú. Notably,

[11] Ibid., p. 288.
[12] Ibid., pp. 289–91.
[13] Hermógenes Masanti, 'Diario del sitio y defensa', in *La defensa de Paysandú: Recopilación de documentos, narraciones, extractos de la prensa, biografías, episodios y recuerdos personales que reflejan el momento político en que tuvo lugar la heroica defensa de Paysandú*, ed. by Rafael A. Pons and Demetrio Erausquin (Montevideo: Rural á vapor, 1887), pp. 337–71 (p. 341).
[14] Whigham, *Paraguayan War*, I, 224. Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 289.

historians do not agree on how the siege ended. Blanco historians insist that the sieging soldiers forcibly entered the city and tricked the defenders into believing that peace had been negotiated.[15] On the other hand, Colorado historians claim that their soldiers respected the defenders and entered the city peacefully without hurting anyone.[16] Illustrating that there is no single accepted narrative about the siege, such a dissonance attests to how historical events often support particular political narratives.

As Brazilian forces entered the main plaza of Paysandú on 2 January, they first seized Leandro Gómez and other Blanco officers and later handed them over to the Colorados. Then, on the orders of Gregorio Suárez (known as Goyo Jeta), an officer infamous for his cruel behaviour, Colorado soldiers executed Gómez. Similar to the killing of César Díaz at Quinteros, the execution of a Blanco General by Colorados had the potential to further divide the nation.[17] However, Gómez's death was lamented throughout the Southern cone and Colorado and Brazilian officials also viewed it as unjust and cruel; Flores, for instance, even sought to court-martial Suárez.[18] Although the Blancos had viewed their leader as a hero throughout the siege, the court-martial attempt points to the fact that after Gómez's death even the Colorados, who had earlier perceived him to be stubborn, had begun to view him in a positive light. It was thus at the moment of his death that Gómez's myth was born and by extension, the defending soldiers and inhabitants of Paysandú were also viewed as martyrs.

As the Siege of Paysandú was taking place, it was simultaneously described in newspaper articles published in Uruguay and Argentina which drew upon soldiers' personal letters to their family and friends.[19] Similarly, after the siege, the defenders Hermógenes Masanti and Orlando Ribero wrote chronicles that later served as resources for many historians such as Antonio Díaz and Eduardo Acevedo. The archival sources for the siege are thus rich and extensive as eyewitness accounts became the basis for both historical studies and myth-making.

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[15] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales*, I, 293.
[16] Antonio Díaz, *Historia*, V (1878), 127–28.
[17] Gómez was promoted to General by the Blanco government at Montevideo during the siege.
[18] Maiztegui Casas, *Orientales,* I, 295.
[19] Eduardo Acevedo, *Anales históricos del Uruguay*, 6 vols (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1933-36), III (1933), 278.

The siege's representation and memorialisation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveal a lot about identity politics and nation-building efforts of the time. Its portrayal was complex and often contradictory whilst its memory was always marked by party allegiances. First, the Blanco faction used the siege to consolidate Uruguayan identity, significant in which was Rafael A. Pons and Demetrio Erausquin's *La defensa de Paysandú* (1887), the compilation of documents related to the siege referred to above. Shaping how the event would be perceived in the twentieth century, this compilation emphasises the need to disregard political affiliation as Pons and Erausquin dedicate the book to 'los que aman las glorias nacionales; á los que antes que partidarios son orientales; á los que sienten orgullo en reconocer el valor y patriotismo abnegado de nuestros compatriotas, sin distinción de filiaciones políticas'.[20] Despite appealing to all Uruguayans to view the event as a national glory, the book's Blanco perspective glorifies Leandro Gómez and the defending forces. For instance, as they reproduce a poem called '¡Gloria á los bravos!' from *Poesía leída* (1873) by renowned poet Washington P. Bermúdez, they reinforce the idea that the brave ones were the defenders and not the besieging forces.[21] Similarly, journalist Norberto Estrada's *Glorias nacionales: El episodio inmortal, Plegaría á Paysandú* (1895) also viewed the defence as patriotic despite it being a civil conflict. Paying homage to the soldiers' courage, Estrada wrote: 'la ciudad jigante [sic], la cuna de la inmortalidad, defiende heroicamente la bandera de la patria: *vencer ó morir*, tal es el lema de los patriotas'.[22] The Blancos then despite being defeated in the conflict proposed the siege's defence as a shared national glory.

In the late nineteenth century, Colorados also attempted to appropriate the siege, beginning, once more, with Máximo Santos's government which brought back Gómez's remains to Montevideo in 1884 and reburied them in the central cemetery.[23] The fact that Santos, a Colorado, would glorify Gómez was remarkable indeed. Despite the siege being a civil conflict, Santos's government, intent on nation-building, recognised Gómez and the defence's importance in consolidating a national identity narrative. By re-burying

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[20] Rafael A. Pons and Demetrio Erausquin, 'Dedicatoria', in *La defensa de Paysandú*, p. 5.
[21] Ibid., p. 375.
[22] Norberto Estrada, *Glorias nacionales: El episodio inmortal plegaria a Paysandú* (Montevideo: La nueva central, 1895), p. 77.
[23] Washington Lockhart, *Leandro Gómez: La defensa de la soberanía* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2012), p. 107. This is a reprint of a book first published in 1977.

Gómez, Santos acknowledged that the siege of Paysandú was an event worth remembering, thus confirming its significant place in Uruguayan history. It is then interesting to consider how a siege embroiled in civil conflict could be viewed as a national glory. Arguably, along with Gómez's martyrdom, because the siege highlighted the bravery and resilience of common people who had chosen to defend the city despite having the opportunity to leave, it could be perceived as a national event which emphasised the values of fighting for one's sovereignty.

In the same vein, the siege was an illustration of Uruguayan resilience against Brazilian imperial interests in its territory. Historian Eduardo Acevedo, for instance, noted in the early twentieth century that the siege was a military laurel for Brazilians:

> En el fondo, pues, era una victoria del ejército brasileño más que del ejército aliado […] lo que resulta indudable es que el ejército de Flores librado a sus solas fuerzas, no habría podido salir de la guerra de recursos en que había vivido hasta que intervino Brasil […]. Y fue por eso sin duda que uno de los marineros del almirante Tamandaré arrancó de la torre de la Iglesia […] la bandera oriental que allí flameaba para colocar en su lugar la bandera brasileña triunfante.[24]

Acevedo's evocative description of the Uruguayan flag being replaced by the Brazilian one demonstrates that highlighting the participation and triumph of Brazilian troops was a way in which the siege's defence could be exalted as an act of Uruguayan patriotism against foreign forces.

At the same time, the siege's portrayal seems to have tapped into an existing and (increasingly more accepted) narrative about Uruguayan identity. The inequality of numbers and the participation of Brazil at Paysandú are reminiscent of the Portuguese invasions (1816-1820) which José Artigas combated unsuccessfully. The Siege of Paysandú was then similar to Artigas's defence of the Banda Oriental in two ways. Firstly, Leandro Gómez was one of the early artiguistas whose obstinacy in not giving up Paysandú could be equated with Artigas's efforts.[25] Secondly, the defence against the siege was also a relentless fight against foreign invasion. Kalí Tal's concept of mythologization of traumatic narratives clarifies this idea further. For Tal,

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[24] Acevedo, *Anales*, III, 283.

[25] See Mario Dotta Ostria and Rodolfo González Rissotto, *Leandro Gómez: Artiguista, masón, defensor heroico de la independencia nacional*, 2nd edn (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Plaza, 2014).

'[m]ythologization works by reducing a traumatic event to a set of standardized narratives (twice- and thrice-told tales that come to represent "the story" of the trauma) turning it from a frightening and uncontrollable event into a contained and predictable narrative'.[26] The Portuguese invasions in the early nineteenth century and the Siege of Paysandú were both traumatic events that threatened the region's sovereignty. In the late nineteenth century, since Artigas's fight against the Portuguese had already been mythologised, there was similarly an attempt to overlook civil strife and standardise the Paysandú narrative as a story of resistance and bravery. Indeed, H.D.'s history textbook, in an extract written by Carlos M. Maeso, notes '[l]a defensa de Paysandú no es un galardón de partido: es una Gloria oriental; porque allí la heroicidad de los uruguayos tuvo una demostración espléndida'.[27] As the textbook insists that the siege must not to divide the country, by appealing to people's emotions and highlighting the bravery of the common man, it accepts the Colorado-Blanco dialectic and denies it at the same time.

Nonetheless, although many attempted to propagate Paysandú as a unified narrative, an analysis of twentieth century Colorado writers such as Rómulo Rossi and Pedro Leandro Ipuche demonstrates that its representation was marked by party allegiances. Rossi, for instance, conducted extensive research on the siege and portrayed it as a patriotic event in *Episodios históricos: Bombardeo y toma de Paysandú / Cruzada Libertadora (*1923), a title which reflects his Colorado allegiance.[28] As a journalist, whilst interviewing survivors and relatives of not only the defensive forces but also the sieging ones, Rossi prompted interviewees to view Brazilian soldiers in a bad light, echoing the idea that the siege was a foreign invasion. Similarly, in order to exonerate Flores, Rossi highlighted his benevolence towards the defeated soldiers and the triumphant army's good conduct. Thus, despite writing about the siege as a national narrative, Rossi's representation was clearly influenced by his support for the Colorados. Almost forty years later, illustrating the evolution of Colorado thinking, from partisanship to a wider, national interpretation, Ipuche, in *La defensa de Paysandú* (1962), views the siege as a shared narrative and asserts that although he is a Colorado and *batllista*, he had 'la

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[26] Kalí Tal, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 6.
[27] Carlos M. Maeso, 'Defensa de Paysandú', in *Ensayo de historia patria*, II, 195–98 (p. 198).
[28] Rómulo F. Rossi, *Episodios históricos: Bombardeo y toma de Paysandú / Cruzada Libertadora* (Montevideo: Peña, 1923).

valentía de despojar[se] de toda limitación partidaria para interpretar el asunto con limpia mirada oriental'.[29] By 1962, when Ipuche's work was published, there was no threat of civil war between the Colorados and Blancos, making it easier for him to engage in cultural production about the event whilst still recognising his own Colorado affiliation.

Although the Siege of Paysandú was a significant part of Uruguayan cultural memory and its national identity narrative, it has been shown here that its remembrance was complex and multifaceted. In other words, in spite of being used for nation-building purposes as a commonly agreed myth, its representation was often marred by historians' political allegiances. In this context, Delgado Aparaín's choice to fictionalise this historical event may stem from highly politicised motives. Yet, as we shall see below, *No robarás* attempts to alter the memory of the siege by reassessing the archive and putting forth a more humane version of the events, a perspective that is also influenced by the emergence of a new political left-wing force, the Frente Amplio. The novel demonstrates accordingly that the siege's memory, in Nelly de Agostino's words during a radio show, 'se está redimensionando, resignificando; lógicamente el proceso histórico lo va alejando de esa dimensión partidaria y le está dando otra proyección'.[30]

Mario Delgado Aparaín and *No robarás las botas de los muertos*

Born in 1949 in the departmental capital of Florida, Mario Delgado Aparaín had a rural upbringing, an aspect often reflected in his fiction. Although he grew up amongst Blancos, he admits that he has always supported the Frente Amplio.[31] A party founded in 1971 by a broad coalition of left-wing groups, the Frente Amplio was declared illegal during the dictatorship and its supporters were persecuted. Delgado Aparaín, a school teacher then, was also imprisoned for his politics near the Uruguayan city of Rocha.[32] Like many others, on his release, he went into exile to Buenos Aires, Argentina. His

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[29] Pedro Leandro Ipuche, *La defensa de Paysandú* (Montevideo: Corporación gráfica, 1962), p. 9.
[30] '"Solo cuando sucumba": La heroica defensa que dio identidad a Paysandú', *En Perspectiva*, Radiomundo 1170 AM, 26 December 2003, 9.30am. Although de Agostino is aware of Delgado Aparaín's novel, in the above quote she refers to the siege generally. Other participants included Emiliano Cotelo (the host), Carlos Maggi, José Claudio Williman and César di Candia.
[31] Mario Delgado Aparaín, 'Un café con Mario Delgado Aparaín', Radio Uruguay, 10 June 2015, 10.46am <https://www.mec.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/70649/22/mecweb/un-cafe-con-mario-delgado-aparain?parentid=11305> [accessed 29 March 2019].
[32] Mario Delgado Aparaín, 'En dictadura fue conmovedor ver cómo la gente resistía en silencio', *LARED21*, 12 June 2013, section Política <http://www.lr21.com.uy/politica/1113101-mario-delgado-aparain-en-dictadura-fue-conmovedor-ver-como-la-gente-resistia-en-silencio> [accessed 1 April 2019].

experiences as a political prisoner and later in exile have undoubtedly influenced his writing as the dictatorship and resistance to it are major themes in his works.

Like de Mattos, Delgado Aparaín's literary career began in the 1970s with short stories and later he published novels such as *Estado de gracia* (1983), *El día del cometa* (1985), and *La balada de Johnny Sosa* (1987), which portrays the turmoil of the dictatorship through the perspective of an Afro-Uruguayan singer. Based in the fictional village of Mosquitos, the novel is a subtle comedy that describes the villagers' trials after a group of military men set up camp there. According to Delgado Aparaín, since the rural experience of the dictatorship was vastly different from cities, in villages it was difficult to oppose the military, even in secrecy. Despite their ordeals, he asserts, '[e]n dictadura fue conmovedor ver cómo la gente resistía en silencio'.[33] *La balada de Johnny Sosa* mirrors precisely this theme of resistance to oppressive regimes, an issue also present in his historical novels from the post-dictatorship period. The present work, *No robarás*, published in 2002, then follows de Mattos's lead in using historical fiction to reflect upon nineteenth century violence and injustice to speak to the post-dictatorship period.

Covering the period from 26 November 1864 until 2 January 1865, *No robarás* relates the siege through the perspective of a fictional character called Martín Zamora. An Andalusian imprisoned at Paysandú for kidnapping free Afro-Uruguayans and selling them as slaves in Brazil, Zamora later fights on the defensive front in return for his freedom. Along with narrating the siege, the author also uses flashbacks to describe Zamora's previous life in Andalusia and Brazil. Zamora's friend, the fictional Englishman Raymond Harris, is imprisoned in Paysandú on suspicion of being a Colorado spy, also to later redeem himself by defending the city. Like Harris, Zamora's love interest Mercedes Orozco, although based on factual accounts of female involvement in the conflict, is fictional. At the same time, an omniscient narrator recounts events the protagonist is not privy to, especially conversations between historical figures such as the Brazilian Barón de Tamandaré and the Uruguayans Hermógenes Masanti, Leandro Gómez and Venancio Flores. The novel also reproduces excerpts of Masanti's historical diary about the siege as he takes on the role of the officer who frees Zamora. *No robarás*

[33] Ibid.

thus follows the trends of its genre as it presents an amalgamation of fiction and history to create an alternative to the accepted, but also often contested, version of events.

The novel's style is descriptive and light. Sometimes Delgado Aparaín's writing is satirical, as he uses humour to criticise historical figures, whilst at other times it is sombre and empathetic towards his characters' ordeals. Reflecting this polyphony, the novel is divided into short sections narrated from different points of view, with dates at the beginning which allow the reader to follow the course of the siege. These dated sections are reminiscent of historical chronicles as well as the representation of the siege in school textbooks. Simultaneously, the effect is also cinematic as the short sections echo scenes in a film that quickly move from one perspective to another.[34] The novel's structural and stylistic features are a means to avoid imposing a fixed narrative upon the reader. As it emphasises the role of the reader in creating a new narrative of the Siege, by not dictating the way in which history and literature are consumed, it subverts the nation-building task of previous historical novels.

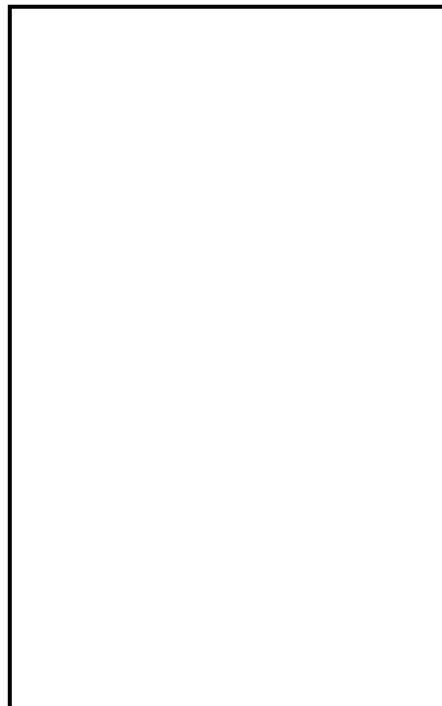

Figure 6 The map at the beginning of *No robarás las botas de los muertos* (8).

Further attesting to its polyphony, the novel's engagement with archival sources is first signalled through its epigraph, which is a news item about the siege from 31 December 1864 in *L'Italia*.[35] Paraphrasing the original, this lengthy quote foreshadows the novel's subject matter and paints a gloomy picture of the collapse of Paysandú. Both

[34] When asked about the multiplicity of voices in the novel, the author brought up the Japanese film *Rashomon* (1950) directed by Akira Kurosawa which provides four different subjective versions of a murder. My interview with Mario Delgado Aparaín. 20 November 2016, Montevideo.

[35] Mario Delgado Aparaín, *No robarás las botas de los muertos*, 4th edn (Montevideo: Alfaguara, 2002), p. 8. Further references to this edition of Delgado Aparaín's novel are given after quotations in the text. The news article was sourced from a letter sent by an eyewitness soldier to a friend after the siege ended. Its original Italian text is not available, but a translation can be found in Pons and Erausquin's *La defensa de Paysandú*, pp. 282–84.

the subsequent map of the region and this archival quote attempt to give the reader the geographical and historical context of the siege (see Figure 6). Next, Delgado Aparaín cites literary texts, the first being Carlos Fuentes's *Los años con Laura Díaz* (1999) about the lessons learnt from the *Iliad* and the second from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* about ruined cities which ends with the question: '¿Quién es el malhechor y quién el bienhechor?' (9). As both quotes frame the novel to raise questions of suffering and of good and evil, they summon not only Latin American historical novels but also classical world literature to foreshadow the tragic circumstances that follow.

As both these intertextual dialogues indicate a move towards a de-politicization of the Paysandú narrative, they resonate with Delgado Aparaín's epilogue, which signals the importance of literature in re-writing events tainted by partisan affiliations:

> quisiera resaltar que solo a través de la recreación imaginaria de la atmósfera de aquella Paysandú cercada en el tórrido diciembre de mil ochocientos sesenta y cuatro, me fue posible comulgar con la humanidad de la ciudad y su gente, rompiendo así la parálisis de una documentación tan portentosa como agobiante, muchas veces confusa, contradictoria y oscurecida por el apasionado partidarismo rioplatense de los últimos cien años. (440)

Indeed, as we will find in the following sections, the themes of de-politicising the siege and focusing on the humanity of the people at Paysandú are prominent in the novel. Moreover, I argue below that in debunking the partisan myth of Paysandú, the novel creates a new memory narrative of the siege which, whilst attempting to be less political, nevertheless continues to be so. Its politics, moreover, engage with present-day concerns of identity and memory in Uruguay.

Outsiders' Voices

The foreign voices in *No robarás* bring forward new perspectives to the Siege of Paysandú that are in turn critical of nineteenth-century politics as well as its memory and identity forming agendas. Firstly, through its Andalusian protagonist Martín Zamora, the novel deviates from the image of the defenders as patriotic soldiers and presents a more nuanced view of them. Secondly, the character of Raymond Harris unravels many Uruguayan myths in order to criticise partisan politics and the Triple Alliance war whilst portraying history from the margins.

The novel's fictional protagonist, Martín Zamora, an outsider not concerned with the region's politics, represents the common man in the novel. An Andalusian who travelled to Latin America in search of a better life, he ended up working as a musician for the slave dealer, Laurindo José da Costa. As a musician he was not involved in the dirtier elements of the trade, a feature which allows the reader to sympathise with him. Described as 'un hombre muy flaco y de notoria mala suerte', Zamora was later imprisoned in Paysandú for his participation in illegal slave trade in Uruguay, only to later redeem himself by joining the defending troops (11). Zamora's varied personal experiences in the novel then become a major tool in de-politicising the rich historical narrative of Paysandú. Delgado Aparaín is able to distance himself from partisan politics as his protagonist is neither Blanco nor Colorado, which allows him to put forth Zamora's fictional viewpoint as ostensibly objective. Highlighting his lack of belonging, 'un hombre con el corazón puesto en ningún sitio' (113), the novel portrays Zamora as alienated from the defending soldiers at Paysandú. For instance, before the siege he felt 'la incómoda sensación de no pertenecer a ningún sitio, a ningún bando, a ningún grupo' (130). This was confirmed by the soldiers' reaction to him when the national anthem was played: 'los potentes acordes del himno nacional hicieron ponerse de pie a los soldados de las trincheras. Un fusilero moreno de casaca gris lo observó con reprobación y le hizo un gesto para que se quitara el sombrero' (130). A stark contrast to the stereotype of the patriotic soldier, Zamora's personal identity differs from the accepted version of events and challenges identity-forming politics of previous representations of Paysandú.[36] Thus, whilst describing the second half of the nineteenth century, when Uruguayan identity was defined by allegiance to either the Blancos or the Colorados, Zamora belongs to neither. This results in a protagonist that appeals to contemporary post-dictatorship readers who have witnessed the dissolution of the bi-party system in Uruguay brought about by the rise of the Frente Amplio, thus further confirming the author's intentions of creating a new memory narrative of the siege.

Nonetheless, Zamora's character becomes complex, as the originally wary soldiers soon accept him, which leads him to develop a feeling of belonging to the city. Later, when given the opportunity to take refuge on a Spanish ship during the siege, he

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[36] For instance, Ipuche writes about the soldiers' patriotism: 'Los hombres de Paysandú defendieron y afirmaron, definitivamente, la independencia de Uruguay'. *La defensa*, p. 9.

chose instead to defend Paysandú (154). At the end of the siege, however, he leaves Uruguay for good on the same Spanish ship with his lover, Mercedes. Since there is no patriotic revelation for Zamora, the novel's anti-climactic end undermines the many memories of the Siege of Paysandú. Through its foreign protagonist, not conforming to either Blanco or Colorado memory of this event, pace textbooks such as *Ensayo de historia patria* by H. D., *No robarás* challenges previous appropriations of the siege as a Uruguayan glory whilst attempting to create a new memory narrative of the event.

Zamora's friend, Raymond Harris, an Englishman from Gibraltar, was a fake art dealer who was imprisoned in Paysandú on suspicion of being a Colorado spy and later redeemed himself by defending the city. Described as pessimistic and unscrupulous, in his conversations with Zamora he criticises European, especially British, interference in the War of Triple Alliance:

> [e]n esta guerra que recién empieza nadie se entiende ni hace falta. Detrás de los hilos hay un séquito interminable de testaferros y mercachifles, de gente del Foreign Office de mi país, el ministro Edward Thornton, los Rothschild de Londres, la masonería del Plata y de Europa y el banquero brasilero Mauá, todos empeñados en quedarse con los altos hornos de Ibicuy, con los ferrocarriles, con los astilleros, con las fundiciones de Asunción y en abrir el Paraguay soberbio a las mercaderías de Manchester y devolverlo a la civilización (245).

Accusing diplomats such as Edward Thornton, who was the British ambassador at Buenos Aires, for his involvement in the subsequent War of the Triple Alliance, reveals the author's disillusionment with the often politically ripe representation of Paysandú. Ironically, this criticism stems from an Englishman himself, albeit one who, as a prisoner, was also marginalised.

Similarly, Harris's conversations with Zamora question generally accepted myths, as the former explains Uruguayan politics to the latter:

> en el Uruguay los dos partidos que luchan entre sí desde mucho tiempo atrás son los mismos que han existido en la Argentina: el Partido Blanco es el mismo Partido Federal de Urquiza vencido en Pavón, con su misma bandera, sus mismas tendencias, sus mismos crímenes y sus mismas infamias; el Partido Colorado es el Partido Unitario de […] Mitre, con sus mismos principios, sus mismas "tradiciones gloriosas" … y sus mismas carnicerías (244).

Harris not only points to Argentina's perennial interference in her neighbours' affairs but to a certain degree also questions the myth that the two parties were uniquely Uruguayan. Through such a simplistic explanation of the country's leading parties, the author directs the reader to view them through a foreign lens and stresses the arbitrariness of Uruguay's nineteenth century identity being linked to party allegiance. As Harris further narrates Uruguayan history to explain the secretive coalition of Flores, Argentina, and Brazil against Paraguay, he questions the nation's memory landscape: '¿[y] todo para qué? Para que algún día Venancio Flores los humille bautizando con su nombre, alguna calle de Paysandú' (246). Reminiscent of *Artigas Blues Band*'s Pedro, Harris's playful and cynical diatribe reflects the author's critique of nation-building gestures that have mythologised the River Plate's nineteenth-century past.[37] Like previous novels in this thesis, Delgado Aparaín's text then also attempts to unravel nineteenth-century politics and its identity-forming gestures such as naming streets after historical figures.

The novel highlights the human rights violations at Paysandú as it expands the scope of its historical context by repeatedly comparing it to the Siege of Cawnpore in India in 1857.[38] Sieged by mutinying Indian troops, around nine hundred British soldiers and civilians were stuck inside the city of Cawnpore. Once a truce was settled, the British were offered safe passage by boat down the river Ganges. This was not the end of the conflict however, as Harris, who was present there, describes the carnage that followed:

> apenas subió el ultimo inglés al bordo, los tripulantes nativos saltaron al agua y a continuación los cipayos abrieron fuego sobre las embarcaciones, todavía amarradas a la costa. A la media hora, los barcos estaban incendiados y el río cubierto de cadáveres y mujeres y niños que se ahogaban (96).

After highlighting the violence in Cawnpore, Harris foreshadows the bloodshed in Paysandú: 'ningún sitio llegó a su fin sin que hubiera atroces humillaciones para el

[37] Interestingly, there was a square named after Venancio Flores in Paysandú dating back to 1880. But after *No robarás* was published in 2002, city officials changed the name of the square. This decision challenged the traditional co-participation between the two parties beginning in the 1870s which postulated that streets would be named equally after Colorado and Blanco leaders.
'Debate en Junta sanducera: cambió de nombre la Plaza General Flores', *LaRed21*, 21 April 2002, section Política <http://www.lr21.com.uy/politica/77284-debate-en-junta-sanducera-cambio-de-nombre-la-plaza-general-flores> [accessed 29 March 2019].

[38] See Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

vencido…' (97). Through this digression to another continent, the author emphasises the universality of human rights' abuses during sieges and reinforces his claim in the epilogue that the soldiers at Paysandú were defending 'la destrucción de valores universales' (440). In this way, Harris's fictional and foreign point of view undermines the uniqueness of Uruguayan history to focus on the human aspect of the siege. Although this can be viewed as contesting the identity politics associated with the siege, by depoliticising the Paysandú narrative and by providing a new one which focuses on its universality, the author also recommends a differently political use for it. In other words, Delgado Aparaín's new myth, although ostensibly apolitical, becomes political in its own use of the past.

Representing Historical Figures: Leandro Gómez

For many in Uruguay, Leandro Gómez was a national hero even before his death at Paysandú. Accordingly, during the siege, the Blanco government at Montevideo promoted him to General as it recognised his bravery and contribution to the city's defence. After his death in 1865, however, his remains were hidden by his descendants and it was only during the government of Santos almost twenty years later that they were brought to Montevideo to be interred in the central cemetery (see Figure 7). Like many other instances discussed in this thesis, Gómez's reburial was also a part of Santos's nation-building politics.[39] Similarly, the Colorado Ipuche, writing in 1962, praised Santos's actions as he described the significance of Gómez's reburial:

> Por un Decreto histórico que le hace honor, Santos declaró mártires de la Patria a las víctimas de Paysandú y ordenó que las tropas nacionales acompañaran los restos de Leandro Gómez hasta el Cementerio Central, rindiéndoles los honores que exclusivamente se consagran a las figuras máximas de la República. Es un documento que recimenta [sic] la ORIENTALIDAD.[40]

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[39] Colorado historian Lockhart describes the conmemorative festivities at Gómez's reburial in 1884: 'La catedral rebosaba de público, y al paso del cortejo de las calles, balcones y azoteas desbordaban de gente. La oratoria en el cementerio fue extensa y muy calificada'. *Leandro Gómez,* p. 107.

[40] Ipuche, *La defensa*, p. 107.

Figure 7 Leandro Gómez's empty tomb in the central cemetery in Montevideo, July 2017.

Even though Gómez was a Blanco leader, Ipuche asserts that the decision to commemorate him was unanimously accepted. Moreover, by using the term 'Orientalidad', or Uruguayan-ness, Ipuche's statement proves that moving Gómez's remains to Montevideo was considered a means of consolidating national identity. Echoing our previous discussion about Artigas's remains, Gómez's reburial was also an attempt to 'bind […] people to their national territories in an orderly universe',[41] thereby cementing his status as one of the nation's heroes. Almost a hundred years later, Gómez's remains were moved again in 1984. They were taken to Paysandú and, despite opposition from his descendants, a mausoleum was built there for him under his statue at the Plaza Constitución.[42] Although various governments had contemplated moving his remains since the 1960s, for reasons unknown the proposal only materialised during the military regime.[43] Again, like Artigas, albeit not to the same extent, the dictatorship then related Gómez's 'heroic' actions to itself, thereby altering the nation's memory landscape to validate its own rule.

As a reaction to these memory politics, in *No robarás* the fictional Gómez is taken off the pedestal, as some voices question his heroism whilst others are sympathetic towards him. Firstly, Martín Zamora's outsider point of view of Gómez doubts his

[41] Verdery, *Political Lives*, p. 49.
[42] Rubens Stagno Oberti, 'Restos de Leandro Gómez deben ser devueltos al cementerio Central', *La ONDA digital*, April 2014, section Cultura <https://www.laondadigital.uy/archivos/899> [accessed 10 April 2019]. This article notes that Gómez's descendants were opposed to his reburial in Paysandú, because the General in his will had asked to be interred in Montevideo.
[43] Ibid.

heroism. Without having met the Blanco leader, he 'se convenció aun más de que la idea de Leandro Gómez de presentar batalla era una locura' (115). Yet, when Zamora first sees Gómez, he seems to be enchanted by him:

> lo que provocaba una misteriosa atracción a quien lo observaba sin ser visto, era su curiosa mezcla de calidez y ausencia de nervio, una especie de inconsciencia resignada y serena a flor de piel, propia de quien sabiendo lo que le espera en la vida, se siente libre de arriesgar su pellejo donde quiera (126).

But Zamora, the pessimist, also thinks to himself: '[o] es un loco de remate' (127). Although this phrase does not directly question Gómez's heroism, it sows seeds of doubt about his sanity in the reader's mind.

Other foreigners are similarly apprehensive of Gómez's decisions. The English Captain Durrell stationed on the river Uruguay notes to his French counterpart Fernand Olivier, '[e]s increíble, este hombre está loco' (158-9). On overhearing them, Spanish captain, Martínez de Arce replies '[t]al vez esté loco como usted dice […]. Pero con solo dos marinos con los huevos de este hombre, me atrevería a recobrar Gibraltar de manos de su Corona' (159). This anecdote is likely sourced from Eduardo Acevedo's *Anales históricos del Uruguay* (1933) in which the historian wrote that the Europeans were in awe of Gómez and according to *The Standard* in Buenos Aires, the Spanish captain had said: 'con solo dos hombres semejantes […] me animaría a recobrar a Gibraltar de manos de ingleses'.[44] Whilst Acevedo used this anecdote to reinforce Gómez's heroism, in the post-dictatorship period Delgado Aparaín paraphrases it, adding the question of madness, to nuance the leader's representation whilst engaging with the event's archival sources. As we have already established, reappraising national heroes is a consistent trope in post-dictatorship historical novels in Uruguay, one that *No robarás* follows diligently.

Gómez's representation is further nuanced when Zamora, who was first intrigued by him, becomes more pessimistic as the fighting continues. He knows that Gómez could have surrendered and criticises him for continuing to fight: 'una sola palabra pronunciada con honor por el coronel Leandro Gómez y esta eternidad se hubiese terminado. Pero el Coronel no ha dicho ni dirá esa palabra, porque desconoce el vocablo 'rendición'' (267).

[44] Acevedo, *Anales*, III, 277.

Similarly, Thomas Whigham's history book *The Paraguayan War*, published in the same year as *No robarás*, also notes that Gómez was stubborn and inflexible. According to Whigham, Blanco soldiers thought that Leandro Gómez, who had 'a reputation for irascibility and hard-headedness', was an 'insufferable martinet'.[45] As he further suggests that Gómez mistreated his soldiers, Whigham's comments seem undeservingly harsh.[46] Yet they demonstrate that Delgado Aparaín's questioning of the Blanco leader's heroism is informed by ongoing debates. Interestingly, whilst both Whigham and Delgado Aparaín describe Gómez's tuberculosis, the historian's description is gratingly biased: 'His loud coughing, which could be heard from the enemy lines, had a frustrated and mournful tone, like that of a dog who could not escape his pursuers'.[47] On the other hand, Delgado Aparaín writes that on 28 December, when the soldiers had lost hope of being aided by General Saá, some began to doubt Gómez's sanity:

> aparecieron los exabruptos de quienes pusieron en tela de juicio la cordura y el sentido común del general Leandro Gómez; o los que atribuyeron a su tuberculosis galopante una creciente actitud suicida, la de preferir la muerte en una gloria que los cubriese a todos como un manto, antes que agonizar atorado en su sangre en la cama pringosa de un dormitorio aislado y a oscuras (345).

Although Gómez's decisions are questioned by some soldiers, a single version of the past is never imposed upon on the reader. Emphasising the role of the reader in interpreting history and fiction then, Delgado Aparaín's work undermines a top-down approach that is characteristic of official history and highlights the complexity of the past as it views national heroes as human beings.

Accordingly, the novel also depicts Gómez in a positive light. When the women and children left Paysandú, Gómez was a considerate chief and communicated individually with his soldiers to encourage them: 'fuese frente a las trincheras o en las bocacalles para intercambiar breves saludos, algunas frases de aliento o simplemente un cambio de miradas significativas con algún voluntario excesivamente joven' (229-30). Simultaneously, Gómez confided in his fellow officer Lucas Píriz that although he

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[45] Whigham, *Paraguayan War*, I, 224.
[46] Ibid., pp. 224–25.
[47] Ibid., p. 225. Although Uruguayan historians such as Lockhart (*Leandro Gómez*, pp. 81–82) have mentioned Gómez's coughing, they have not used it to criticize his decisions nor his resolve. Whigham's description of the Blanco leader as a moaning dog is then highly problematic.

doubted his decision to continue fighting, it would be cowardly to surrender. Subsequently, when Píriz asked him if he was afraid, Gómez replied: '[p]or supuesto que tengo miedo, pero lo tengo a raya…' (232). This scene, which portrays him as an attentive chief and a compassionate man, undermines the assumption that Gómez might be crazy. Notably, although the narrator is sympathetic towards Gómez here, the novel does not use words such as patriotic and heroic, suggesting that, in this case, Delgado Aparaín's new memory narrative of Paysandú does not impose a specific viewpoint upon the reader.

In keeping with the novel's polyphony, it reproduces excerpts from Hermógenes Masanti's historical diary which conform to a positive image of the leader. During the battle, for instance, Captain Hermenegildo Alarcón informed Gómez that Brazilian canons had destroyed a monument to liberty: '¡Coronel, los brasileros mataron la Libertad!'. Immediately, Gómez replied 'No se preocupe […]. Haremos una nueva pirámide con las balas enemigas' (197). This historically accurate incident from Masanti's diary is quoted almost verbatim in the novel.[48] But *No robarás*'s omniscient narrator adds Masanti's thoughts on witnessing this event as he 'admiraba las mil y una mañas del Coronel para tranquilizar a su gente' (197). This scene, on expanding upon a historical diary, whilst engaging with and elaborating on the archive, contributes to a positive representation of Leandro Gómez.

Similarly, Gómez's death at the end is portrayed in a poignant scene as the novel describes some soldiers mistreating his corpse:

> como perros cimarrones enceguecidos en su propio vigor, desnudaban el cuerpo del general Leandro Gómez para estragarlo a puñaladas, fastidiados tal vez porque su cuerpo enjuto no sangraba. Y enseguida, la visión alucinada del saladerista Mujica, quien sin el menos miramiento, le cercenó a facón la barba entera y la guardó en el bolsillo para hacer bromas macabras a sus camaradas de la noche, y que luego sentándose en el suelo, se acomodó para tironearle las botas al cadáver y dejarle los pies a la intemperie, muy pálidos bajo al sol restallante del mediodía (428).

At this tragic point, the omniscient narrator, and the author, disapprove of Mujica's actions and emphasise the novel's title which already warned the reader not to desecrate the dead; an officer accordingly tells Mújica '[e]s de malos guerreros robarles las botas a

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[48] Masanti, 'Diario', p. 345.

los muertos' (429). Mujica then brazenly replies '[y]o no soy guerrero, soy comerciante' (429). On portraying the sieging soldiers as vultures, Delgado Aparaín condemns the abuse of Gómez's death and his body by many governments, thus also bringing into question the nation-building gestures of the nineteenth century.

At the same time, Delgado Aparaín's description of Gómez's death speaks to present-day Uruguay. In my interview with the author, he discussed honour in the nineteenth century: 'en esa época […] [había] el honor entre los guerreros. […] Se respetaban. Una vez que el hombre rendido, ya había dejado de pelear, había que tener piedad, había que tener compasión, había que tener respeto por el otro'.[49] Like *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*, the novel's description of the honour code being violated at Paysandú then raises ethical dilemmas that are informed by the author's post-dictatorship present which saw similar violence in its recent past. Through the novel's retrospective warning to the present-day reader to not desecrate the dead, the author then laments the lack of compassion and respect not only historically after sieges but also symbolically during the dictatorship. Therefore, like other novels in this thesis, *No robarás* also uses the past to raise questions relevant to its present whilst also addressing how these issues might be viewed in the future.

The novel's representation of Leandro Gómez is complex: by not enforcing any political assessments, *No robarás* presents different, often contrasting, visions of the Blanco leader. As he fictionalises the hero's perspective, Delgado Aparaín offers the reader a vulnerable human version of him. This multifaceted representation subverts the hierarchy of official narratives to emphasise the role of the reader in interpreting fiction and history. Gómez's portrayal in *No robarás* is then similar to Hamed's treatment of Artigas; he is not the figure of stone that we see at the Plaza Constitución in Paysandú as the national identity stemming from the undisputed worship of these heroes is put into question and opened up to interpretation.

Representing Historical Foes

Historically, the Colorado leader General Venancio Flores, the Argentine President Bartolomé Mitre, and the Brazilian Admiral Barón de Tamandaré played a key role in

[49] My interview.

sieging Paysandú. Whilst Mitre provided Flores with ammunition and soldiers, Tamandaré's squadron of five battle-ships bombarded the city. In *No robarás*, the author uses humour to criticise Mitre and Tamandaré but, in a multifaceted portrayal of the Colorado leader, glosses over Flores's role in the siege. As we shall see below, such a portrayal of historical foes reconfirms myths of Uruguayan identity.

Mitre's negative portrayal in the novel becomes clear in two instances. Firstly, as Raymond Harris narrates his encounter with the Argentine President and explains how he was blackmailed to become a spy for the Colorados, he reveals the latter's designs for Uruguay. In one of its many flashbacks, *No robarás* narrates that Harris travelled to Buenos Aires to sell fake art, and although Mitre realised that his paintings were forged, he did not publicly denounce the Englishman. Instead, after conspiring with Flores, who was exiled at Buenos Aires at the time, Mitre announced that Harris's deceit had offended the whole country and threatened him with a swift execution, claiming that 'ni en la embajada británica ni en ningún sitio, nadie movería un dedo […] por un delincuente bilingüe como él' (106). To save himself, Harris would have to accept Mitre's deal: he must join Flores's forces on their way to Uruguay where he would purposefully desert the Colorado army to spy on the Blancos from inside Paysandú (107). Although Raymond Harris is a cheat and a bootlegger in the novel, he often embodies the authorial voice in his criticism of nineteenth century River Plate politics. Moreover, because he is a fictional character, we can assume that this incident is not real, to argue that it only serves to paint Mitre as an unscrupulous president.

Secondly, whilst the fictional Harris disapproves of Mitre, Delgado Aparaín's fictionalisation of Hermógenes Masanti also condemns him. In the novel, Masanti wishes to write a tell-all book about Mitre: 'una historia en la que intentaría desenmascarar el alma diabólica del hombre que pergeñaba y respaldaba masacres desde su sillón presidencial en Buenos Aires' (270). Along with unmasking his diabolic intentions, Masanti wants to portray him as,

> un militar pedante, hipócrita y megalómano. Será un generalillo de cartón, obsesionado por pasar a la historia parado sobre una peana de versos malos y que tendrá en grado sumo la primera condición que ha menester cualquier periodista que se precie: la hipocresía (270).

Since we do not know if the real Masanti wrote about Mitre, this probably fictional addition is another means to criticise the historical figure, leading to the question of whether the novel's portrayal of the Argentine president reinforces Uruguayan identity in the present; an analysis of another foreigner reveals similar concerns.

The novel also caricatures Admiral Barón de Tamandaré, who was the leader of the Brazilian naval forces at Paysandú. He is described as '[s]arcástico, grandulón, y profusamente entorchado sobre su levita azul con botones de plata, vistiendo unos ajustados calzones blancos metidos al descuido en sus botas de mar y exhibiendo una imprudencia premeditada para llevarse los muebles por delante' (117-18). Tamandaré is further belittled when he fires the first Brazilian canon to mark the beginning of the siege:

> El espeso y musculoso Almirante, con sus tripas atiborradas de frutas, se agachó con extrema dificultad detrás del bruñido cañón, dejó escapar un dilatado pedo barítono de sandía y luego de maniobrar la manivela hasta levantar la mira tres grados, acercó el mechero y disparó el primer cañonazo de la escuadrilla imperial (175).

As *No robarás* satirises foreigners Mitre and Tamandaré, it makes for a rather patriotic narrative. Along with using humour, however, the author also engages with the siege's foreign politics through Zamora who highlights Brazilian imperialist tendencies: 'el Barón está obsesionado como un hijo caprichoso con la idea de quebrar nuestra bandera de combate y hacer que en su lugar, el Año Nuevo encuentre la bandera imperial en la cúpula de la iglesia de Paysandú' (349). Again, reminiscent of Eduardo Acevedo's *Anales históricos de Uruguay*, the image of the Brazilian flag on the church of Paysandú reconsolidates the myth that the siege was not a military laurel for Flores but a significant victory for the Brazilian forces. In the same vein, criticising Buenos Aires's involvement, the novel absolves the sieging Uruguayan leader as Raymond Harris asserts: 'si Venancio Flores triunfa en Paysandú, el triunfo de sus armas será el de Buenos Aires' (244-45). This critical representation of foreign invaders Mitre and Tamandaré, which portrays the outsiders as aggressors, detracts from the fact that the siege was a civil conflict. Indeed, differentiation from its neighbours, i.e. reasserting national boundaries, is a way in which Uruguay, and many other nations, assert their nationhood. Moreover, by criticising its neighbours' involvement in the siege, the novel seems to mythologise Uruguayan moral superiority, whilst problematically glossing over Flores's role in it.

The novel's portrayal of Flores is complex; although in some ways it reaffirms the myth that the siege was a foreign invasion, it does not entirely ignore his role. For instance, Raymond Harris suggests that Mitre and the Brazilian emperor took advantage of Flores:

> este par de rapiñeros ha sabido embozar estos planes de despojo a cuatro manos, bajo la máscara de una cruzada por la libertad y otras patrañas. Y para ello han usado al general Venancio Flores, un hombre entretenido en golpear a los hombres a uno y otro lado de la frontera, mientras huye de las locuras de sus hijos y de la prepotencia de Agripina, como llaman a su mujer (22).

Despite Flores being criticised here, by portraying him as lacking agency, his actions are exonerated. Moreover, although the omniscient narrator affirms that many people hate Flores, the protagonist is slightly sympathetic towards him:

> Martín Zamora fue juntando poco a poco constancias de que al general Flores lo odiaba el país entero y que su figura parecía no tener, por lo menos desde lejos, mayores atractivos para seguirlo. Y que salvo un puñado de advenedizos con indescriptible capacidad de odio, su ejército de casi dos mil hombres se integraba con esclavos regalados, convictos extraídos de las cárceles y decenas de inminentes desertores.
>
> "Debe ser un hombre que no conoce el sueño tranquilo", pensó Martín Zamora (123-24).

Even as Flores is disparaged, the protagonist's sympathy towards him demonstrates that his representation is not completely negative like Mitre and Tamandaré. Interestingly, as the author asserts that the whole country hated Flores, his intention to not divide the populace into Colorados and Blancos is clear. Similarly, by elaborating on the delinquent soldiers in Flores's army, the text insinuates that 'good' Uruguayans were not part of the sieging forces. As it does not engage with partisan politics of the nineteenth century, it instead creates a new Paysandú narrative for post-dictatorship readers.

Like Gómez, the representation of Flores in the novel is multifaceted. Although he is one of the invaders, his role is glossed over by giving him less agency. In contrast, the foreigners Mitre and Tamandaré face unrestrained criticism and satire. Perceiving the siege as a foreign invasion instead of a civil conflict aids the author in avoiding party politics and achieving his aim of fictionalising a new memory of Paysandú for all Uruguayans. Similarly, viewing the foreigners as aggressors strengthens the national subject's belonging to the nation and reinforces identity. Considering that the text re-

evaluates Uruguayan identity in other parts of the novel, in the portrayal of the siege's offensive forces, there is no clear undermining of it, resulting in a pluralistic version of identity that is up to the reader to decipher for themselves.

Making Marginalised Figures Visible

Affectionately called 'el negro' by his friends, Delgado Aparaín persistently portrays Afro-Uruguayans in his works.[50] As he acknowledged in my interview with him, he spent his childhood with people of African descent, and as an adult, he concluded that 'no había que olvidar esas historias de negros y me propuse rescatarlas. Para mí la literatura es una operación de rescate, traerlos para que las historias no se pierdan. Y eso formaba parte de *mi* identidad'.[51] Echoing Amir Hamed's concerns with those marginalised in narratives of the past, whilst Delgado Aparaín's representation of Afro-Uruguayans also stems from personal interests, in *No robarás* it intertwines with the national myth of Paysandú. In an attempt to reconfigure Uruguayan cultural memory through literature, the novel's many fictional digressions accordingly highlight the author's Afro-Uruguayan cause. As a recently arrived migrant in Brazil we are told that the protagonist Zamora was forced to accompany Brazilian Laurindo José da Costa, a real historical slave dealer in the Rio Grande do Sul region. On kidnapping free Afro-Uruguayans near the Brazilian border, da Costa took them to Rio Grande do Sul to be sold as slaves. The reason being that in the 1860s, slavery had been abolished in Uruguay whilst it had continued in Brazil. In the novel, Zamora becomes the author's mouthpiece in his criticism of da Costa calling him 'un inepto para el trabajo y sin ningún respeto por la vida humana' (18).

In a flashback, as Zamora narrates an incident when da Costa kidnapped three Afro-Uruguayans, the novel describes the tension between Uruguayan and Brazilian attitudes on the issue. On reaching Rio Grande do Sul, where they would be sold as slaves, da Costa and his gang were caught by an enraged Uruguayan consul, Santiago Guillenea, and Brazilian João Lena Vieira, the mayor of the San Pedro region. The novel then elaborates on the ensuing argument between the Uruguayan consul and the Brazilian officer, as the former criticises Brazilian behaviour towards Afro-Uruguayans. He first

[50] Delgado Aparaín, *Un café*.
[51] My interview.

defends their rights and then gives examples of da Costa's previous human rights violations, emphasising the role of corrupt priests in slave trafficking:

> [u]sted está enterado de que a esta misma hora, hay curas y obispos brasileños que siguen legitimando crímenes de estos señores aquí parados, sin que nadie emita reproche alguno. A los africanos capturados despojan de la libertad en las mismas pilas bautismales y quedan sus nombres asentados en la parroquia como nacidos de vientre esclavo (80).

Similarly, as the Consul names Afro-Uruguayans who were kidnapped, he describes Carlota Olivera whose husband was beheaded and highlights their cruelty towards her:

> a ella le ataron las manos y la colgaron de los tirantes del techo, mientras estos señores discutían en medio de la borrachera, si debían matarla o no. Al fin, la dejaron colgada. La abandonaron allí, confiados en que moriría de hambre, y se llevaron a sus hijos Cleto, Higinio e Inés, ninguno de ellos mayor de trece años… (83).

Despite being 'cargada de llagas y agonías', Carlota survived and went in search of her children, 'llevada por esas fuerzas sobrehumanas que da el amor de madre' (84). Portraying Carlota as a strong woman who had agency despite the violence committed against her, not only results in a criticism of slavery practices in Brazil but also brings forward adversities of Afro-Uruguayans in the 1860s. Additionally, the argument between the two officials is a metaphor for their attitudes towards slavery as it reaffirms that Uruguay was one of the first countries to abolish slavery in the continent whilst Brazil continued its human rights abuses. Moreover, within the Paysandú narrative, it also acts as a value judgement on the siege: a more primitive but stronger nation abuses a smaller more civilised one. This speaks to the post-dictatorship period at two levels. First, it functions as a consolidation of Uruguayan identity suggesting the country to be more progressive than its neighbours. Secondly, by bringing these human rights violations to the foreground, the novel highlights the presence and trials of Afro-Uruguayans in nineteenth century Uruguay and includes their experiences within this new memory of the siege.

In the same vein, Zamora's portrayal of Afro-Uruguayans during the siege makes them, and their contribution, visible in its narrative. For instance, the novel portrays black

soldiers not only in the Brazilian squadron but also in the defence of Paysandú, especially the fictional Julián Guite who becomes friends with Martín Zamora over the course of the siege. After Paysandú's defence falls, Guite's fate is unknown and Zamora contemplates his life under Brazilian rule: '[l]o capturarían y tratarían de vender al negro Guite en San Leopoldo, transarían seguro con el traficante Germano Kray en la Casa de la Pastora y la historia seguiría como tenía que ser' (434). Lamenting Guite's fate further draws attention to African descendants in Uruguay and criticises slavery practices in nineteenth-century Brazil. Moreover, given that Afro-Uruguayan soldiers have only been mentioned once as 'un negro' in archival works about the siege, the novel's portrayal of a black soldier conversing with Zamora reclaims Afro-Uruguayans' historical presence at Paysandú.[52]

Along with Carlota, Delgado Aparaín portrays another woman of African origin called Severia. Present at Paysandú since before the siege, her description reflects contemporary prejudices against black people; she was '[u]na extraña bruja negra […], inquietante, flaca y fibrosa' (199). An outcast because people believed she was a witch, 'las embarazadas se apartaban de su presencia como de la peste y las madres separaban a sus niños del alcance de su vista evitando que les echara el mal de ojo' (322). Severia's representation then contrasts with the soldier Guite's; the people of Paysandú shun her because of her status as a witch, forcing her to live on the fringes of society.

During the siege, on 31 December, Zamora describes a rather disconcerting incident with Severia. When Brazilian soldiers were attacking, Severia, who seemed to have gone over to the offensive side, walked towards the defending soldiers. Assuming she wanted to curse them, Raymond Harris then killed her as she came closer, raising the defensive soldiers' morale in the process. Considering that, according to the novel's epilogue, Severia is fictional, her description as a sacrificial lamb to boost the soldiers' morale raises the question of whether she is meant to reclaim the historical role of African-origin women. Given that there are no African-origin women mentioned in historical works about Paysandú, Delgado Aparaín's description of Severia seems to create a fictional space for them within this memory narrative, albeit a rather outlandish one. Consequently, by highlighting issues of human rights abuses against them and by

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[52] A black soldier was mentioned in Orlando Ribero's *Recuerdos de Paysandú* (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1901), p. 30.

reintroducing people of African descent in the defence of Paysandú, the author re-evaluates who participated in Uruguayan history, therefore also reassessing who is Uruguayan in present-day society.

Although largely overlooked in subsequent historical accounts, the novel's representation of women's roles in the siege is based on fact as Masanti and Ribero's chronicles inform us that women also defended the city.[53] Nonetheless, in keeping with the patriarchal values of the time, women's participation in the defence was glossed over in key historical texts such as those by Eduardo Acevedo and Antonio Díaz. For instance, as Díaz mentioned how on 4 and 5 December many women and children were evacuated from Paysandú, he named many women who decided not to leave the city. Conforming to the patriarchal idea of women as loyal to their male counterparts, he wrote that they only stayed at Paysandú to look after their sons, husbands and brothers.[54] Later, on 9 December, these remaining women were evacuated and taken to an island on the river Uruguay, later known as Isla de la Caridad. Again, some women refused to leave and chose to participate in the defence as nurses or cooks. Díaz acknowledges their participation in a footnote: '[q]uedaron la Sra. D.ª Rosa Rey, esposa de D. Torcuato González y la Sra. madre de Aberasturi, Sras. de Ribero, Catalá, Francia, Menentiel y los esposos Ribero'.[55] Despite participating in the siege then, their presence was relegated to a footnote in Díaz's work and many were only mentioned by their husbands' surnames. Although this practice was typical of the nineteenth century, it suggests that historians perceived women's roles in the defence as an afterthought. In other words, despite women contributing to this historical event, their roles were side-lined from its subsequent representations.[56]

The novel then engages with archival sources to elaborate on women's roles in order to bring forward their participation in the siege. For instance, after describing the

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[53] Masanti, 'Diario', pp. 348, 350–51, 362 and Ribero, *Recuerdos*, pp. 46–47 and 55.
[54] Díaz, *Historia*, V, 105.
[55] Ibid., p. 111.
[56] This was a common phenomenon in nineteenth-century Latin America as Catherine Davies, Claire Brewster and Hillary Owen argue that women may have played a crucial role in the struggle but 'once independence from Spain was finally achieved, they were expected to return to their embroidery'. *South American Independence Gender, Politics, Text* (Liverpool University Press: Liverpool, 2006), p. 156.

evacuation of most women and children as the 'éxodo doméstico' (226), *No robarás* describes the remaining women who refused to leave with admiration:

> [p]refirieron simplemente soportar el bombardeo como cocineras de la tropa o como enfermeras del hospital de sangre o arrostrando los peligros de las mensajerías nocturnas como Magdalena Pons. O la viuda de Paredes, hermosa y con la mente alterada por sus pérdidas recientes; o Leticia Orozco, altiva mujer morena, de traje ligero y flotante y sus tres hijas, María, Mercedes y Patricia (227-28).

Whilst to a certain degree conforming to the stereotype of women as caregivers, the author elaborates on their almost inexistent presence in historical works by basing the characters of Leticia Orozco and her daughters María, Mercedes y Patricia on real-life persons such as Dr. Berengell's wife and family who helped as nurses in the hospital.[57] In comparison to Orlando Ribero's diary where Dr. Berengell's wife is mentioned only once, in the novel Leticia Orozco and her daughters are significant secondary characters. *No robarás* not only depicts their trials in the hospital, but also portrays them giving shelter to and sharing food with injured soldiers in their house. Moreover, Leticia Orozco's daughter Mercedes, who is Zamora's love interest, is also shown to combat in the trenches. Despite her efforts, Zamora patronises her: 'harías bien en ponerte a buen resguardo en la isla del río' (209). Mercedes becomes visibly annoyed and asserts her right to defend her city: '¿Me ves capaz de sentarme en la orilla de enfrente y bordar rococó mientras arde mi pueblo bajo el azul de diciembre?' (209). Later, Zamora keeps calling her 'niña' to which she angrily snaps '[d]éjate de joder con llamarme niña a cada paso. Mi nombre es Mercedes y es nombre de mujer, ¿me oyes?' (211). As the novel portrays her to be outspoken and confident in her ability to fight, it highlights her agency when faced with a man who advises her not to defend the city.

Along with Mercedes, *No robarás* also describes the contribution of Torcuato González's wife.[58] On 31 December, the omniscient narrator applauds her bravery as she quenched the soldiers' thirst by wading through the battlefield with pails of water: 'la mujer de Torcuato González hizo en poco rato dos viajes milagrosos hasta los cantones'

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[57] Ribero, *Recuerdos*, pp. 46–47.

[58] In the novel and in Masanti's diary we are never told her first name and she is only known as González's wife. But in Ribero's diary, her full name Rosa Rey de González is mentioned, perhaps because Ribero fought alongside her husband, Torcuato González in the trenches. *Recuerdos*, p. 55.

(385). But, on seeing her, her husband ordered her to leave the trenches: 'le suplicó a gritos que se retirara, que volviese al hospital, pero ella hizo lo contrario' (386). Disregarding her husband's wishes, she continued to supply water until her pots were empty and approached him to assert herself: '¡Dios te guarde! ¿No estás cumpliendo con tu deber?… En general aquí se muere y no te abandono por más que me lo exijas' (386). Like Mercedes's dialogue above, this scene also shows a woman asserting her agency despite disapproval from her male partner. The incident, absent in history books, was mentioned in Masanti's diary in which he called González's wife a heroine and also applauded her bravery.[59] According to Masanti, when her husband asked her to leave, she conscientiously replied 'y tú no estás aquí cumpliendo con tu deber, pues donde se halle mi esposo quiero encontrarme yo. Ese es también mi deber. No te abandono por más que me lo exijas'.[60] Masanti's historical diary then highlights her loyalty to her husband and her role in the defence is linked to his presence there. Delgado Aparaín's novel on the other hand focuses on her general concern for Paysandú and omits the sentences emphasizing her devotion to her husband. As the author brings forward stories of women which were previously hidden in the archive, he uses his poetic license to draw attention to their agency in order to reflect their role in present-day society. In other words, it brings the Paysandú narrative more up to date with present times.

No robarás's representation of women in the battlefield has precedents in Uruguayan literature. Acevedo Díaz's renowned short story, 'El combate de la tapera' (1892) portrays women fighting against Portuguese invasion in 1817. Taught in schools in Uruguay today, this story describes them as 'mujeres-dragones de vincha, sable corvo y pie desnudo'.[61] Like the women in *No robarás,* these female dragoons do not comply with orders to stay in the rear-guard with the horses but instead participate in the battle against the Portuguese.[62] The central figure, Catalina's actions were decisive in the battle as she shot the Portuguese captain Heitor and later on finding him injured on the ground, she finished the task she had begun by killing him brutally. According to San Román,

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[59] Masanti, 'Diario', p. 362.
[60] Ibid., p. 362.
[61] Acevedo Díaz, *Cuentos completos*, p. 61.
[62] Gustavo San Román asserted that this disobedience shows the companionship present within the Uruguayan corps. *Amor y nación: Ensayos sobre literatura uruguaya* (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 1997), p. 67.

with this act, Catalina 'toma revancha por la violación de la mujer y de la nación oriental'.[63] Thus, in this story, the nation is viewed as feminine and women battling the Portuguese are a metaphor for revenge against foreign invaders. Delgado Aparaín's description of women soldiers follows this tradition; however, it does not serve the same metaphorical function, nor does it vividly describe women in combat. *No robarás* instead builds upon their slight mention in the archive in order to retrospectively highlight their presence and agency in Paysandú's defence.

Another significant female character in the novel is Magdalena Pons and historically Masanti's chronicle of the siege informs us that she was an upper-class woman from Montevideo and the sister of a Blanco artillery official at Paysandú.[64] Acting as a courier, she brought a letter from the government for Gómez informing him that General Saá's army would arrive soon. Although her valiant efforts as a courier attest to women's participation in nineteenth century politics, Pons is not mentioned in H.D.'s *Ensayo de historia patria* which focuses instead on the roles of the military leaders. In *No robarás,* however, her arrival is described with respect:

> Nadie hubiera dicho que era una mujer cuya vida entre Paysandú y Montevideo se guiaba por las fiestas y por los ayunos dictados por la Iglesia, pues se veía desgreñada como una loca de campos, encascarada de barro desde los botines hasta los dobladillos del vestido y alterada por la urgencia de llegar hasta el coronel Gómez (283).

In the novel, she delivered the said letter and informed Gómez that he was promoted to General: 'el Presidente Aguirre ha premiado su resistencia con un ascenso aplaudido en todo Montevideo […] A partir de hoy, don Leandro, es usted General del Ejército Nacional por derecho propio' (285). Furthermore, her presence raised the officers' morale and had a positive effect on them, but her role did not end there as she returned to Montevideo with Gómez's communications for the government. Considering Pons' brief almost non-existent description in historical works, Delgado Aparaín's novel elaborates on her participation as she was not a caregiver nor a helpmate but an activist in her own right fulfilling a role normally associated with male soldiers. After the novel's publication, as newspaper articles suggest, Pons' role in the siege has been recognised

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[63] Ibid., p. 74.
[64] Masanti, 'Diario', p. 350. Díaz, *Historia*, V, 114.

and celebrated. In January 2019, for instance, as part of the defence's commemoration, a mural called 'Mujeres de la Defensa' based on Pons and other women defenders was inaugurated at Paysandú.[65] The novel's acknowledgement of women's participation in the city's defence then is an influential factor in their perception in present-day society, which, as we have seen above, is also characterised by a general reappraisal of women's roles in Uruguayan history.

Like previous historical novels studied in this thesis, reclaiming marginalised presences is a key feature of *No robarás*. Through a focus on forgotten people, the novel questions the shared narrative of Uruguayan history as it reassesses who took part in it. As it includes these figures in the narrative of Paysandú, they become part and parcel of this new memory of the siege. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that although Delgado Aparaín highlights the presence of previously marginalised figures, they do not stand out in the novel as protagonists nor as narrators, raising the question of whether the author merely follows, and therefore consolidates, the features of the 'new' historical novel in Uruguay as indicated in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. As noted before however, Delgado Aparaín's need to portray Afro-Uruguayans stems from personal reasons which arguably goes hand in hand with this trend in post-dictatorship historical novels.

Conclusion

In the novel's epilogue, the author expresses an aim to distance himself from the partisan politics of the time and to focus on the humanity of the people at Paysandú. The above analysis shows that Delgado Aparaín not only succeeds in doing so, but he also makes the novel differently political by fictionalising new foreign voices. Outsiders such as Martín Zamora and Raymond Harris allow the author to deviate from previous patriotic representations that portray the defenders as heroic Uruguayans. If through these foreigners' perspectives the novel's aim is to reject a national identity-forming narrative, the representation of historical figures sends a rather mixed message. The multifaceted image of Gómez emphasises the reader's role in interpreting history and undermines a top-down approach to the past, similar to other novels in the thesis. Furthermore, the

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[65] 'Conmemoran hoy 154 años de la Caída de Paysandú', *El Telégrafo*, 2 January 2019, section General <https://www.eltelegrafo.com/2019/01/conmemoran-hoy-154-anos-de-la-caida-de-paysandu/> [accessed 10 April 2019].

portrayal of Gómez contrasts with that of historical foes such as Mitre and Tamandaré. And yet, as its critical description of foreign leaders representing the giant neighbours overlooks the Uruguayan Flores's role, the novel also contributes to national cohesion. Criticising foreign invaders reinforces national boundaries, re-mythologises relations with its neighbours and therefore reconsolidates identity, albeit a different version of it. The novel then has a varied message: whilst the reader is asked to question and reinterpret Uruguayan historical figures, the negative opinion of foreign aggressors is imposed upon them.

Although reclaiming marginalised figures is a significant concern in *No robarás*, it seems to fall short in this respect when compared to other works studied here. Nonetheless, as it makes previously forgotten subjects visible in events of national importance, it puts forth a new identity narrative of Paysandú for the post-dictatorship period, one that includes women and Afro-Uruguayans as national subjects. The significance of *No robarás* is also clear in the fact that it has reawakened debate about how the siege is remembered.[66] For instance, a plaza named after Flores was altered after the book's publication and women's roles have been reclaimed by recent commemorations at Paysandú. Indeed, the novel's representation of women and the commemorations highlighting their role in the defence both indicate a feminist trend in contemporary Uruguayan society, an argument that will be further developed in the next chapter on Marcia Collazo Ibáñez's *Amores Cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (2011).

[66] In the previously cited radio show, 'Solo cuando sucumba', Emiliano Cotelo also discussed the significance of *No robarás* in reviving debate about the siege.

Chapter 5

Retracing Women's Pasts in *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* by Marcia Collazo Ibáñez

Considered the father of Uruguayan nationhood, José Artigas's central place in the country's memory and identity was constructed and reconstructed primarily through cultural production, school textbooks, artworks and material culture. The apotheosis of his cult came during the recent dictatorship (1973-85) when the military regime sought to harness the country's goodwill towards the national hero for their own purposes as they built a mausoleum to house his remains under the monument dedicated to him in the Plaza Independencia in Montevideo. As discussed Chapter 2, Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* reacted to the dictators' stance, especially to the mausoleum, and suggested an Artigas who was not moulded in stone, proposing instead an egalitarian mode of recreating memories of the national hero. In the seventeen years between Amir Hamed and Marcia Collazo Ibáñez's novel, *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (2011), Artigas's position as the national hero has remained uncontested.

Although he continued to be depicted in numerous novels, comic books and in cinema, Collazo Ibáñez's *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (henceforth, *Amores cimarrones*) is the first work of historical fiction about Artigas that centres entirely on the points of view of women that had a significant connection with him. Using the scarce historical material available on them, the novel fictionalises the lives of six women related to him: his two grandmothers, Ignacia Xaviera Carrasco and María Rodríguez Camejo; his mother, Francisca Pasqual Arnal; and his three partners, Isabel Sánchez, Rosalía Villagrán and Melchora Cuenca. Through these six narratives, the novel presents multiple female voices spread over one hundred years of the nation's history (1726-1824) and highlights the evolving nature of cultural memory in Uruguay today. As it brings the cycle of post-dictatorship historical novels studied here to a close, *Amores cimarrones*, like the other primary texts studied, also represents previously marginalised

figures and questions national heroes, bringing the question of national identity and memory up to date in the process.

Historical Background

Looking back at nineteenth and early twentieth century history in the western world, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that women are largely absent from it. Similarly, in works of Uruguayan history, women are seldom alluded to. A main reason for this is the traditional definition of history; only political and military history, mostly dominated by men, were viewed as important enough to fill the pages of history books. Accordingly, history written by men, and for men, continued to relegate and ignore women's pasts and deeming their domesticity unworthy of History. Likewise, women related to Uruguay's national hero José Artigas were side-lined in historical narratives. Through an analysis of how the six women in *Amores cimarrones* were portrayed in history, it will be argued here that although a few of them are mentioned in historical works, together with a general refusal to accept his possible lapses of judgement, they only served to highlight Artigas's positive behaviour. This idealised representation of him reinforced his heroism as well as the national identity built upon it. Additionally, the following overview reveals the scarcity of archival sources available on these women as well as the historical lack of interest in research on them, leading to a void in history and memory that, it will be argued, Marcia Collazo Ibáñez attempts to fill with historical fiction.

Artigas's grandmothers, Ignacia Xaviera Carrasco and María Rodríguez Camejo, were amongst the first European inhabitants of Montevideo. Ignacia, his paternal grandmother, arrived with her husband Juan Antonio Artigas on the ship that brought the first families to Montevideo from Buenos Aires in 1726 to settle down and set up a city.[1] His maternal grandmother María, on the other hand, came to Montevideo from the Canary Islands as part of the Spanish families brought to the Banda Oriental to populate the city.[2] María's daughter Francisca Pascual Arnal was Artigas's mother and was married to Ignacia's son, Martín Artigas.[3] The next woman to feature in the novel is Isabel Sánchez,

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[1] Luis Enrique Azarola Gil, *Los orígenes de Montevideo: 1607-1749* (Buenos Aires: La Facultad, 1933), p. 100. Following the convention in the novel, and in order to avoid confusion, this chapter will mention the six women using their first names in the historical background as well as the analysis sections.
[2] Ibid., p. 139.
[3] Isidoro de María, *Rasgos biográficos de hombres notables de la República Oriental del Uruguay*, 3rd edn (Montevideo: Imprenta Artística, de Dornaleche y Reyes, 1889), p. 8.

a mestiza from the region of Soriano and Artigas's first known lover.[4] Separated from her husband before she started a relationship with Artigas in the 1790s, she had four children with the latter.[5] Artigas's next partner was his first cousin Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán whom he married in 1805 when he returned to Montevideo to recuperate from his ill health.[6] As his only known legal wife, although she is often mentioned in historical works, she is usually described unfavourably because of her miscarriages and frail mental health that led to her death in 1824.[7] The last woman in the novel is Melchora Cuenca, who was of Paraguayan descent and Artigas's partner from 1815 until 1819 in Purificación, a village he set up when he governed the Banda Oriental.[8] Artigas's treatment of Melchora is quite peculiar, however, since despite her being Paraguayan, he refused to let her accompany him when he was exiled in Paraguay from 1820 onwards.[9] Evidently, all six women's experiences of the national hero Artigas in the territory of the Banda Oriental are different and, keeping this in mind, this chapter considers their portrayal in, or absence from, historical sources.

After Artigas's death in 1850 in Paraguay, and especially after his remains were repatriated to Montevideo in 1855, Uruguayan historiography began to repudiate his Black Legend and situated him instead as a precursor to Uruguayan nationhood. Key in this process were the works of Isidoro de María, who favoured the Artigas family because his sister was married to José María Artigas, José Artigas's only son with Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán.[10] After de María's *Vida del Brigadier General D. José Jervacio Artigas* (1860), he published *Rasgos biográficos de hombres notables de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (1879) which proposed Artigas as the most significant figure in the country's history. In this work, de María included the full names of his mother and grandmother when he mentioned Artigas's lineage, but he did not delve into their personal stories.[11] De María also described his wife Rosalía Rafaela and wrote of her miscarriage in 1809

[4] Aníbal Barrios Pintos, *El silencio y la voz: Historia de la mujer en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2001), pp. 97–98.
[5] Ibid., pp. 98–99.
[6] Street, *Artigas*, p. 74.
[7] Barrios Pintos, *Silencio*, p. 75.
[8] Ibid., p. 103.
[9] Ibid., p. 103.
[10] Pivel Devoto, *Leyenda negra*, p. 20.
[11] De María, *Rasgos*, p. 8.

in order to quote the following supportive letter from Artigas to his mother-in-law and aunt Francisca Artigas de Villagrán:

> Mi más venerada señora: Aquí estamos pasando trabajos, siempre á caballo para garantir á los vecinos de los malevos. Siento en el alma el estado de mi querida Rafaela. Venda usted cuanto tenga para asistirla, que es lo primero, y atender á mi querido José María, que para eso he trabajado.[12]

By citing this letter, de María intended to highlight Artigas's dedication to his family. A few pages later, he continued to portray Artigas as sympathetic and patient regarding his family's pecuniary problems as he quoted another letter in which the leader reassured his mother-in-law that everything would be resolved soon.[13] It becomes clear in de María's work that domestic life and women are only mentioned when they conform to and provide further proof of the national leader's heroism. De María does not quote any of his mother-in-law Francisca Artigas de Villagrán's responses to these letters, although this is understandable as he might have not had access to them. Nonetheless, such a one-sided portrayal of Artigas results in supressing the female voice that might have presented an incongruous image of him. Notably, de María does not mention Artigas's other partners, either because he was not aware of them or perhaps because he wanted to strengthen his family's claim of being the national leader's descendants. Thus, although women are mentioned in preliminary works which sought to confirm Artigas's position as the national hero, their voices were ignored and their portrayal functioned as a means to reinforce his heroism.

The next stage in Artigas's historiography was in the early twentieth century when his image as a national hero was literally set in stone through cultural production, notably thanks to works such as Zorilla de San Martín's *La epopeya de Artigas* (1910), which was written to inspire sculptors' proposals for the monument to the hero that was eventually inaugurated in the Plaza Independencia in Montevideo in 1923. Two years later, Luis A. Thevenet, after conducting extensive research on Artigas's legacy, published *De la estirpe artiguista: Investigación genealógica e histórica sobre ignorados descendientes*

[12] Ibid., p. 12.
[13] Before quoting the letter, de María writes: 'Su madre política y tía le escribía sobre su situación, consultándole sobre el cobro de los alquileres impagos, para sus necesidades. Artigas, en sus penurias, le contestaba paciente y cariñoso, como va á verse.' Ibid., pp. 34–35.

del General José G. Artigas (1925) which brought to light details about not only Melchora Cuenca, Artigas's partner in Purificación, and their son Santiago but also his last living grandchild Francisca Artigas de Mieres.[14] By focusing on Artigas's descendants, Thevenet provides some valuable information on his partners, yet his research was not incorporated into history textbooks at the time, attesting to women's absence in the nation's identity-building apparatuses. For instance, H.D.'s school textbook does not mention Melchora Cuenca as one of Artigas's partners nor does Eduardo Acevedo's *Manual de historia uruguaya* which even fails to name his grandmothers as it discusses his lineage.[15]

In 1945, drawing upon Thevenet's research, Luis Bonavita published *Sombras heroicas*, the first Uruguayan history book that focused entirely on women from the nineteenth century. But as its title acknowledges, these women's roles continued to be viewed as secondary, as mere spectators in the national origin story, an idea which is repeated throughout the text. *Sombras heroicas* dedicates individual chapters to different women related to national leaders such as Artigas, Lavalleja, Rivera and Oribe, beginning with one titled 'Mujeres de Artigas' which focuses on his relationship with his partners, Isabel, Rosalía Rafaela and Melchora.[16] Although the book describes each woman's personality as distinct, rendering them vividly for the reader, its aim, as we shall see below, is to emphasise the greatness of Artigas himself.

Bonavita starts with the mestiza Isabel Sánchez and soon relegates her to the shadows by emphasising how she will always be at the margins of history: 'debió ser como el clavel del aire, montuno y grácil. Pero será siempre la *sombra*'.[17] On the other hand, he favours Rosalía Villagrán's elite background and the legality of her marriage to Artigas to note, rather intriguingly: 'Rosalía fué [sic], indudablemente, el único y profundo amor de Artigas. Tal vez la quiso desde que era casi una niña, ya que ella llevó al casamiento una grácil plenitud'.[18] Furthermore, he claims that Artigas was not entirely in love with Isabel and Melchora, and that it was Rosaliá's illness that brought about his

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[14] (Montevideo: Imparcial, 1925).
[15] H.D., *Ensayo*, I, 293. Eduardo Acevedo, *Manual de historia uruguaya* 2 vols (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1916-19), I (1916), 110. Acevedo's *Anales* also does not mention his grandmothers. I, 81.
[16] Luis Bonavita, *Sombras heroicas* 2nd edn (Montevideo: Impresora L.I.G.U., 1949), pp. 13–24.
[17] Ibid., p. 14.
[18] Ibid., p. 15.

downfall: 'Ninguna de sus uniones ilegales, tuvo, para Artigas, la fuerza ni la desdicha de ese amor que debió haber sido su remanso, y fué [sic], en cambio, su fuente de amargura, y quizás de decepción definitiva'.[19] In a problematic manner, therefore, whilst favouring the white Montevidean partner over the mestiza and the Paraguayan, he still blames Rosalía for Artigas's failings. On the other hand, Bonavita describes Artigas's reaction to Rosalía's miscarriage in order to portray him as a caring husband by quoting the same letter that de María reproduced in *Rasgos biográficos de hombres notables*.[20] The repetition of this letter across centuries points to how historically, Artigas was perceived as a loving and supportive husband when faced with a wife who was unwell. Thus, although Bonavita's book is meant to be about women's contributions, it ends up reinforcing positive traits of the already established national leader Artigas.

Bonavita not only attributes Rosalía's illness to her paternal, hence, non-Artigas lineage (she was his maternal cousin) but also describes her in a patronising manner that was typical of the earlier nineteenth century:

> Empieza a bosquejarse en ella la manía melancólica. Todo contribuye a crear el proceso patológico: los puerperios, febriles, encuentran terreno fértil, ya que no falta la predisposición nerviosa, elemento indispensable para que prosperen las psicopatías de origen gravídico o puerperal.[21]

The description of women as hysterical and mad in nineteenth-century history and literature has been a topic of debate in feminist criticism in Europe and it is notable that in this 1945 work, Bonavita's portrayal of Rosalía follows these traditions.[22] Moreover, because we do not have any letters nor documents by Rosalía herself, Bonavita's claims must be questioned. It will then be interesting to see how Marcia Collazo Ibáñez

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[19] Ibid., p. 15.
[20] Bonavita, *Sombras*, pp. 18–20 and de María, *Rasgos*, p. 12.
[21] Bonavita, *Sombras*, p. 19. Bonavita had also claimed: 'Rosalía era un temperamento emotivo, que había recibido, por línea paterna, peligrosa herencia psicopática' ibid., p. 18.
[22] See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*, an iconic work of feminist criticism which discusses the portrayal of women in nineteenth-century literature from a British perspective. (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2000). Lisa Appignanesi*'s Mad, Bad and Sad: Women and the Mind Doctors* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008) also explores how mental illness was viewed by medical professionals and cultural producers from the eighteenth century onwards in Europe and the United States.

represents Rosalía's mental health from a twenty-first century perspective and whether her novel challenges Bonavita's view.

As Bonavita describes Artigas's third partner, Melchora Cuenca, he calls her a *lancera*, a term given to women who fight with lances, and an uncultured tropical flower.[23] Discussing Artigas's love for their son Santiago, Bonavita defends his decision not to allow Melchora to follow him to Paraguay. As he paints an idyllic picture of the national leader, he attributes her anger at his decision to her lack of culture in order to dismiss the non-elite Paraguayan as a serious partner: 'no tenía la menor cultura, pero sí, tal vez, un vivísimo instinto femenino'.[24] Finally, despite initially viewing Rosalía as Artigas's profound love, he comes to the conclusion that '[n]inguna de las mujeres de su vida pudo constituir para él el remanso que necesitan los hombres de su temple'.[25] Blaming the women for Artigas's failed relationships with them, Bonavita continues:

> Es seguro que ninguna tuvo la intuición femenina capaz de comprender la extraña psicología de aquel hombre en el que tal vez siempre estuvo incubándose una decepción tan llena de rebeldía, que pudo hacer de él algo así como un viajero que tira todo por la borda de su barco, despojándose voluntariamente, y, pasado el peligro, persiste en la fortaleza o en la misantropía de no volver a tomar nada de nuevo.[26]

Thus, whilst Bonavita can be viewed as progressive for telling women's stories, his representation of them is highly problematic. Firstly, conforming to patriarchal views of the time, he portrays women as naturally inferior to the national hero; and secondly, he uses their supposed failure in understanding him to romanticise Artigas's ideals. Therefore, like de María, in Bonavita's work women's pasts become a means to the end of reinforcing Artigas's myth and the national identity built upon it.

After Bonavita's *Sombras heroicas*, other books such as Juan Alejandro Apolant's *La partida bautismal de José Gervasio Artigas: ¿auténtica o apócrifa?* (1966) and *Génesis de la familia uruguaya; los habitantes de Montevideo en sus primeros 40 años, filiaciones, ascendencias, entronques, descendencias* (1966) as well as Juan A. Gadea's *El ambiente hogareño donde nació Artigas* (1974) demonstrated an interest in Artigas's

[23] Bonavita, *Sombras*, p. 21.
[24] Ibid., p. 22.
[25] Ibid., p. 23.
[26] Ibid., p. 23.

childhood and personal life. This inevitably meant that women, especially his grandmothers and mother, would be mentioned in these works. Nonetheless, portraying women continued to be a means to praise Artigas. For instance, Gadea describes María Rodríguez Camejo walking to church to arrange her own funeral despite being on her deathbed in order to highlight how she was a fitting grandmother for the national hero:

> Basta rememorar este episodio, que nos llega desde el fondo del tiempo tocado de conmovedor dramatismo, para tributar profunda admiración a su protagonista y reconocer que, por su sereno valor y grandeza de alma, merecía, a justo título, ser abuela de José Artigas.[27]

Another significant moment in Artigas's historiography began in the 1940s when the construction of the Archivo Artigas was passed in the Senate. This national archive would compile and publish 'todos los documentos históricos en original y copia, relacionados con la vida pública y privada de Artigas'.[28] The first volume of Archivo Artigas was subsequently published in 1950 and was gradually followed by thirty-six more to date. As this archive, the first of its kind in Uruguay, also published sources from the national hero's personal life, it included letters he wrote to his mother-in-law and aunt Francisca Artigas de Villagrán. Whilst some of these letters contradicted de María and Bonavita's assumptions that Artigas was the ideal son-in-law, Francisca Artigas de Villagrán's replies were not reproduced in the Archivo. Although it is likely that her letters are untraceable because Artigas took them to Paraguay, it results in her voice being absent in the archive and unwittingly contributes to women's silence in historical narratives. Interestingly, many of Artigas's letters that highlight his negative behaviour towards his family were published in 1989 in volume twenty-two of the Archivo and could perhaps be viewed as part of the process of reinterpreting Artigas's myth in the post-dictatorship period (see Chapter 2 above).[29]

The decision to publish letters from José Artigas to Francisca Artigas de Villagrán may also have been influenced by the turn in history studies in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 70s, historiography about women started to change

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[27] Juan Alberto Gadea, *El ambiente hogareño donde nació Artigas* (Montevideo: Estado Mayor del Ejército, 1974), p. 9.
[28] Reyes Abadie, *Artigas*, p. 108.
[29] These letters are mostly in *Archivo Artigas*, XXII (1989), 190, 195, 199, 234–35 and 215; his sympathetic letters about Rosalía are in Volume III (1952), 312 and 348.

gradually, going hand in hand with the shifting idea of what was considered history.[30] In Uruguay, this historical turn was inaugurated by José Pedro Barrán and Benjamín Nahum's *El Uruguay del Novecientos* (1979) which was the first time that 'se considera a nivel de la historiografía la situación de las mujeres […] como componente importante del desarrollo histórico global'.[31] The shift was further consolidated by Barrán's *Historia de la sensibilidad* (1989), which as the name suggests did not retell the significant moments of political and military history but focused on hitherto unchartered territory like domestic violence, sexuality and death.[32] In other words, as it historicised the customs and traditions of domestic life as well as deviant behaviour within it, it inevitably brought attention to women's histories. Barrán's influential work was followed by a conference on women in Uruguayan history in 1991, whose proceedings were later published as the already referred to book *Mujeres e historia en el Uruguay.* This edited volume not only discussed how women had been viewed in history but also how they were portrayed in Uruguayan school textbooks from 1986 to 1991. In her contribution, 'La enseñanza de la historia y la invisibilidad de la mujer,' Carmen Tornaría discussed the results of a survey she conducted, which showed how women were largely invisible in history textbooks and that the handful of women present in them were viewed as either accompanying men in history and/or as mere spectators to it.[33] Notably, the few women named in the textbooks were almost always related to Artigas, indicating once more that their only claim to fame was their relation to the national hero.[34] Thus, although Artigas's grandmothers, mother and wife Rosalía are visible in Uruguayan memory through the nation building apparatus of school textbooks, they are only known in relation to him and not as individuals with agency, thus reinforcing the idea that they were not participants in national (male) History. Furthermore, whilst the work of reclaiming women's histories had begun in historiography in 1991, it had not yet been incorporated into history textbooks. It is

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[30] Silvia Rodríguez Villamil, '¿Víctimas o heroínas? Los desafíos de la historia de las mujeres y su desarollo en Uruguay' in *Mujeres e historia en el Uruguay* co-ord. by Silvia Rodríguez Villamil (Montevideo: Trilce, 1992), pp. 35–63 (pp. 52–53).

[31] Ibid., p. 56.

[32] Rodríguez Villamil noted the significance of Barrán's work as she asserted: 'Su retrato de "la mujer dominada" presenta con gran riqueza de matices el modelo burgués de "la mujer con dedal", desde la subjetividad de hombres y mujeres. Al mismo tiempo tiene la virtud de vincular la posición de la mujer con las relaciones de poder y el sistema de dominación vigente en la sociedad en su conjunto'. Ibid., p. 56.

[33] Carmen Tornaría, 'La enseñanza de la historia y la invisibilidad de la mujer' in *Mujeres e historia en el Uruguay*, pp. 177–234 (p. 211).

[34] Ibid., pp. 216–30.

significant to note, therefore, that Marcia Collazo Ibáñez bases her novel on women who were recognisable names in Uruguay, but little was known about them.

The late 1990s continued to witness historical studies on nineteenth-century women's lives in relation to domesticity, with edited volumes such as *Historias de la vida privada en el Uruguay* (1996) by José Pedro Barrán, Gerardo Caetano and Teresa Porzecanski and *Sociedad y cultura en el Montevideo colonial* (1997) by Luis Ernesto Behares and Oribe Cures. This trend continued into the twenty-first century with works like *El silencio y la voz: Historia de la mujer en el Uruguay* (2001) by Aníbal Barrios Pintos and Gabriela Fuentes Álvarez's *Protagonistas y olvidadas: de la mujer de la independencia a la independencia de la mujer* (2008). As these titles suggest, Uruguayan historians are conscious of women's absence in historical works as well as the necessity of bringing their pasts out of oblivion.

At the same time, historians reiterate the lack of historical documents available to reconstruct women's pasts, especially in the case of Isabel Sánchez and Melchora Cuenca, leading to a void in historical narratives about them.[35] Considering the absence of archival sources on women from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one can argue that their role in history and in previously constructed cultural memory was limited to being passive spectators in national identity narratives. Undoubtedly, it is in these abysses of history that literature can flourish and prove fruitful in filling gaps that historiography cannot. The rest of this chapter will accordingly demonstrate how Marcia Collazo Ibáñez, a historian herself, attempts to fill this archival gap and, building upon feminist literary criticism, writes in a female tradition of nineteenth-century Uruguayan history to propose new memories of historical women for the present as well as for the future.

[35] Rodríguez Villamil discusses women in history generally as she asserts: 'Esa falta de información concreta contrasta con la abundancia de imágenes y de discursos sobre las mujeres. Más que describirlas o narrar sus hechos, se las representa o se dice cómo deben ser.' '¿Víctimas o heroínas?', p. 45. Similarly, in the case of Melchora Cuenca, Cielo Pereira notes 'No hay datos precisos, no hay discurso probable a propósito de su vicisitud: su paso por este mundo es parte de una narración muda, secreta, escrita en transparencia.' 'Melchora Cuenca: Cuando desde que él se fue', in *Mujeres uruguayas*, II, 131–67 (p. 137).

Marcia Collazo Ibáñez and *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* (2011)

Born in Melo, in the Cerro Largo department of Uruguay, Marcia Collazo Ibáñez (b. 1959) is a historian, lawyer and teacher in Montevideo. Her literary career began in the early 2000s when she submitted poems for a variety of anthologies and later published two poetry books, *A caballo de un signo* (2005) and *Alguien mueve los ruidos* (2010). Published a year later in 2011, *Amores cimarrones* is Marcia Collazo Ibáñez's first foray into the historical fiction genre. For a first-time novelist, publishing such a long novel was quite an accomplishment as Heber Raviolo notes in the preface: 'es la primera vez que la editorial encara la publicación de una novela de casi seiscientas páginas de un autor sin ningún antecedente en el género'.[36] Although Raviolo admits that 'la cantidad no hace a la calidad' (7), Collazo Ibáñez's literary prowess was promptly acknowledged by the Premio Bartolomé Hidalgo Revelación in 2011 and the Libro de Oro award in 2012.[37] *Amores cimarrones* has also been an immensely popular novel; after it was published in April 2011, four editions were reprinted in the same year and, as of November 2016, it had reached its tenth edition (6). The novel's popularity and critical acclaim make it a suitable text not only to study how cultural memory has evolved in the late aftermath of the dictatorship but also to bring to a close this study of historical novels in Uruguay that began with another best-seller, de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*.

Before *Amores cimarrones* begins, Collazo Ibáñez echoes this thesis's research question of how fiction engages with memory and history as she writes a short note for her readers, highlighting, like historians before her, the scarcity of documental evidence on these women's lives and the necessity of using fiction to fill in these archival gaps:

Durante mucho tiempo me he preguntado, casi con una suerte de obsesión, por la huella de estas mujeres en la vida de Artigas. A través de la investigación histórica encontré algunas respuestas,

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[36] Heber Raviolo, 'A manera de presentación' in *Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas* by Marcia Collazo Ibáñez, 10th edn (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Bandra Oriental, 2015), pp. 7–10 (p. 7). Further references to this edition of Collazo Ibáñez's novel are given after quotations in the text.
[37] '34ª Feria Internacional del libro - Premios Bartolomé Hidalgo. Ganadores y ternas finalistas', *Cámara uruguaya del libro*, 2011 <https://www.camaradellibro.com.uy/34%c2%aa-feria-internacional-del-libro-premio-bartolome-hidalgo-ternas-finalistas/> [accessed 8 April 2019].
'Ganadores del Libro de Oro y Legionarios del Libro 2012', *Cámara uruguaya del libro*, 2012 <https://www.camaradellibro.com.uy/ganadores-del-libro-de-oro-y-legionarios-del-libro-2012/> [accessed 8 April 2019].

casi todas indirectas, casi todas desesperadamente escasas […]. Faltaba tender los hilos, descubrir las conexiones […]. La creación literaria me permitió imaginar y compaginar el resto, o por mejor decir, intuirlo, dejarlo crecer y desplegarse en mí (12).

This note is followed by a genealogical tree beginning with Artigas's paternal grandparents and branching out to his numerous relationships and children. Such an extensive historical survey gives the reader the impression that despite being a work of fiction, the novel is grounded in historical research, an idea also highlighted by the author in her note: 'En definitiva, me propuse recrear el alma, la raíz, el sentimiento y también la razón que alentó en estas mujeres, sin mengua del rigor histórico allí donde este debe ser respetado' (12). Even before the text begins, *Amores cimarrones* then alludes to the omnipresent question in all historical novels: where does history end and where does fiction begin? In response, Collazo Ibáñez indicates that fiction begins in the recesses of history and highlights the urgency to use fiction where history is not enough, in order to render a space for women forgotten in official historiography. Although Collazo Ibáñez does not use the word memory in her prologue, her intention in recreating this historical narrative is to influence how historical women are, and will be, remembered; in other words, to amplify and diversify cultural memory.

The novel's structure and style further attest to the author's intention of elaborating on the scarce archival sources on women's lives. *Amores cimarrones* has six main sections, each based on a woman associated with Artigas. These are further divided into small subsections which are either named after well-known incidents in Uruguayan history or events from the women's domestic lives. A subsection is often preceded by historical quotes, usually by men, some by Artigas himself and others by historians or novelists. The narrative that follows fictionalises the cited incident from the women's perspectives, functioning as an elaboration of historical facts and as a fictional counter history. Such a structure, reminiscent of Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band*, oscillates between the historical truth of these quotes and the fictional truth of the novel to question official history and reveal multiple layers of historical discourse.

In its representation of blacks and Indians, the novel echoes the concerns of all other texts studied in this thesis. Although they are minor characters in the novel, through the description of African slaves such as Encarnación and Lorenzo, blacks are visible in

this fictionalisation of Uruguayan history, which renders them a voice, albeit a nondescript one. In other words, *Amores cimarrones*'s portrays them as a part and parcel of the historical milieu of this period. Due to space constraints, however, the following analysis, recognising the presence of racially diverse characters in the text, focuses only on its portrayal of the six women and its depiction of a female history.

The analysis below reflects the novel's structure and is divided according to different characters. For each female character, a handful of scenes are highlighted to discuss how they raise issues of identity and cultural memory in Uruguay. Artigas's grandmothers Ignacia Xaviera Carrasco and María Rodríguez Camejo are discussed together as they present women's perspectives on the foundation of Montevideo. An analysis of Artigas's mother Francisca Pasqual Arnal comes next to highlight how her role outlines the disillusionment with the Spanish Crown which sowed the seeds of the independence movements. Then, Artigas's partners Isabel Sánchez, Rosalía Villagrán and Melchora Cuenca are discussed individually to demonstrate how the novel proposes new subjects in national history through its focus on the varied ethnicities of these women and how it responds to male historians by bringing into question Artigas's behaviour towards them. Subsequently, the novel's portrayal of Artigas is analysed to argue that, like Amir Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* and as a reflection of current trends in society, it brings the national hero down from his pedestal to present a humanised, multifaceted leader. The conclusion brings together these different strands to answer the question of whether the novel proposes a renewed cultural memory and identity for present-day Uruguayan readers.

Ignacia and María, the Grandmothers

This section discusses how the narrative of Artigas's paternal grandmother Ignacia Xaviera Carrasco describes the foundation of Montevideo and engages with historians such as Luis Enrique Azarola Gil. Then it focuses on his maternal grandmother, María Rodríguez Camejo, to demonstrate how her perspective responds to other historians like Isidoro de María and Juan A. Gadea by portraying her as an assertive and determined woman. Lastly, it discusses their narratives' common themes of oral history and metafiction to show how Collazo Ibáñez builds upon these issues from the perspective of the present.

Artigas's grandmother Ignacia's narrative begins the novel in a non-linear fashion, as she reminisces about her youth in her old age, and recounts how she met her husband, their decision to come to Montevideo and the first years of their life in the city in the 1720s. Ignacia arrived in Montevideo with the first group of families on a ship from Buenos Aires and in the novel she describes the arduous journey at length, remembering that her husband called her a ragged soldier: 'El día que pisaron la orilla de la tierra nueva el marido le dijo, Ignacia, no pareces mujer, sino un soldado desarrapado, bravucón e insolente, de los que duran poco en una guerra' (24). Decades later, as Ignacia recounts her husband's words, she muses to herself,

> ¿Un soldado? Era posible, si, el vestido tenía unas trencillas pretenciosas cosidas en los puños por las manos de su madre, que podían haber pasado por grados militares, y era verdad que había sido un soldado en casi todo, menos en aquello de colgarse el arcabuz del hombro, masticar tabaco y orinar de pie en cualquier lado (24).

Ignacia's comparison to a soldier, albeit by a man himself rather than the novelist directly, is an interesting take on women's roles in the foundation of the city. In the act of embarking the ship and traversing the river, women crossed the boundaries of the domestic sphere to step into the public one, only to set up house in Montevideo and retreat into their private lives again**.** It is in this liminal act that Ignacia was indeed a soldier as she embodied a predominantly male space. At the beginning of the novel then, the author does not radically challenge male traditions of writing history that privileged military feats, but instead by calling her a soldier it places women such as Ignacia within it.

Ignacia's narrative recounts the foundation of the city, not only demystifying its idyllic beginnings but also questioning the heroism of its founder Bruno Mauricio de Zabala (1682-1736).[38] In the months that followed their arrival at Montevideo, as the families camped with the military, the soldiers treated them badly and the campsite's unhygienic conditions resulted in a growing horde of rats that traumatised its inhabitants. This dire situation continued until the arrival of Zabala, whose presumably historical

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[38] Bruno Mauricio de Zabala was the governor of the River Plate Viceroyalty from 1717 until 1734. It was under his initiative that the Portuguese were first ousted from Montevideo in 1723, following which in 1726 the city was officially founded and families from Buenos Aires and the Canary Islands were brought in to populate the region. Today considered the founder of Uruguay's capital city, Zabala's monument lies in one of the central plazas of Old Montevideo. On Zabala, see Street, *Artigas*, p. 20. In 1976, the dictatorship also celebrated 150 years of the city's foundation.

proclamation about burning the camp's waste is quoted in the novel, followed by his fictional wrath at seeing its deplorable condition: 'Hay que ver en lo que han convertido mi ciudad estos hijos de puta! – masculló Zabala' (100). Zabala's arrival unsettles the entire populace who hurry to clean up their tents before he inspected them. Portrayed as an arrogant man who gave unreasonable orders before leaving for Buenos Aires again, he was not aware of the families' reality as 'no se fijó o no quiso fijarse en las sonrisas de burla de unos cuantos, habráse visto semejante delirio, se decían entre ellos, cómo se ve que el hombre está loco' (104). The novel's Zabala certainly diverges from school textbooks such as H.D.'s *Ensayo de historia patria* which wrote of him: 'Éste es su primer timbre de gloria, y mientras exista Montevideo, su nombre será objeto de la gratitud del pueblo uruguayo'.[39] Questioning and caricaturing prominent leaders is a consistent theme in the post-dictatorship historical novel as we saw above with Delgado Aparaín's Leandro Gómez as well as in his portrayal of the Colorado Venancio Flores. Indeed, *Amores cimarrones* continues this trope of doubting the heroism of nationally significant leaders. Its aim, however, is not just to reflect this motif but to use it to bring forward women's perspectives of, and roles within, this foundational period.

Collazo Ibáñez further counters male historiography from Ignacia's perspective as the novel discusses two of Montevideo's first settlers, José González de Melo and Jorge Burgues. This subsection first quotes an excerpt from Azarola Gil's classic work, *Los orígenes de Montevideo*: 'Otros dos vecinos de la capital, José González de Melo y Jorge Burgues, que precedentemente habían presentado escritos solicitando se les admitiese como pobladores, mantuvieron y realizaron luego su proposición' (81).[40] Immediately afterwards, Ignacia's narrative emphasises her personal recollection of meeting the two men: 'Doña Ignacia también hizo memoria' (81). Similar to de Mattos's protagonist-narrator Josefina, Ignacia also remembers how she participated in this traditionally masculine conversation when her husband met de Melo and Burgues in Buenos Aires to discuss their move to the new city, thus proposing that women were also present when historically significant decisions took place. As noted in the previous anecdote, the novel creates a tension between the written past and Ignacia's fictional memory as 'official' history is repeatedly challenged with additions, lapses and contradictions. If we consider

[39] H.D., *Ensayo*, I, 145.
[40] Azarola Gil, *Los orígenes*, p. 92.

Azarola Gil's book a quintessential study of early Montevideo, as the novel elaborates on it through fiction, it endows Ignacia with a lively personality and creates a space for her historical memory, albeit a fictional one, within its established national counterpart.

Artigas's maternal grandmother María Rodríguez Camejo was part of the second set of families that came from the Canary Islands to Montevideo, disembarking directly in the Banda Oriental to join the city's residents. Like Ignacia's narrative, María's point of view oscillates between her past experiences of arriving in the city and her old-age present ending with her death in 1772.

Although not much is known about María, like many other women in the novel she has only been mentioned in history books in relation to Artigas. *Amores cimarrones* first quotes historian Juan A. Gadea, whose book on Artigas's birthplace discussed the location of María's first home in Montevideo where she lived until 1743.[41] Then the novel elaborates on María's sentiments at being asked to evacuate this home because the government decided to erect city walls in its place. This anecdote draws attention to women's education, or the lack thereof, as well as her tenacity in defending her property in a public act, albeit related to a private space: 'Defender la propiedad era mucho más importante que saber leer y escribir para aquella mujer nacida en un mundo de aluvión y desdichas' (134). On hearing the news of the evacuation, María 'se encrespó como una hiena' and exclaimed:

> Yo no tengo la culpa de que la corona haya cambiado la línea de las murallas, o de que sus mercedes tengan pareceres contrarios o lo que sea, este terreno me fue donado en buena ley por orden del gobernador Zabala, títulos tengo, con sello real y todo, y no han de echarme a la calle así nomás (134-5).

As her narrative continues, she reminisces about her life in the house and visits it every day before it is demolished. A few pages later, the novel cites Gadea again about the compensation María was given for losing her first house. Gadea's historical quote notes that the government donated two pieces of land to María in return for her *solar* (plot), implying that the Spanish crown had been benevolent towards her (147).[42] Collazo

[41] Gadea, *El ambiente*, p. 13.
[42] Ibid., p. 14.

Ibáñez's fictional rendering suggests otherwise; although María was given two pieces of land, she pressured the government to build her a house in compensation for her losses:

se fue ella a la comandancia para pedir que se le construyera allí otra casa, al fin podían aprovecharse los materiales de su recién demolida vivienda, pecado sería no hacerlo y cargos de ladrón levantaría contra cualquier que tocara una sola de esas piedras, esto dijo con voz ronca mientras pregonaba sus muchos sacrificios y dolores, […] tanto rogó y argumentó que llegaron a levantarle otra casa a costa de la Real Hacienda (147).

Here, the novel highlights María's agency and portrays her as an assertive woman who fights for her rights, an aspect missing in Gadea's work. Her taking a stand in a public, and male, space like the headquarters of the Spanish Crown in Montevideo and fighting for what she deserves both reclaims the historical María's voice and also echoes the author's actions, highlighting the novel's metanarrative qualities as Collazo Ibáñez, a female historian in a traditionally male genre, uses fiction to give women their due in history.

In the preface to *Amores cimarrones*, Heber Raviolo highlights the differences between Collazo Ibáñez's novel and de María's well-known *Montevideo antiguo*, and writes that in the former,

en cuanto a Montevideo, es como si las humildes casas de azotea o techo de tejas fueran perforadas por su mirada y nos topáramos de golpe con la vida de aquellos montevideanos, que permaneció ajena, por cierto, a la mirada de Isidoro de María (9).

Artigas's maternal grandmother María's narrative is significant in further analysing this relationship between *Montevideo antiguo* and Collazo Ibáñez's novel which is arguably more political than Raviolo gives it credit for. For instance, when *Amores cimarrones* portrays how María arranged her funeral with the Franciscan church before her death, it personalises Isidoro de María's general anecdote of paying for a funerary garb in the late eighteenth century. Accordingly, the historian is first cited in the novel:

Era costumbre amortajar de hábito del Carmen, de Dolores y de San Francisco, a las personas pudientes, a los demás de tela blanca. Se pagaban hasta 25 pesos por un hábito Franciscano de los

Padres Conventuales, que cuanto más viejo era, más caro costaba, por las indulgencias que se le atribuían (164).[43]

The novel's second historical source for this anecdote is Gadea once more, who alludes to María's agency in paying for her funeral but, as discussed earlier, only mentions it to demonstrate how she was worthy of being Artigas's grandmother.[44] In *Amores cimarrones*, however, Collazo Ibáñez's description of María does not serve the purpose of celebrating the national hero; in fact, Artigas is not even mentioned in the anecdote. Instead, the novel describes her as an assertive woman giving the priest orders:

Anote, padre: han de ser cuatro cirios de los grandes y diez varas de tela negra, de la llamada de holandilla, que está dentro de lo permitido y además es muy decente ¿no cree usted? […]. No han de faltar los responsos, sobre todo, le encargo que me haga poner el hábito más viejo de los franciscanos (165).

Whilst the historian Gadea discusses María's arrangements to highlight the heroic tendencies of Artigas's family and to reinforce his positive image, Collazo Ibáñez renders an image of her as independent, assertive and resourceful, thus portraying her as separate from the politics of Artigas's myth. Yet, María and Artigas continue to be linked in the national consciousness, given that, as a means to attract the reader and to situate the women, the novel is titled 'Las mujeres de Artigas'. This raises the question of whether the novel proposes a new memory, in which women are perceived as independent of but connected to the national hero's myth, an idea that becomes clearer through the rest of this thesis chapter.

It becomes apparent through the narratives of both grandmothers that the novel places an emphasis on story-telling and oral histories between women of different generations. For instance, in her old age Ignacia recounts how she met her husband in Buenos Aires to Antonia, José Artigas's older sister. Ignacia remembers Antonia's curiosity in listening to her stories:

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[43] de María, *Montevideo antiguo*, I, 44.

[44] Gadea, *El ambiente*, p. 9. Although Gadea is not quoted here, this anecdote is clearly sourced from his work because he is the only historian to have mentioned it.

Antonia se arrimó a la cama y se puso a cebar mate y a preguntar. Hurgaba en el pasado de la abuela como quien revuelve un baúl viejo, lo haría de puro curiosa o por alguna procesión que llevaba por dentro (34).[45]

Similarly, Antonia listens to María, who notes her granddaughter's interest in her life: 'Antonia, la nieta mayor, […] no podía siquiera imaginarse las fatigas y la mala suerte que trajeron a su abuela materna a este rincón austral del nuevo mundo, y por eso mismo no dejaba de escarbar y preguntar' (174). Antonia's obsession with her female ancestors' lives is similar to both the role of the author in *Amores cimarrones* and that of the female reader of the novel: 'la vida de sus dos abuelas achacosas parecía atraerla de un modo casi morboso, y a las dos procuraba averiguarles cosas que en cualquier caso ni ellas mismas podían responder' (174-75). This mechanism can be seen as a form of metafiction to suggest the author's own curiosity in her nation's feminine past as well as her challenge to the dominant male traditions of written history.

As the novel highlights the transmission of experiences and history through the act of storytelling, it alludes to women's absence from historical discourse and cultural production because of their illiteracy. This becomes clear when María muses:

Si solamente hubiera sabido leer y escribir, de su propia vida habría dejado testimonio doña María tan bien como el propio Cervantes lo hizo con Don Quijote, no le hacía falta inventiva alguna para ello, sino que le bastaba con lo que a lo largo de su propia vida le había acontecido, y con la facilidad de su prosa, que era florida y espesa como monte nativo (180).

On mentioning the canonical Cervantes, the novel looks to challenge two stereotypes about historical women: that they were not literary and that their lives were mundane because they took place in the domestic sphere. Furthermore, as it contemplates an alternative reality where women would have left a testimony of their lives in the Banda Oriental, the novel serves as a metafiction once more, as Collazo Ibáñez has already recreated a testimony of their historical lives, albeit a fictional one.

At first glance, the novel follows the trend of metanarratives as noted in the previous historical novels studied in this thesis; *Artigas Blues Band, ¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*,

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[45] In this context, the obscure and often colloquial phrasal verb 'andar, o ir, por dentro la procesión' means to 'sentir pena, cólera, inquietud, dolor, etc., aparentando serenidad o sin darlo a conocer.' RAE, 2019.

No robarás and *Las esclavas* all feature protagonists who either pen letters or write books and testimonies. Yet, *Amores cimarrones* does not function as a literal metafiction; instead, it highlights the nuances and ambiguities of the conflict between written and oral history whilst reflecting upon the author and the reader's role in writing and interpreting women's histories. In doing so, it depicts women as occupying 'male' spaces, highlights the discrepancies of relegating them to the domestic sphere, and draws attention to the politics of reclaiming women's historical roles by countering male historians' narratives.

Francisca, the Mother

Although a large part of Francisca Pasqual Arnal's narrative centres on her relationship with her son, it is not completely dominated by the national hero, as it also focuses on her marriage to Martín Artigas, her relationship with her parents and the looming conflict between the creole population and the Spanish crown. The following analysis highlights how Francisca is placed within the political milieu of the time, and how her fictional personal memories of the past are put forward as part of the national cultural memory of the present.

As a fourteen-year-old, before Francisca's marriage to Martín, her parents advised her about married life and politics. Her father informed her that life with Martín would be difficult, especially because as a creole councilman and military officer, he was in an underprivileged position: 'ganará toda la vida menos de la mitad del sueldo de un oficial español […] y haga lo que haga […] no ha de pasar nunca de capitán' (199). On hearing this, an indignant Francisca thought to herself:

> era como una especie de anunciación innombrable, verdadera conspiración de alguna fuerza oscura contra todo lo bueno y amable y justiciero. ¿Cómo que su marido no pasaría jamás de capitán? ¿No eran acaso los criollos las más entendidos para ocupar los altos cargos de su propia tierra? (200).

Francisca's thoughts thus point to the creole population's disenchantment with the Spanish government as well as the injustices of the time. Suggesting that women also embraced the growing antipathy for the Spanish crown which would result in the 1810 revolution, the novel implies that Francisca's desire for justice foreshadows her son José's. As it traces the national hero's values and personality characteristics to his maternal, and not paternal side as previous historians have done, it proposes women as

forebears of national independence movements, attempting to alter this historical period's memory to include women within it.

The adult Francisca is further portrayed as a politically aware and opinionated woman when she listens to a conversation between Francisco Antonio Maciel, Faustino González and her husband, whilst pretending to sew at the same time:

> Desde la pieza contigua, haciendo como que cosía, Francisca escuchaba y meditaba. Era verdad que no se le daba voz al criollo y, sin embargo, el criollo la tomaba, ahí estaba para muestra la impaciencia de estos hombres ansiosos de obtener en buena o en mala ley lo que la naturaleza y su ingenio prometían, dio una puntada Francisca en la tela amarilla y allí quedo el agujero diminuto, si lo agrandara con las agujas seguramente rasgaría la tela, de la misma manera en el borde del mundo conocido se había abierto una garganta que ya estaba tanteando la manera de salirse de madre, quién demonios piensa en los imperios transoceánicos o en los bandos cuando sale a ganarse la vida a campo suelto (212).

Reminsicient of Josefina from *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* and the Greek epic *Odyssey*'s Penelope who used weaving and unravelling to bide her time and control her future, as *Amores cimarrones* also uses metaphors of sewing to foreshadow the eminent revolutions, it depicts historical women to be capable of political opinions. Francisca's belief that if the hole in a stitch is made bigger it will spoil the whole fabric is symbolic of the growing anti-crown opinions of the men she is listening to. Highlighting how interwoven public and private life were, the novel challenges early historiography that viewed these two spheres as separate and privileged public history over its private counterpart. It also suggests that women were politically curious and aware, even if as in Francisca's case, she was not present at the decision-making table but was only listening in from the adjacent room. Keeping in mind how the Banda Oriental revolutions are remembered, if we consider Martín and the others' thoughts as sowing the seeds of the Uruguayan nation, when Francisca shares those ideas, *Amores cimarrones* proposes that the revolution, and therefore the nation's subsequent independence, was not just a masculine project.

The novel further reclaims women's roles as it portrays Francisca taking politically relevant decisions. Her husband, who was both a councilman and a captain in

the military was often away from Montevideo to fulfil the latter role. On these occasions, the inhabitants of the city would approach Francisca instead:

> si no pueden hablar con el cabildante don Martín Artigas se dirigen a su mujer, que para el caso es casi lo mismo o hasta mejor, según como se mire. Ya se conoce, y desde tiempo inmemorial, que la esposa gobierna los hilos de la rueca (232).

The image of women involved in politics because of their influence on the men in their lives is rather stereotypical and is described through the metaphor of daily household tasks such as a spinning wheel. Once more, the novel uses language associated with domestic life to re-inscribe historically accepted roles of women that, although taking place in the privacy of their homes, were related to public service. *Amores cimarrones* diverges from this stereotype to some extent when it describes the requests Francisca received everyday and compares her to another Artigas man, her father-in-law Juan Antonio: 'aprendió a oír con la misma cara de piedra que años atrás su propio suegro Juan Antonio Artigas sabía poner frente a la gente desde su cargo de Alcalde de la Santa Hermandad' (232). Comparing Francisca to Juan Antonio Artigas, one of the first councilmen in Montevideo, is significant in drawing attention to women's historical roles in the city. Accordingly, on her husband's return, he would ask her what news she had and 'ella lo miraba de reojo y de diez casos le relataba uno, el que le parecía de veras importante' (233). Although Francisca did not take any decisions that would change the course of history, as she filtered what news to tell Martín, the novel indicates that women were not entirely inconsequential, as their absence in history books had implied, thus proposing a shift in cultural memory about them, no longer perceiving them as spectators of history but as participants in it.

Whilst placing the fictional Francisca in the political milieu of anti-Crown sentiment, the author also highlights how the real Francisca has been sidelined in Uruguayan history. During the Spanish-Portuguese war of 1776-77, Martín Artigas participated in various battles in the Banda Oriental, notably when the Portuguese lay siege to the Spanish fortress of Santa Tecla.[46] In the novel, when the news of the attack spread through Montevideo, and when faced with a deluge of visitors who came to the Artigas household in search of information, Francisca would put on a brave front: 'se

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[46] Street, *Artigas*, p. 47.

callaba profiadamente, ponía cara de palo y se mordía los labios hasta sentir el gusto de sangre' (225). But as she waited for news about Martín herself, in the privacy of her room she would take a penknife and 'trazaba una raya en una de las vigas de madera' to count the days (226-27). The narrator then notes that even if Martín were to come back safe and sound, 'en la madera quedaron para siempre aquellas rayas finitas trazadas a cuchillo, como centinelas de una historia demasiado pequeña como para merecer un sitio en el recuerdo de otros' (227). As the novel comments on her forgotten story, it fictionalises the tangible traces that Francisca's experiences may have left in the past, thus hinting that the stories of everyday women were inextricably connected with many noteworthy events in history. This anecdote serves two entwined purposes: it points out how women's experiences have been excised from history; and by undoing their absence, it in fact takes on the task of bringing forward their personal memories.

Whilst the first part of Francisca's section considers her relationship with her parents and Martín, the second focuses on her role as a mother to José Artigas. This subsection challenges and reinforces certain aspects of Artigas's historiography, raising questions of how the memory of Artigas, and indeed his mother, has evolved in Uruguay. Crucially, it engages with his Black Legend as reinforced by Argentine historian and former president Bartolomé Mitre, who is quoted in the novel: 'Inobediente, altivo y travieso desde sus primeros años se acostumbró a obrar por propia voluntad […] parece que el cielo hubiera querido dotarlo de un temple de alma superior para dominar a los demás hombres y arrastrarlos al peligro' (257). Subsequently, Artigas's mother Francisca then attests to his disobedient behaviour and recounts his schooling by Franciscan priests who 'relataban a la madre que más de una vez […] Pepe había aplastado contra el suelo a un rival, poniéndole un pie en el pecho' (257). Although Francisca listened to the priests quietly, once she found out that 'los frailes habían encerrado al niño en un baúl de madera, para escarmiento' she decided to take him out of school and sent him to their house in Sauce (257). The novel does not entirely challenge Artigas's Black Legend, but neither does it reinforce it; instead it employs it to highlight Francisca's role in this history.[47]

[47] Artigas's schooling was described in a cryptic footnote in H.D.'s *Ensayo*: 'El futuro jefe de los orientales fué [sic] educado en el convento de San Francisco […]. Aunque su educación fue incompleta, debido al atraso en que se hallaba por entonces la instrucción de la niñez.' I, 292.

Although the novel engages with Mitre's Black Legend, it also cites to pro-Artigas works like de María's *Rasgos biográficos de hombres notables* which discusses Francisca's love for Artigas:

> Ella misma, si era menester, preparaba el amasijo del pan casero. Acompañada de una criada, encargada de conducir los avíos para el mate, se constituía inmediatamente al punto donde acampaba su amado hijo con la tropa y se complacía en cebarle el mate por su mano (263).[48]

Interestingly, Collazo Ibáñez leaves out the exclamation that follows in de María's work ('¡Amor de madre!'), which highlighted her devotion to her son Artigas.[49] Historically then, Francisca was categorised as a dedicated and loving mother (and confined to that role), a stereotypical image of women at the time. Although *Amores cimarrones*'s subsequent fictionalisation of this quote follows de María diligently as she makes bread for him and meets him on horseback, there is a difference in the image of Francisca that comes through in Collazo Ibáñez's text. In the novel, her personality is more developed and she is an astute mother who, whilst having *maté* with her son, asks him questions like, 'Cómo te lleva el cargo, José?' and when he does not answer directly, she reiterates, using his nickname to encourage a response, 'Pero dime, ¿estás contento de veras, Pepe?' (270). In portraying her as a developed multifaceted character, the novel takes on the task of fiction to imbibe historical people with living personalities, but it also goes one step further as it speaks to present-day trends of excavating the roles of previously marginalised figures, thereby also setting a precedent for how women from Uruguayan history would be viewed in the future.

The novel thus places Francisca within the anti-Crown sentiment of the Banda Oriental population of the time and highlights her participation in the nation's origins. Moreover, as it blurs the historically-defined boundaries of politics and domesticity, it proposes new memories of historical women, playfully engaging with their absence and presence in history.

Isabel Sánchez, the mestiza

After describing Artigas's grandmothers and mother, the novel's next section takes place away from Montevideo, demonstrating a stark contrast between the former's elite lives

[48] de María, *Rasgos*, p. 12.
[49] Ibid., p. 12.

and Isabel Sánchez's humble origins. It portrays the mestiza Isabel, who is of Chaná origin, as an independent woman and delves into the Indian past of the Banda Oriental, fictionalising extensively when faced with meagre historical details. Accordingly, the novel differentiates between women in the countryside and Montevideo's Spanish elite:

> Para empezar, Isabel y sus hermanas nunca tuvieron que sufrir la celosa vigilancia paterna de una castidad a la castellana, las hembras gozaban de una libertad natural como la de los animales y los pájaros, era aquella una cosa casi desconocida para el criollo (324).

Using the common literary device of associating the countryside with freedom, it highlights the egalitarian relationship between men and women there:

> En aquella sociedad no quedaba maldita o cubierta de infamante sospecha una mujer por el solo hecho de lanzarse sola al paseo, […] no hay mujeres malas cuando las hembras escasean, ni remilgos melindrosos llegada la edad de merecer, en cualquier caso, lo que buscaban los hombres en las mozas no era una virginidad impoluta, sino placer y camaradería, alguna pasión pasajera, afecto manso y duradero cuando se podía (325).

Whilst this portrayal of women is rather idyllic and romanticised, it links Isabel to ideas of liberty by focusing on her humble origins and multi-ethnic background. In doing so, it privileges her narrative over Montevideo's women and challenges historical works such as Bonavita's *Sombras heroicas* which had favoured Artigas's wife Rosalía's elite background.

Collazo Ibáñez also engages with previous historians who often failed to mention Isabel, either because she was not a member of the elite or because they did not know of her existence. In Bonavita's 1945 book, she was portrayed as a short-term affair, 'como un relámpago,' who would always be in the shadows.[50] Arguably, because of her mestiza background, she was not viewed as a serious companion to the national hero of a country that revelled in its European connections. In the novel, however, her relationship with Artigas is viewed differently and there is an emphasis on her practical skills and on his affection for her:

[50] Bonavita, *Sombras*, p. 15.

–Pero si yo no te pido nada, Pepe –le diría ella mucho más tarde, cada vez que las muchas ocupaciones de él lo reclamaban–. Esa es la cosa, que yo no te pido nada, capaz que ni te quiero –agregaba como para torearlo y también defenderse del estrago de sus casi seguras infidelidades.

–No hay cuidado, mi china, yo te quiero por los dos –le contestaba él, artero (348-9).

The text draws further attention to Isabel's significance for Artigas when it fictionalises her death: 'Isabel se murió pocos meses después y entonces todo se convirtió para Pepe en un largo derrumbamiento' (354). Ironically, this sentence echoes Luis Bonavita's description of Rosalía's relationship with Artigas which according to him was the leader's 'decepción definitiva'.[51] Then whilst Bonavita and, indeed before him de María, focused on the elite Montevidean woman Rosalía as his ideal partner, in *Amores cimarrones* Isabel comes across as the preferred one. Symbolically, as the novel veers from the historical privilege given to the white Montevidean woman towards the love story of the mestiza, it highlights not only the national leader's but thereby also the nation's multi-ethnic roots and alliances. Although this could be viewed as problematic because it seems to gloss over the violent deaths of many indigenous people and presents a romanticised view of them, it clearly makes a point about Uruguay's identity for a contemporary reader which goes hand in hand with the trend of bringing forward previously marginalised figures.

The mestiza Isabel also reclaims women's histories of the colonisation process as she dons the role of a storyteller. Following established convention, the novel quotes a letter written by Hernando Arias de Saavedra (1561-1634, aka Hernandarias), to the Spanish king about the fertile land and abundance of cattle in the region.[52] Then Isabel recounts her version of Hernandarias's story and its connection to her hometown Soriano:

Unos cien años más tarde bajó el criollo Hernandarias por el mismo camino que habían recorrido sus ancestros, hacia la tierra que un día no muy lejano se llamaría de Santo Domingo de Soriano […]. Hernando Arias de Saavedra era su gracia completa, grande su fama por haber sido el primer gobernador criollo, y por algo mereció el nombramiento (298).

In giving her a historical voice, the novel follows the trend of women retelling history in post-dictatorship novels, such as Graciosita in *Las esclavas* and Josefina in *¡Bernabé,*

[51] Ibid., p. 15.
[52] Hernandarias was the first creole governor of Asunción of Paraguay and the River Plate regions. He was responsible for the creation of the River Plate as a separate governorate in 1618 with Buenos Aires as its capital and for the introduction of cattle into the region. H.D., *Ensayo*, I, 114–17.

Bernabé!. But Isabel's narration does not stop there; in a feminist gesture, she traces Hernandarias's success to his grandmother, Mencia Calderón:

> Sin embargo a Hernandarias se le concedió la gracia del cargo, sería también porque a sus espaldas traía el fantasma de su abuela doña Mencia Calderón, mujer de temple augusto y talón rajado que se echó a la mar por las buenas o por las malas, viuda reciente pero no por eso medrosa (298).

Isabel continues to praise his grandmother, as the latter also '[s]upo llevar consigo las cincuenta primeras mujeres españolas que pisaron las Indias' (298). Mencia Calderón, one of the first female explorers of the New World, does not feature in many historical works. *Amores cimarrones* then reclaims women's pasts at different levels; it brings forward Isabel's stories, who in turn emphasises the role of women in the colonisation process, albeit resulting in a rather romantic and sanitised view of it. Interestingly, Mencia Calderón is a significant character in Uruguayan Diego Bracco's 2007 novel which is based on her daughter and is eponymously titled, *Maria de Sanabria*.[53] As it fictionalises Spanish women's entry into the River Plate in 1546, *Maria de Sanabria* indeed fills the historical gap in narratives about these women, attesting to the importance of this trope in post-dictatorship Uruguay.

As *Amores cimarrones* recreates Isabel's story, situating her in the countryside, it highlights the nation's mestizo connection via women related to Artigas, suggesting a multicultural view of national identity in the present. Moreover, in reclaiming Mencia Calderón's story, it emphasizes women's contributions in the creation of the nation that many claim began with the colonisation of the River Plate in the early sixteenth century.

Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán, the Wife

Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán is probably one of the best-known women from nineteenth-century Uruguayan history because of her legal marriage to the national hero Artigas and for her elite background. Additionally, since Artigas's letters to her mother Francisca Artigas de Villagrán were reproduced in the Archivo Artigas, much more is known about Rosalía and her family than his other partners. Accordingly, in *Amores cimarrones* Rosalía's narrative also features her mother Francisca Artigas de Villagrán, aka Pancha's

[53] (Madrid: Ediciones Nowtilus, 2007).

point of view and often oscillates between the two women's perspectives.[54] Keeping in mind that Artigas was portrayed as a kind husband in history books, in Chapter 2 it was noted that *Artigas Blues Band* questioned his behaviour towards Rosalía through the words of his loyal servant Ansina. *Amores cimarrones* develops this idea further to emphasise Rosalía and her mother's misfortunes as well as Artigas's problematic conduct towards them. In doing so, it attempts to give us the full picture of the letters exchanged between Artigas and Pancha by fictionalising the latter's sentiments, thus going beyond the archive to de-romanticise historical works. Whilst to some extent this challenges the figure of Artigas as the epitome of national values, the novel's aim is to focus on women's experiences, to render them as fully-fledged characters and to provide a fictional space for their voices.

Because of its presence in historiography, Rosalía's narrative is the most complex and for this reason, the analysis below follows it chronologically. It first discusses the British Invasions of 1806-07 when Montevideo was defended by the Spanish armies as well as by its female inhabitants.[55] Next, it focuses on women's perspectives of the Banda Oriental revolution against the Spanish, beginning in 1810. Then it covers the letters exchanged between Artigas and his mother-in-law Pancha and finally, the representation of Rosalía's illness and death in 1824.

As the novel portrays women defending Montevideo during the British Invasions of 1806-07, it is reminiscent of Delgado Aparaín's representation of women soldiers in *No robarás*. First, the women at Montevideo took on a traditional role as they helped in hospitals as nurses: 'Rosalía llegó a perder la cuenta del número de heridos que pasaron por sus manos en un solo día de combate, que los contara y anotara sus nombres le habían dicho' (415). Yet, they also adopted the unconventional role of soldiers as 'muchas habían combatido espalda contra espalda con los defensores de la ciudad' (417). *Amores cimarrones* then not only consolidates its established image of women as soldiers, as in the case of Ignacia and as we shall see later, Melchora Cuenca, but it also follows previous Uruguayan literary motifs of women in combat that began with the short story 'El combate de la tapera' (1892) by Eduardo Acevedo Díaz (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, in

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[54] The nickname Pancha is a narrative ploy so that the reader does not get confused between Francisca Pascual Arnal, Artigas's mother and Francisca Artigas de Villagrán, his mother-in-law.
[55] For a historical analysis of the British Invasions in the River Plate, see Street, *Artigas*, pp. 78–93.

portraying Rosalía as a nurse defending the city, the novel nuances her character in an attempt to expand the nation's memory of her.

As the novel presents Rosalía defending Montevideo during the British Invasions, it also counters the historical archive, quoting from a presumably real diary of an British soldier who did not have a good impression of Banda Oriental women:

> Las mujeres nativas eran las menos graciosas que jamás hubiera yo contemplado. Tienen anchas narices, labios gruesos y son de muy pequeña estatura. Su cabello, que es largo, negro y áspero al tacto, lo llevan rizado y levantado sobre la frente de la manera más horrible […] cuando se engalanan, entrelazan en el cuello plumas y flores, y se pasean en plena ostentación de su fealdad (420).

In light of this rather disparaging description, Collazo Ibáñez's twenty-first century novel defends Montevideo's historical women by fictionalising the following exchange between Rosalía and her friend Mercedes: '¡Habráse visto, tan luego ellos que parecen cangrejos de río, todos colorados! – se río Mercedes cuando contó aquello a Rosalía –' (420). This playful dialogue between historical letters and fiction, in a patriotic gesture, alludes to the silencing of women in history and overturns it by depicting them as countering the insult.

As the novel recounts post-1810 history, it focuses on life in Montevideo during the revolutions against the Spanish crown and addresses the situation of families who, because of their connection to the rebelling leaders, were expelled from the city at gunpoint. When faced with an absent Artigas, *Amores cimarrones* portrays Pancha nominating herself the head of the family because of 'su pura altivez de mujer caudilla' and notes that other women also did the same: 'amén de tres cuyos jefes de familia eran mujeres, según propia declaración' (441). Emphasising her agency further, the novel presents a conversation between Pancha and a clerk who noted the names of the expelled families:

> –Nombre del jefe de la familia –inquirió con voz seca el escribiente.
> –Doña Francisca Artigas de Villagrán.
> Hizo una pausa la mano que anotaba, fue breve, pero pausa al fin.
> –Anote lo que le he dicho –machacó la vieja–. Ponga usted: Doña Francisca Artigas de Villagrán.
> […]

[E]ntonces le habrá dicho al escribiente fatigado, anota que esta familia es mía, sí señor, esta es la familia de una mujer sola, que se basta a sí misma para regentear a su gente y a su casa. Y punto (442).

Like in the case of Artigas's grandmother Ignacia, Pancha also takes on a traditionally masculine role, making the boundaries of private and public spaces ambiguous. Moreover, as the novel assigns Pancha agency in retrospect, it presents her as an active character in the historical narrative of the nation.

In the section on Rosalía, the novel quotes many letters by Artigas, written to Pancha directly or to government officials about his family. In one such letter from 1815, Artigas asks Pancha to take his family back to Montevideo and comes across as a domineering son-in-law:

Entre tanto mándeme Vd. a José María que se adelante en leer y escribir, Vd. con ese motivo llévese a la familia a Montevideo, estése allí disfrutando del sosiego, y déjenos trabajar a nosotros. Expresiones a Rafaela, que no sea tan ingrata, y a los demás conocidos recordará el afecto con que muy especialmente se dedica a Vd. su hijo y servidor (462).[56]

Countering the real Francisca Artigas de Villagrán's historical silence, the novel's fictional Pancha responds to Artigas in the following way:

Ay, Pepe, cómo eres de ingrato, hijo mío. Que los deje trabajar a ustedes, que me quede quieta aquí, disfrutando del sosiego, me dices. ¿De qué sosiego, te pregunto yo? Porque mira que lo mío no será ni caballo ni armas, ni decretos ni tratados, pero en cambio es sudor y tierra, carbón y lejía, oficio callado de enfermera y de madre (463).

Pancha's informal direct response to Artigas highlights the novel's politics of filling in gaps in the archive and questions his behaviour towards his family, as she continues:

si no me crees prueba a bajar un poco por aquí, a asomarte así por un instante a la pieza donde tu ingrata Rafaela se consume la vida, […] y cómo ibas a comprenderlo tú, si lo tuyo siempre ha sido la vida y el aire libre y la gloria (463).

Along with emphasising the significance of women's roles in her society, she also comments on their enforced silence: 'Todo esto te podría escribir, y seguramente te sorprenderían y hasta te disgustarían mis palabras […]. Lo diría si pudiera decirlo, pero

[56] *Archivo Artigas*, XXII (1989), 199. In the original, Artigas writes 'cuideme' instead of 'mándeme'.

cosas hay en el mundo que se pueden nombrar y otras que han de callarse para siempre' (463). As Pancha muses that she cannot write these words, ironically, they have already been written by the author in another metanarrative gesture in *Amores cimarrones*. In other words, we as readers become privy to these unwritten, unspeakable thoughts that contest historians' image of Artigas as 'paciente y cariñoso'.[57] However, the novel is not a mere repudiation of historical works: as it presents women's personal memories of the past, it proposes that they become part of the national origin story which is no longer viewed as unequivocal, but as one that contains multiple, often contradictory, historical accounts.

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Rosalía's madness has been a controversial issue for many historians who have mostly portrayed it in a patronising manner. The novel challenges this view, as Rosalía's narrative begins with her interior monologue in a hospital bed listening to doctors who, like historians, contemplate the reasons for her illness. The reader follows her consciousness over the next two pages when she thinks about the meaning of liberty whilst urinating in her bed:

> piensa en la libertad, qué idea espléndida se decían los entendidos de entonces, casi todos frailes o letrados, que eran precisamente los que menos sabían de libertad; qué idea fenomenal, decían, y ella veía cómo Pepe enarbolaba la palabra en el aire […]. Ahora en cambio, se orina en la cama, plácidamente feliz de haberlo hecho, como si con ello recobrara su minúscula posibilidad de ser libre (362).

As the novel gives us her perspective, one could argue that it continues to portray Rosalía in a melancholic way, a stereotypical view of someone who has mental health issues. However, it also challenges this perspective in endowing her with a political mindset that questions what freedom meant for different people during the revolutions. *Amores cimarrones* thus, by providing her personal perspective, presents a renewed image of her for the reader.

The section on Rosalía ends with Pancha's perspective of her daughter's death. Historically, although the duo's exact circumstances after Artigas left the Banda Oriental are not known, Bonavita gave evidence of Rosalía's death in the city hospital on the same day as an important wedding: 'El 10 de Febrero de 1824, mientras Montevideo asiste a

[57] de María, *Rasgos*, p. 34.

las fiestas nupciales de un personaje de la Cisplatina, muere Rosalía, en un cuartucho del Hospital de Caridad'.[58] Collazo Ibáñez's version, on the other hand, is more poetic:

> La campana de la iglesia no se ha dignado tocar a rebato por el alma de la menesterosa, si alguno se acuerda de su nombre lo calla con fervor de sobreviviente, es una Artigas, más vale no revolver el avispero. La campana se echará al vuelo, en cambio, por la fastuosa boda que ha de celebrarse ese mismo día, las gentes murmuran expectantes, todo el mundo espera ver pasar el carruaje del novio, ese poderoso hijo del imperio del Brasil que ha elegido casarse en la Cisplatina, como ahora la llaman (467).

As the novel raises issues of forgetting and remembering through this anecdote, it comments on how women's lives, and indeed their deaths, were not deemed significant enough whilst events such as the wedding of a Brazilian aristocrat were worthy of being celebrated and commemorated. There is an irony in this, however, because as the novel comments on how Rosalía had been forgotten by her contemporaries in the past, the author dedicates an entire section to her life story, thereby suggesting its worthiness in the twenty-first century present.

The novel thus attempts to challenge the existing memory of Rosalía Rafael Villagrán, providing a narrative that questions her previous images and proposes new ones. Although not entirely disputing the historical image of her madness, it suggests that she should also be remembered as a woman who defended the city during the British Invasions. With regards to Pancha (Francisca Artigas de Villagrán), the novel portrays her as an agent and highlights how her voice has been supressed in historical works as it calls for the inclusion of both their individual narratives within the cultural memory of the nation.

Melchora Cuenca, the Paraguayan

Melchora Cuenca was Artigas's long-term partner in the village of Purificación when he governed the Banda Oriental from 1815 until his exile to Paraguay in 1820. Whilst the previous sections in *Amores cimarrones* are from the perspectives of real historical women, in the case of Melchora the author provides a fictional third-person narrator. With

[58] Bonavita, *Sombras*, p. 20.

Anunciación as a mouthpiece, the novel discusses Melchora's origins and the two women's roles as *lanceras*, and comments on memory-making and history.

As previously noted with regard to de Mattos's Josefina and Cabrera's Graciosita, women retelling history is a recurring motif in the post-dictatorship historical novel. Likewise, Anunciación, Collazo Ibáñez's fictional narrator, reinforces this trope as she begins her tale with: 'Esta historia, buena o mala, comenzó…' (469). She muses what her story would be like if she were literate: 'Podría haber sido una carta si yo hubiera sabido escribir, hasta un libro podría haber sido […] pero como no sé escribir ni siquiera mi nombre, que para mejor es muy largo' (469-70). Since she cannot write, Anunciación becomes an oral historian as she thanks God for giving her a good memory, a means to persuade the reader of the 'historical truth' of her narrative: 'como Dios me ha dado buena memoria he llegado a tener adentro del pecho una verdadera historia que está pidiendo a gritos que la suelte' (470). She also ponders upon why she chose to tell Melchora's story: 'Véase si no cómo se la ha tragado el olvido, a mí me parece que ya no queda nadie con memoria de ella en esta tierra' (471). As the narrator intends to convince the reader of her impeccable memory, the novel highlights the ambiguous relationship between writing history and memory. Anunciación will never be able to write a history book because she is illiterate; however, she is in possession of a 'true' history because of her good memory. Her description thus challenges traditions of writing history which often accuse memory of being unreliable and of embellishing facts because it is not fixed and may change with each telling and over time.

The novel also describes Anunciación and Melchora's role as *lanceras* in the revolutionary armies:

> Las lanceras me acuerdo que nos habíamos puesto toditas en fila, para que apreciara el General, toditas también con una vincha en la frente, […] el pelo en una trenza larga para el costado, […] no éramos un ejército ni cosa que se la parezca, éramos hembras de guerra nomás, lo mismo que los hombres, pero había que ver a todas esas mujeres respirando el mismo aire que él respiraba (473).

Echoing its previous description of women defending Montevideo against the English in 1805-06, through Melchora and Anunciación the novel presents more images of women as soldiers. Once more, drawing attention to combatant women, it continues the

Uruguayan literary tradition of portraying them as soldiers but this time fictionalising their individual points of view of different battles.

When Anunciación discusses their roles as *lanceras*, she also describes Melchora's personality at length, deviating from Bonavita who had compared her to a wild flower, despite calling her *lancera* before: 'una flor de la maraña tropical, una de esas flores que en el dialecto aborigen tienen tan lindo nombre, de acento agudo, gracioso y musical'.[59] Fitting with nineteenth-century views of women, Bonavita emphasises her non-elite origins and claims: 'No tenía la menor cultura, pero sí, tal vez, un vivísimo instinto femenino'.[60] In contrast, Melchora's best friend Anunciación describes her as strong and active as well as beautiful: 'tenía por su lado la gracia de belleza, el ojo de águila y aquel talante rápido y decidido' (483). And later, she emphasises her compassion as she took the narrator in: 'la Melchora compartió con esta miserable sus pesares, su mesa y hasta su propia cama' (483). Melchora's character is further developed as she was not only bold enough to criticise the revolution but also wept furiously when another friend was killed in battle: 'Melchora no paraba de llorar, el dolor era como si esa pólvora le estallara adentro' (484). She would, however, show another side to her character during battle: 'cuando sentía el clarín de la guerra se le agitaban las greñas negras y se le encorvaba la mirada, otra mujer parecía, y cuidado con ella según pude comprobar más tarde' (484). This representation of Melchora veers from Bonavita's version and instead is reminiscent of the popular musician and poet Aníbal Sampayo's (1926-2007) eponymous song. Quoted in the novel before Melchora's section, this song highlights her role as a warrior muse, perhaps another problematic myth in itself, but bestows her place in the nation's origins: 'Luce el alba nacional / dos medias lunas guerreras, / tus ojos, Melchora Cuenca, / que alumbran del más alla' (469). The novel, like Sampayo's poem, then clearly places Melchora within the boundaries of national memory and contests previous images that disapproved of her non-elite origins.

In order to further recover women's memories of Purificación, the novel presents Anunciación's perspective on Artigas's egalitarian scheme of the Reglamento (1815), which meant to reallocate land to the poor and needy (see Chapter 2). As Anunciación

[59] Bonavita, *Sombras*, p. 21.
[60] Ibid., p. 22.

begins to describe the Reglamento, the text's focus on memory becomes clear: 'La primera vez que escuché hablar del reglamento […]. Me acuerdo que era agosto y hacía un frío cruel' (514). Laying emphasis on her personal memory of events, she repeats the phrase 'I remember': '[m]e acuerdo que discutían sobre la necesidad de nombrar autoridades para repartir los terrenos' (514-5). Whilst the novel depicts Anunciación's recollection of the Reglamento's conception, it also fictionalises her presence in the room when it was drafted. Accordingly, she reports conversations between Artigas and his scribe José Monterroso:

> añadía el General, pero hemos de especificar que se trata de todos, yo entonces levanté la cabeza, todos quiere decir todos, negros libres, y zambos, y también indios, cómo no, además criollos, y en eso advertí que Melchora había entrado en la pieza y escuchaba igual que yo […]. El General también la miró, como interrogándola, y sin dejar de mirarla agregó, oye, Monterroso, no has de olvidar a las viudas pobres con hijos (515).

In proposing that women were influential in devising such an important law, the novel engages with Pedro Blanes Viale's iconic painting, 'Artigas dictando a su secretario José Monterroso' which is also set in Purificación (see Figure 4 in Chapter 3). In his art piece, although Blanes Viale includes a nondescript Charrúa and a black servant in his representation of official patriotic history, he does not portray women as part of this milieu. In 2011, *Amores cimarrones*, on the other hand, fills a gap in Blanes Viale's pictorial representation and retrospectively renders women as participants in this important event. As Collazo Ibáñez alludes to a significant image in the nation's consciousness and draws attention to Melchora's influence, it proposes a reassessment of nationally significant moments. Interestingly, this does not challenge the fact that the Reglamento was part of the nation's origins but highlights a new presence in its redaction. In other words, it serves the dual purpose of reinforcing the national narrative through a positive event and introducing new national subjects within it.

Historically, one of the contentious issues of Melchora and Artigas's relationship was the latter's refusal to let her accompany him in exile to Paraguay, despite her being Paraguayan. Engaging with this polemic, the novel first quotes Artigas's letter to his older son Manuel, asking him to take care of his infant son Santiago and advising him on how to deal with Melchora: '[s]i Melchora se aburriese de estar ahí y quisiese ir a otra parte, no le permitas en manera alguna que se lleve al niño. Tú sabes que por eso la mantengo'

(540).[61] Also noted in *Artigas Blues Band*, this letter highlights Artigas's questionable attitude towards Melchora. As the novel elaborates upon this quote, it fictionalises the fight between Melchora and Artigas to both give her a voice and highlight his problematic behaviour:

> Cuánto más argumentaba ella, más se enfurecía él y menos se entendían ambos […]. Al final el General se levantó de golpe de la silla y le lanzó aquella última conminación, si no obedeces lo que te mando, si te quieres ir a otra parte, entonces vete, pero a Santiago no te lo has de llevar (546).

Like in the section on Rosalía, here *Amores cimarrones* questions Artigas's heroism, portrays him as stubborn and urges the reader to disapprove of his behaviour towards women. This highlights the many ways in which the national hero can be viewed and serves historical justice to Melchora as it also describes their lives after he left the region, when she and Santiago were considered spoils of war:

> No he de relatar todo lo que nos aconteció después, solo diré que desde el día en que el General se marchó, nuestras vidas dejaron de estar vivas, si así puede decirse. […] Cuando el destino apretó sus rigores, Melchora tuvo que aceptar la protección de don Frutos y le entregó a Santiago para que lo criara (552).[62]

As the novel reassesses Artigas's myth, to be further discussed next, it also reevaluates how women were viewed. It highlights their agency by depicting them as strong, multifaceted characters whilst drawing attention to their adversities after Artigas's departure from region.

Amores cimarrones, via the fictional Anunciación, presents personalised memories of Melchora as well as those of lancer women generally. It thus provides a narrative of non-elite women who had been condemned to oblivion because they did not leave written traces of their lives. In doing so, it comments on memory-making and history, uses motifs of oral history and engages with identity-building paintings to bring forward stories of marginalised figures of the past.

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[61] *Archivo Artigas*, XXXVI (2006), 175.

[62] The Riveras did indeed raise Artigas and Melchora's son Santiago. Barrios Pintos, *Silencio*, p. 104.

The Many Faces of José Artigas

In reaction to the dictators' appropriation of the national hero's myth, Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band* provided an array of images of Artigas that were deliberately not associated with the military. in a postmodern fashion, Hamed's novel playfully hinted at a multitude of avatars of the national hero, such as his relationship with Ansina, his treatment of women and his affinity to the Charrúas, without developing any of them in detail. Collazo Ibáñez's prose, although distinct from Hamed's writing style, develops similar ideas in a more coherent way to present an Artigas who is characterised by his humanity. In *Amores cimarrones*, he is not viewed as a sanctified and immutable hero, but rather, like Hamed had indicated, as a leader whose myth is fluid, open to interpretation, who stands for a variety of values and whose image revels in a multifacetedness which is defiantly different from the military's rigid version of him.

Artigas's maternal grandmother María's narrative, for instance, foreshadows the values Artigas would be associated with as an adult. After her funeral, Pepe was worried about and empathised with his grandmother's pet birds who were confined in cages. Then as he abruptly decided to free them, the novel directs the reader to trace his ideas of liberation and revolution to his childhood behaviour:

> salió corriendo de pronto, como enloquecido. A todos los pájaros soltó, con obsesión minuciosa, nadie se atrevió a oponerse, los mayores lo miraban hacer con ojos húmedos y los más pequeños se asombraban y pedían a gritos que a ellos también les fuera permitido abrir, una a una, las jaulas (192).

Although Artigas's association with freedom is commonplace in depictions of him, it is interesting to consider how the novel includes fictional incidents from his childhood to lay emphasis on it. In fictionalising his youth, the novel portrays Artigas as made of flesh and blood whilst also reinforcing his position as the national leader.

Another aspect of portraying Artigas as a multifaceted human being is his representation as a lover and partner. We have already discussed what image of Artigas's partners comes through in the novel, and it is interesting to consider how he is viewed by them. Isabel, for instance, echoes the title of the novel, as she compares Artigas to a 'perro cimarrón' and contemplates her life with him:

al fin de cuentas él siempre pasaría mucho más tiempo lejos de ella que a su lado. Así se lo imponía a Pepe, más que sus ocupaciones, su mismo destino, que lo empujaba siempre más y más allá del preciso círculo de los amores y las vicisitudes domésticas (352).

Similarly, as Melchora and Artigas's relationship starts to sour, the narrator Anunciación contemplates the reasons for his unsuccessful personal life, imbibing him with a sanctified aura:

No había duda de que él no podía ser de cualquier mujer, aunque lo soñaran casi todas […]. Hay hombres así, hechos como para todo el mundo, para ancianos y niños, para animales y plantas, para contentos y para desgraciados, y por lo mismo para nadie (517).

Anunciación's assertion that Artigas could not belong to any woman echoes Luis Bonavita's historical claim that no woman would be sufficient for him: 'Ninguna de las mujeres de su vida pudo constituir para él el remanso que necesitan los hombres de su temple'.[63] Yet, as the novel alludes to Bonavita, it also overturns his claim. Instead of women not possessing the traits to understand Artigas, *Amores cimarrones* asserts that he could not be faithful to a single woman because he belonged to the people, thus shifting the responsibility from the women to the national leader and the people who followed him.

Arguably, the idea that Artigas cannot belong to anyone (and that he is portrayed as more committed to his cause than to his relationships) is a problematic romanticised vision of him because it seems to justify his debatable behaviour towards women. This raises the question of whether Collazo Ibáñez reinforces the idea that Artigas was a womaniser because he was a man of his time and was more concerned about freedom, thereby continuing to uphold him as the epitome of national values. But this is not the only image of Artigas that comes through in the novel. As noted before, his behaviour towards his wife Rosalía is criticised and his commitment to his family is brought into question. Furthermore, his abandonment of Melchora Cuenca is also not excused in the novel. Simultaneously, other women such as Isabel and Anunciación are sympathetic towards him for his lifestyle and for his role in the revolution respectively, resulting in a rather complex representation of him than a mere reiteration of his role as a national hero. Thus, through fiction, the author highlights the ambiguities of his behaviour towards

[63] Bonavita, *Sombras*, p. 23.

women as well as the complexities of their attitudes towards him, presenting a renewed version of him for the present-day reader to empathise with. In other words, it presents an Artigas whose fallibility and negative personality traits are part and parcel of being a complex human being.

It is interesting to consider the act of viewing a statue as a metaphor. If we go to Plaza Independencia, we will literally look up to Artigas's statue which is meant to increase our veneration of the nation's hero. *Amores cimarrones* then does what a novel can do, as it brings Artigas down from his pedestal and puts him eye to eye with the viewer/reader, allowing them to identify with the national hero at a personal level. Such an identification with Artigas deviates from the previous top-down versions of him which, like monuments, went hand in hand with the politics of state formation and identity building, and proposes a more egalitarian form of collective identity.

Figure 8 Artigas en la puerta de la Ciudadela (1884) by Juan Manuel Blanes.

For similar reasons, the novel alludes to another identity forming medium as it engages with Juan Manuel Blanes's iconic painting of a poised Artigas impeccably dressed in military garb in front of the gate to Old Montevideo (see Figure 8). The narrator Anunciación, for instance, glorifies Artigas as a General evoking his association with the military, anachronistically reminding the reader of Blanes's painting and its politics of memory-making:

Este era un general como de estampa de libro, de esos libros que los niños llevan en sus cartapacios y algunos viejos guardan en sus arcones […] como las figuras que aparecían en esas láminas de batallas y de uniformados, lindo con sus lindos ojos celestes (517).

But she quickly revokes this polished image to present a humbler one:

aunque sin muchos galones, más bien raído y sucio y en ocasiones hasta medio desnudo el pobre, Dios me perdone, más bien con los zapatos cuarteados y los puños de la chaqueta deshilachados, y la color de la tela descolorida, y la color del alma también descolorida (517).

Although Anunciación's words begin by conforming to Blanes's portrait of Artigas, the second half of her description contests the idea of the national hero as a polished general, not only challenging the iconic painting but also his association with the military.[64]

Similarly, his mother Francisca's narrative dissociates Artigas's image from its link to the military. She considers his dissatisfaction on joining the Blandengues regiment and how he was not meant to be a military man:

José se había formado a monte desde la edad más tierna, y sencillamente no había tenido tiempo de aprender la rutina, los plantones, los arrestos y demás artes de amansamiento que sufren los militares ya en los primeros tiempos de su mocedad, como para irles bajando los humos, domándoles el alma y metiéndolos en caja. Muy por el contrario, Pepe Artigas era hijo de la más absoluta libertad, móvil, errante y rotundamente viva, esa que sólo puede surgir entre las sierras y los ríos (272).

This description of a lively and mobile Artigas in *Amores cimarrones* is strikingly similar to the one in Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band*. In the latter, Pedro, the leader of the iconoclastic group Leyenda Negra, expresses a desire to allow Artigas to be free, beyond the constraints of material culture : 'era mejor […] ayudarlo [a Artigas] a andar por ahí, menos aherrojado en bronce y en cemento'.[65] Collazo Ibáñez brings this wish to fruition as she portrays an Artigas who is not 'embuti[do] del más común de los sentidos: la inmovilidad' nor is he associated with military values of order, routine and stoicism.[66] Clearly, Hamed's novel was an immediate reaction to the dictatorship's abuse of material culture such as monuments and mausoleums. In the twenty-first century then, as the myth of Artigas continues to be inextricably linked to national identity, Collazo Ibáñez's portrayal of him raises many questions: to what extent can the Artigas of *Amores cimarrones* be viewed as a mere response to the military regime? Does it, on the other hand, indicate a larger overall re-evaluation of the national hero, and therefore also of the

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[64] Marcelo Rabuñal's documentary *Detrás del mito*, screened at the LASA 2018 congress, interviews art and cultural historians, forensic scientists and common people to analyse Blanes's painting in order to reveal what Artigas actually looked like.
[65] Hamed, *Artigas Blues Band*, p. 142.
[66] Ibid., p. 142.

identity built upon his image? These two ideas are not mutually exclusive, however, as *Amores cimarrones* demonstrates that the historical novel, as a reflection of current trends in Uruguayan culture, indicates a change in cultural memory regarding the national hero precipitated by the military dictatorship's abuse of Artigas's previous image. It does not attempt to dislodge Artigas from his prominent position in Uruguayan memory but instead renews the myth as a challenge to both the military's view of him as well as that of previous regimes headed by Lorenzo Latorre and Máximo Santos.

The trend of re-evaluating Artigas's myth in Uruguayan society is reflected in other art forms such as cinema. The film *Artigas: La Redota* which was released in 2011, the same year as *Amores cimarrones*, also contests Blanes's image of the national hero.[67] It depicts Máximo Santos, the military president of Uruguay from 1882-86, commissioning Blanes to paint a nation-building portrait of Artigas. In the film, as Blanes investigates the scarce sources on Artigas's appearance, allowing for extensive flashbacks of the Redota, he first paints an image of the leader surrounded by a diverse population of creoles, Africans and indigenous people, including women. But Santos angrily rejects this version and orders Blanes to paint Artigas as a General.[68] Blanes's second draft becomes the now iconic work of 'Artigas en la puerta de la Ciudadela' (see Figure 8), implying that behind the national hero's image as a military man, there was a 'truer' version of the painting which portrayed Artigas during the Redota amongst a variety of people, who were the first subjects of the nascent nation.[69] In the same vein, as *Amores cimarrones* also presents a non-military image of the hero, it echoes the implication in *Artigas: La Redota* that through Artigas's affiliation with people of colour, present-day Uruguayan society views itself as multi-ethnic, thus leaving behind its politics of racial homogeneity of the first half of the twentieth century. As Anunciación describes the myriad of people who arrived at the village camp of Purificación, the novel alludes to Artigas's egalitarian politics and universal appeal:

Yo vi con estos ojos la llegada de varios hacendados pudientes, a pesar de venir huyendo de tanta desolación la prosperidad se les notaba en la ropa, […] en la cantidad de esclavos que traían, mujeres rumbosas vi que se habían traído sus vestidos de terciopelo bordado […] pero también

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[67] 2011 was the bicentenary of the Redota, also known as the Exodus. See Chapter 2 and Street, *Artigas*, pp. 146–161.
[68] César Charlone, *Artigas: La Redota* (Uruguay: TVE/Wanda Films, 2011), 01:44:35 to 01:45:24.
[69] Ibid, 01:45:38 to 01:48:30.

venían gauchos de pata en el suelo, o mejor dicho de a caballo […]. Muchos indios llegaron también con sus tolderías a cuestas, muchas indias que supieran demostrar su soberbio dominio de la lanza […] y negros libertos, y pulperos y vendedores de cuanta cosa pueda imaginarse y conseguirse (495-96).

Through these varied perspectives on Artigas, it becomes clear that the novel does not challenge his position in society as the father of Uruguayan nationhood but in fact reveals the process of creation and recreation of his image, resulting in a new myth for new times. Similarly, it also suggests that the contemporary reader ought to be aware of myth and myth-making as part of national identity, and therefore become more questioning of historical 'truth'.

Conclusion

The novel presents a variety of voices, images and ideas about the several women and their individual relationships with the national hero Artigas. It proposes new ways of remembering these women as it portrays them to be independent of the national hero's myth whilst also linked to him. Moreover, if we view Artigas's memory as a repository of ideas and images, during the dictatorship it was tightly shut and unavailable. In 1994, *Artigas Blues Band* opened it in order to frantically overturn some ideas and include new ones, as an instigation for others to do the same. Following this lead, a decade and a half later, *Amores cimarrones* neatly rearranges the many ideas inside this memory chest, uses fiction to insert more images where needed and then closes it again. Although it seems to then complete the task of renewing Artigas's myth for the post-dictatorship reader, by unravelling the myth-making process and challenging the notion of immutability, it suggests endless possible revisions, memories and readings in the future.

Amores cimarrones by Collazo Ibáñez rounds up the series of post-dictatorship historical novels studied here by embodying and developing upon the many features noted in this thesis, notably, bringing forward marginalised voices from nineteenth century history to propose egalitarian and diverse memories for the present-day reader; engaging with the gendered and politicised tension between written and oral history to highlight the ambiguous relationship between memory and the archive; and reinterpreting national heroes as a means to present renewed identity myths for new times. As it develops these characteristics, it highlights the significance of literature as a cultural memory narrative

when faced with the inability to get a clear picture of women's historical lives because of their absence in the archive. It therefore indicates the large extent to which historical novels not only function as a reflection of the past but also of current trends in society which determine how history is viewed. In other words, it demonstrates that the historical novel in Uruguay does not exist in a vacuum and continues to be inextricably linked to identity and memory in the present.

Conclusion

Figure 9 Graffiti on the Puerta de la Ciudadela on 4 November 2016.

On my research visit to Montevideo in November 2016, when I first saw the Plaza Independencia, flanked by the government's presidential tower and the grand Palacio Salvo, I was struck by José Artigas's monument which stood majestically in the middle. Its front faced the iconic Avenue 18 de Julio, named after the day Uruguay's constitution was sworn in, and on his horse in mid-stride, the bronze Artigas seemed to be symbolically galloping into Uruguay's future. Its back, on the other hand, faced the path towards historical Montevideo, home to emblematic buildings such as the original Cabildo, Iglesia Matriz and the National History Museum. Artigas then stood out to me as a crucial link between the past and the future in the nation's memory landscape. After visiting his monument and mausoleum, I made my way, as many do, towards the historical centre through the Puerta de la Ciudadela, the literal door to Uruguay's past. As

it was being refurbished at the time, I noticed graffiti on this enormous gate claiming 'Artigas son los padres' (see Figure 9). Referring to the Spanish expression often used in connection to Santa Claus and the Three Wise Kings, whose presents are in fact given by parents, the graffiti then seemed to doubt the existence of Artigas himself. As it questioned Artigas's heroism, this graffiti, most probably sprayed on when the refurbishment of the Puerta began, serves as a perfect metaphor for the findings of this thesis: post-dictatorship Uruguayan culture is reassessed in fiction through its heroes and foundational myths. These myths and heroes are not uprooted, however. Instead, much like the phrase on the Puerta which was painted over before the renovation ended, they are neatly reconfigured for future generations.

This thesis began with the aim to explore how its corpus of five historical novels raised issues of identity and memory in Uruguay's post-dictatorship period. It sought to analyse the novels' assessment of the nation's nineteenth-century past, especially the foundational myths of its national heroes, and raised the question of how these works privileged historically marginalised voices to speak to contemporary trends in Uruguayan society. Through a focus on the above research questions, it attempted to trace the development of the historical novel genre from 1988 until 2011. The analysis carried out has shown that the questions raised at the beginning of this thesis were indeed urgent concerns of all the five works selected. As they delineated Uruguay's crisis of identity and memory through fiction, these historical novels also paved the way for their gradual reconsolidation whilst developing a new version of the literary genre, i.e. a new historical novel.

It is de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* which first points to the reassessment of national heroes in this cycle of historical novels. Although to some extent *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* suggests Rivera and Artigas's possible failings, it does not focus on major national icons but instead on the lesser known Bernabé Rivera. As de Mattos's novel highlights Bernabé's tragic flaws and the ensuing ethical complexities of his actions, it allows the reader to decide which version of the figure they adhere to. In Hamed's *Artigas Blues Band*, however, Uruguay's foundational hero Artigas becomes the focal point. A radical manifestation of this theme of reassessing national heroes, after bombarding the reader with his many avatars, Hamed's representation of Artigas stands out as playful and iconoclastic.

De Mattos and Hamed's reconsiderations of Rivera, Bernabé and Artigas in 1988 and 1994 respectively propose a particular framework of representing heroes which is echoed in novels published in the subsequent decades. Delgado Aparaín's Leandro Gómez is a clear example. Gómez's representation in *No robarás* is complex and characterised by a multivocal tendency, resulting in a many-sided view of the Blanco leader. Similarly, in *Amores cimarrones*, Artigas, despite being an overarching presence in the text, is portrayed as a man with many failings. Arguably, as *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!* through de Mattos's careful and concise prose and *Artigas Blues Band* with Hamed's playful radical notions tested the extent to which one can dispute national figures, *No robarás* and *Amores cimarrones* reinforced this theme of questioning their heroism. Notably, Cabrera's *Las esclavas* does not centre on the theme of national heroes, perhaps making it an anomaly in this series of historical novels. Yet, as it depicts the National History Museum, previously the house of President Rivera, it engages with iconic spaces that sustain the heroism of Uruguay's national figures. Moreover, as *Las esclavas* unearths an overlooked event from the Uruguayan past, it brings forward black women's voices to the forefront of national memory.

Indeed, the portrayal of figures hitherto forgotten in Uruguayan history is a recurring theme in all the works analysed above. Beginning with de Mattos's representation of the Charrúa massacre, and the indigenous Sepe in particular, Indians of the Banda Oriental region are portrayed in a realistic and positive manner. This trend is also echoed in *Artigas Blues Band*, which highlights Artigas's concerns for indigenous groups. Similarly, Afro-Uruguayans are substantially represented in the novels studied in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Firstly, *Artigas Blues Band* endows Ansina, who was earlier only viewed as Artigas's loyal follower, with a historiographical as well as literary voice to emphasise his role in Uruguayan history. Secondly, in Cabrera's novel, the personal memories of historically enslaved women are incorporated into cultural memory in the present by representing instances of oral histories and by portraying them within monumental buildings. Thirdly, Delgado Aparaín re-inserts black figures into the national narrative of Paysandú to highlight their concerns in nineteenth-century Uruguay. Of these three works, Cabrera's and Delgado Aparaín's texts direct the reader to view Afro-Uruguayans as part and parcel of the nineteenth-century past, thus attempting to move away from their national stereotypes of either being loyal servants or performers of

candombe. If we compare the representations of indigenous people to that of Afro-Uruguayans in this corpus, the latter group stands out as more substantial and significant. This is perhaps because of the relative visibility of Afro-Uruguayans in popular culture through candombe, in addition to the reasonably high percentage of living Uruguayans of African descent and organisations such as Mundo Afro which campaign for their rights as opposed to the Charrúas whose descendants are no longer discernible in the region.

The focus on women's histories is most significant in *Las esclavas* and *Amores cimarrones*, the two works by female authors in this corpus. By representing women's perceptions of Uruguayan history, these two novels highlight the tension between oral and written history as well as between private and public spaces which are often defined by gender, especially by nineteenth-century male historians. As they challenge traditional ways of writing and remembering the past, they also question what is considered important enough to be part of cultural memory.

This trope of attempting to decentre official versions of Uruguayan history by retelling it from the margins was first introduced in de Mattos's *¡Bernabé, Bernabe!* with Josefina as a narrator. Subsequently, *Artigas Blues Band*'s Ansina also narrates Uruguayan history to Artigas, whilst *Las esclavas*'s Graciosita, Mariquita and Encarnación recount their personal narratives to their interrogators. Similarly, Delgado Aparaín's Martín Zamora, who was marginalised for his role as a prisoner at the beginning of the siege, also pens his experiences. And finally, Collazo Ibáñez's lancer woman Anunciación gives us her perspective of Artigas and his relationship with his partner Melchora. All in all, by bringing forward stories of, as well as by, those marginalised from official history, these novels challenge a dominant vision of who participated in the origins of the nation as a means to examine who is considered Uruguayan in the post-dictatorship present. Whilst the works highlight the ethical complexities of the treatment of these figures in the past, sometimes to raise issues of impunity in the present, at other times to propose their personal memories as part of the national narrative, they put forth a multifaceted and diverse vision of collective memory and identity for post-dictatorship Uruguay.

One of the methodological goals of this thesis was to assess how the historical novels engaged with works of history as well as with archival documents from the

nineteenth century. It was clear from the outset that as works of fiction which updated certain topics for a different present, these literary texts would differ from historical writing. Yet, whilst this thesis shows differences, and sometimes similarities, between the two genres, it also posits that these nuances can offer key insights into the authors' political and cultural standpoints with regards to memory and identity. Furthermore, the above analyses have pointed to how the novelists view national narratives stemming from the archive as more accessible and less fixed than they were during the dictatorship. In turn, in post-dictatorship Uruguay historical novels interact with and manipulate the archive in the following ways: it can be played with as in *Artigas Blues Band*; it can be viewed from different temporal perspectives as in the case of *¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*; it can be used to bring forward injustices of the past (the Charrúa massacre, violence against enslaved women and Artigas's treatment of Rosalía); and to highlight instances that were documented in the archive but never received their due (women's roles at Paysandú and Artigas's grandmothers at the foundation of Montevideo). Moreover, as these works point to the archive's potential to be expanded when necessary, they propose that filling gaps in the archive through literature is a way to access and reclaim memories of those people whose historical experiences are not available to us.

Along with an engagement with archival works, this thesis demonstrates how historical novels reflect upon other mediums of Uruguayan culture such as monuments, museums and art pieces. Functioning as figures of memory, these devices often present fixed versions of cultural memory and identity and during Uruguay's dictatorship this top-down vision of the past was fossilised further. The historical novels studied here propose a different vision for the post-dictatorship future as they interact with material icons of Uruguay by inserting new figures into the previously static artworks, monuments and museums, thus proposing mutable ways of viewing these spaces. *Las esclavas*'s Graciosita at Iglesia Matriz and Encarnación at Casa Rivera; *Amores cimarrones*'s Melchora and Reglamento; Bernabé's portrait in de Mattos's novel and *Artigas Blues Band*'s fluid and ever-changing Artigas are clear examples.

Accordingly, as these five novels explore and consolidate the relationship between literature, identity, memory and history, they propose that there was more to the Uruguayan past than was previously remembered, suggesting that we can and should recall history differently. In other words, they update the past for present-day

remembering whilst also positing the many ways in which the past could be recalled in the future. In suggesting that we consider the complexities of Uruguayan history, one could argue that to some extent this series of historical novels is also didactic. Nonetheless, these works do not serve the same pedagogical purpose as Eduardo Acevedo Díaz's novels and by highlighting the many ways of viewing the past, the post-dictatorship texts leave it up to the reader to decide how they consume and react to Uruguayan history. Thus, like historical fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, identity and memory continue to be a significant concern of the genre, albeit differently. This thesis has shown how studying memory, identity and literature together leads to more nuanced understandings of Uruguayan society generally. In other words, literature reflects society in more ways than one, especially in the aftermath of a violent and repressive regime.

The contributions of this thesis to the field of literary and cultural studies, especially in relation to the evolving perceptions of national heroes, can be applied to other Latin American nations and they can also serve as a starting point for an exhaustive intermedial study of Artigas in post-dictatorship Uruguay. The latter would include not only analyses of historical novels but also of cinema, street art, graphic novels, museums and art pieces related to the national hero in order to trace the development of his myth and foreshadow further advances in it. As noted at the outset of this conclusion, in Uruguay, Artigas continues to lead the way from the past into the future.

Appendices

A Chronology of Uruguayan History (1726-1903)

Year	Event
1726	Foundation of Montevideo.
1764	Birth of José Artigas.
1776	Establishment of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate with Buenos Aires as its capital.
1787	Caserio de los Negros was built to quarantine recently arrived slaves.
1791	Montevideo declared only legal port of entry for slaves in the River Plate.
1797	Foundation of the Blandengues.
1806-1807	The English Invasions of the River Plate.
1810	The May Revolution.
1812	Abolition of the slave trade by Patriot armies: no new slaves could be brought into the region.
1813	Free Womb Law: anyone born in the Banda Oriental and the River Plate provinces would be free. Artigas's Instrucciones del Año XIII composed at the Congreso de Abril.

1814	Rejection of Oriental diplomats at the Constituent Assembly in Buenos Aires. Spanish governor hands over Montevideo to Buenos Aires army headed by Carlos María de Alvear. Consolidation of Artigas's Federal League.
1815	Artigas's forces take over Montevideo. Beginning of the Patria vieja under the leadership of Artigas. Artigas nominated El Protector de los Pueblos Libres. Redaction of the Reglamento.
1816	Beginning of the Portuguese invasion of the Banda Oriental.
1817	The Portuguese take over Montevideo; return of the slave trade. Henceforth, the region is known as the Cisplatina.
1820	Artigas's withdrawal from the Banda Oriental to go into exile in Paraguay.
1825	The disembarkation of the Thirty-Three Orientals on the Banda Oriental bank of the River Plate led by Juan Antonio Lavalleja. The Cruzada Libertadora: the beginning of the military expedition to oust the Brazilians (and previously Portuguese) out of the region, aided by Argentine forces. Declaration of Independence from Brazil by the Oriental armies. Rivera wins the Battle of Rincón against Brazilian troops. The Battle of Sarandí, Brazilian forces lose to the armies of Lavalleja and Oribe. Reinstatement of law abolishing slave trade and the Free Womb law.

1828	Convención Preliminar de Paz, signed between Brazil and Argentina (the United Provinces of the River Plate). Diplomatic efforts of Lord Posonby to establish a buffer state between the two nations.
1830	The Jura de la Constitución; Lavalleja interim governor, Rivera elected first President.
1831-1832	Massacre of the Charrúas. Death of Bernabé Rivera.
1833	Lavalleja's revolution against President Rivera, subdued.
1836	Battle of Carpentería; division into Colorados and Blancos.
1839	Beginning of the Guerra Grande between the Colorados and Blancos.
1842	Abolition of slavery by the Colorados in Montevideo.
1846	Abolition of slavery by the Blancos at the Cerro.
1850	Artigas's death in Paraguay.
1851	End of the Guerra Grande.
1852	Fusionist government; presidency of Blanco Juan F. Giró.
1855-56	Artigas's remains repatriated to Montevideo and reburied in the Central Cemetery.
1858	152 Colorados killed at the Hetacombe de Quinteros.
1860-64	Bernardo Prudencio Berro's Presidency (Blanco).

1864	Colorado Venancio Flores's Cruzada Libertadora. Beginning of the Siege of Paysandú.
1865	End of the Siege of Paysandú; execution of Blanco Leandro Gómez. Flores overthrows Blanco government and assumes Presidency. Start of Triple Alliance War.
1868	Blanco rebellion against Flores's government. Flores and Berro are assassinated.
1870	End of Triple Alliance war.
1870-72	Revolución de las Lanzas headed by Blanco Timoteo Aparicio. Peace treaty of co-participation signed.
1876-80	Beginning of Militarismo: Presidency of Lorenzo Latorre.
1882-86	Presidency of Máximo Santos.
1897	Civil War led by Blanco Aparicio Saravia during the Colorado presidency of Juan Idiarte Borda; ends in promise of co-participation again.
1903	José Batlle y Ordoñez (Colorado) becomes President.

A Selected Chronology of Uruguayan Historical Novels (1988-2011)

Year	Title	Author	Subject
1988	*¡Bernabé, Bernabé!*	Tomás de Mattos	The massacre of the Charrúas in the 1830s.
1988	*Los papeles de los Ayarza*	Juan Carlos Legido	Based on the historical letters of the Ayarza family recounting their impression of the early nineteenth century in Montevideo.
1988	*Hombre a la orilla del mundo*	Milton Schinca	Artigas's exile in Paraguay.
1989	*Maluco, la novela de los descubridores*	Napoleón Baccino Ponce de León	Magellan's journey around the world through the perspective of a jester.
1992	*Una cinta ancha de bayeta colorada: Desandanzas de Goyo Jeta*	Hugo Bervejillo	Gregorio Suárez, the Colorado General who ordered Leandro Gómez's execution at Paysandú.
1993	*El archivo de Soto*	Mercedes Rein	The letters of Juan José Soto about the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially the Triple Alliance War.

1993	*El príncipe de la muerte*	Fernando Butazzoni	1820s Banda Oriental until the Triple Alliance War (1865-70). The definitive edition of the novel was published in 1997.
1994	*Artigas Blues Band*	Amir Hamed	Artigas and the iconoclastic group Leyenda Negra.
1996	*Troya blanda*	Amir Hamed	Refers to Alexandre Dumas's portrayal of the Guerra Grande (1839-51) in *Montevideo ou une nouvelle Troie* (1850) but focuses on the entire nineteenth century.
1996	*La fragata de las máscaras*	Tomás de Mattos	A rewriting of Herman Melville's Benito Cereno (1855).
1997	*Los secretos del coronel*	Susana Cabrera	The tango singer Carlos Gardel.
2001	*La Soledad del General. La novela de Artigas*	Jorge Chagas	Artigas's exile in Paraguay and his relationship with Ansina.
2001	*La guerra de Baltar*	Carlos Maggi	Artigas through the perspective of a Paraguayan officer Baltar Ojeda, with a focus on the hero's relationship with indigenous people.
2001	*Las esclavas del Rincón*	Susana Cabrera	The murder of Celedonia Wich by her slaves in 1821 Montevideo.

2002	*No robarás las botas de los muertos*	Mario Delgado Aparaín	The Siege of Paysandú (1864-65).
2003	*El regreso de Martín Aquino*	Napoleón Baccino Ponce de León	The matrero Martin Aquino (1889-1917).
2003	*Gloria y tormento. La novela de José Leandro Andrade*	Jorge Chagas	Twentieth century footballer José Leandro Andrade (1901-57).
2004	*El vuelo de las cenizas*	Susana Cabrera	Nazism and the Holocaust.
2007	*María de Sanabria*	Diego Bracco	Spanish women's first expedition to the River Plate in 1546 through the perspective of María de Sanabria (the mother of Hernandarias).
2010	*El hombre de marzo. La búsqueda*	Tomás de Mattos	Nineteenth century educator and intellectual José Pedro Varela. The first volume of a bipartite biography; the second one, *El encuentro* was published in 2013.
2011	*Amores cimarrones. Las mujeres de Artigas*	Marcia Collazo Ibáñez	Six women connected to Artigas.

Excerpts from an Interview with Amir Hamed

November 2016, Montevideo

On *Artigas Blues Band* and the historical novel

00.08.20

Me parece que la fuerza de *Artigas Blues Band* […] debe radicar en el hecho de que es ese pasado que se hace presente, que cae de golpe en el presente y que curiosamente también se da en esa aniquilación del futuro.

00.13.50

A mí, por lo general esa otra novela histórica convencional no me interesa; debo decir también que toda la novela histórica sin excepción que han hecho mis colegas uruguayos me aburre profundamente. […] Un crítico, Ramiro Sanchis, dejó entrever que la novela histórica se acabó en Uruguay cuando yo publiqué estas dos novelas [*Artigas Blues Band* y *Troya blanca*] porque en realidad, aniquilaba la tópica. […] Después de *Artigas Blues Band* y la *Troya Blanda* no hubo más novela histórica en el Uruguay, salvo esos intentos de […] Tomás de Mattos.

00.16.30

Artigas Blues Band se me apareció. Yo estaba leyendo una historia de Hispanoamérica […] cuando estaba haciendo mi examen de doctorado en Northwestern. […] Llegué a la parte uruguaya y Artigas, [el libro] hablaba de los realistas y como yo estaba estudiando literatura, realismo siempre lo pensaba en términos artísticos [y] estéticos. Entonces allí me vino toda la escena desde que empezaba a partir de que alguien dice: 'seamos realistas' y que Artigas confunde y vuelve a la vida. Ese comienzo ya de alguna forma marcó toda la novela, ese comienzo desde el malentendido etc. Entonces, a mí me parece que el cuestionamiento de la historia y de la historiografía, también debe participar en un cuestionamiento de la forma de la historiografía y de la historia. Y eso es lo que yo no he visto en mis colegas uruguayos que se dedicaron a hacer eso que se llama la novela histórica. Por eso […] si lo que yo hice fue novela histórica o no, me tiene sin cuidado, es un problema de etiqueta.

On Uruguayan historiography, Artigas and monuments

00.12.10

La historia uruguaya, sacando la figura de Artigas, fue escrita o por historiadores blancos o por historiadores colorados. Entonces más que historia tiene mucha propaganda. […] Artigas fue esa figura que no era un colorado ni un blanco, sí una figura pre-partidaria y entonces ahí se hizo esa historia monumental de Artigas.

00.18.50

A mí me impresionó mucho [Artigas] cuando hice la novela lo que podríamos llamar el temple o el calibre de Artigas que está en su propia escritura. Esa escritura, no importa que sea dictado, porque es escritura. […] Se ve en las citas, eso que escribe es siempre lo mismo, es decir, tiene siempre el mismo tono, el mismo tenor, no importa cuál es su secretario, sea el que está transcribiendo la carta. Entonces lo que me dio la novela fue el temple o el calibre de Artigas. Eso es lo que más me impresionó. […] Me interesaba [Artigas] también como figura tradicional por la propia historiografía y por el propio país y digamos la figura del exiliado que no quiso volver. Entonces, y me interesaba porque precisamente cuando se me ocurrió escribirla, me parecía que este país precisaba que le hiciera eso. En la medida que Artigas era una figura intocable, estaba fuera de discusión. Y ese es el problema, es como una hagiografía, una vida de santo que se enseña en la escuela. […] En alguna forma quería lidiar con eso, la dimensión mitológica de la figura de Artigas.

00.21.25

No hay ninguna [versión] privilegiada [en *Artigas Blues Band*]. Es como 'this is a package.' […] En ese sentido, creo que la novela no juzga [a Artigas].

00.26.30

La dictadura fue un momento muy monumental. […] Se hizo el mausoleo. […] Entonces sí, a la leyenda Negra le molesta la monumentalización de Artigas.

On Marginalised Figures and Identity

00.29.00

Yo creo que es una obligación del escritor en general, escriba lo que escriba, ver aquello que no está siendo visto. Yo creo que eso es lo que hacen los buenos escritores. […]

Es el arte en general, no es una obligación, pero creo que es una condición del arte en general. […] Es una obligación de lo que escribo, en tanto cualquier cosa que escriba y si es una novela histórica sí tiene que ver eso, si no estoy repitiendo la historia, estoy repitiendo la historiografía, eso no tiene sentido. Es ver aquello que es dejado de lado por la historiografía. […] La historia uruguaya sí fue una política de hombres varones y blancos. […]

Me parece que el valor del arte es su negatividad. Es el de percibir eso que no está siendo percibido. […] En *mi* caso, lo que me resulta impensable, es escribir algo que ya se haya escrito. En ese sentido, me decía alguien, es que con tu libro es que como todo empieza de nuevo. […] No me interesa escribir algo cuya final yo ya conozca. […]

No es 'ah yo voy a escribir una cosa sobre las minorías' etc. No, no. Aparte, eso me parece, puedes poner la palabra que yo digo, repugnante […]. Las políticas identitarias me parecen repugnantes. […] Las identidades son cosas que no existen. Nadie es idéntico. Nadie es idéntico siquiera a sí mismo.

00.34.50

Esa fue una torpeza que se discutió a fines de los ochenta y en los noventa, fue verdaderamente una torpeza. Entonces se discutía por la identidad nacional y después, obvio, se llegó a la conclusión que no había tal cosa. […] lo interesante está en 'the framing of the subject'. […] Cuando uno empieza por el tema de identidad nacional no va a llegar a ningún lado, eso es obvio. Entonces perdieron no sé cuántos años, y decir: 'bueno, no hay tal identidad, sino hay *identidades*'.

00.37.16

Cuando uno lee un libro, debe salir mejorado por la lectura del libro, porque si no, que no lea. […] Si yo salgo mejorado por el libro, ya no soy el que era. […] El problema no es que soy, sino que estoy siendo, que voy deviniendo.

00.38.24

Cuando digo yo, ya estoy diciendo más de uno. […] Cuando uno dice yo, está diciendo todo lo que dejó de ser. Porque el yo, como lo lee Foucault, que es el yo cristiano, es el que reniega de Satanás. […] Yo es también aquel, […] toda esa tecnología del yo, es decir, yo ya no soy. […] Dejar de ser para devenir otra cosa. Pero el cristiano siempre fue el otro.

Excerpts from an Interview with Mario Delgado Aparaín

November 2016, Montevideo.

On Uruguayan history and the Siege of Paysandú

00.00.50

El Uruguay es un país muy singular dentro de América, […] decía un antropólogo brasileño Darcy Ribeiro que los mexicanos descienden desde los aztecas; los guatemaltecos [y] los hondureños de los mayas; los ecuatorianos [y] los peruanos de los incas y nosotros [uruguayos] descendemos de los barcos porque somos todos inmigrantes e hijos de descendientes de inmigrantes. […] somos un país muy joven, tenemos trescientos años. Pero con un acervo cultural migratorio importante, muy importante diría, que se traduce en la cultura agraria, que se arrastra a la edad media europea, ¿no? Y todo el proceso histórico del Uruguay, aparte de la independencia del imperio español, y tuvo sus primeros cien años hubo una estructura política [y] administrativa muy precaria, muy primitiva en donde los jefes eran caudillos. Es decir, eran grupos políticos que dieron forma a los partidos tradicionales.

00.04.35

Gracias a un dirigente del partido colorado, muy moderno, que trasladó un esquema administrativo tomado de los cantones suizos, entonces el país se divide en diecinueve departamentos que ahora son como una especie de gobierno semiautónomo que depende de un gobierno central. […] un sistema presidencial, republicano, democrático […] pero para llegar a ese estado moderno, que se le llamó estado batllista, [por] José Batlle y Ordoñez tuvo que pasar por un periodo muy duro de guerras civiles entre fracciones coloradas y blancas. Y bueno, a mí me interesó mucho eso porque así como te decía que somos un país joven, yo tuve cuando era niño, tuve oportunidad de conocer viejitos [y] ancianos que habían sido guerreros en las guerras civiles, no. Entonces allí había […] una mística de la guerra, y en particular a mí me interesó mucho un sitio, en donde, el sitio de Paysandú, que es una ciudad que está al borde del río Uruguay que nos separa de la Argentina. Y en ese sitio fue muy duro, se unieron el imperio del Brasil, el gobierno argentino de Bartolomé Mitre, y un General uruguayo, a quien yo considero un traidor para borrar del mapa a Paysandú que era un obstáculo militar para llegar al dominar al

país mas adelantado de América que era Paraguay. Un país rico, tuvo el primer ferrocarril, la luz de gas y tan rico era que tenía una gran influencia económica con el territorio brasileño del Rio grande del sur y el norte argentino, y tanto el gobierno argentino como el gobierno del Emperador Pedro II tenían miedo de que Paraguay se quedara con esos territorios que no tuvo intención política de quedarse con ellos pero sí la población brasileña y argentina dependían de la economía paraguaya. Para ello el obstáculo era Paysandú. Y creyeron que el sitio iba a durar cuarenta y ocho horas. La ciudad estaba defendida por sus habitantes, setecientos defensores, contra catorce mil hombres […] y el sitio mostró lo más perverso de la guerra. Los sitios tienen la particularidad de despertar una patología terrible que es la crueldad de los sitiadores sobre los sitiados, a mi juicio hubo en todos los sitios esa crueldad, en todos los sitios de la historia universal esa crueldad siempre tuvo presencia: destruir a los sitiados.

On *No robarás las botas de los muertos*

00.10.30

Cuando apareció la novela, *No robarás las botas de los muertos*, los estudiantes, los jóvenes, que se mostraron muy impresionados, tenían dos emociones: una indignación muy grande, por la crueldad, y una emoción muy grande por la resistencia de la población que eran setecientos hombres y un puñado de mujeres donde las niñas eran enfermeras de los heridos, habían convertido la escuela en un hospital de sangre.

00.14.10

…a mí me interesaba obviamente, me interesaba muchísimo el por qué, la causa [del sitio de Paysandú]. Pero a la hora de hacer la novela me importaba el cómo lo hicieron. Porque todo el mundo sabe cual fue el final del sitio de Paysandú. Todo el mundo lo sabe […] pero no saben cómo. Entonces a mi me interesaba muchísimo, [el] cómo, contar las vicisitudes de ese sitio que creían que iba a durar cuarenta y ocho horas y duró treinta y tres días. […] al líder, Leandro Gómez, no les alcanzó con fusilarlo, le metieron once balas en el pecho y cuando cayó, le cortaron la barba para llevársela de recuerdo, le robaron la ropa, y le robaron las botas. El oficial, que estaba observando como le robaban las botas, le dice al soldado, eso no lo hace un buen guerrero, y el tipo, sin dejar de sacarle las botas, le dice yo no soy un guerrero, soy un comerciante.

00.19.45

Sobre el sitio de Paysandú, se escribió mucho, muchos libros de historia, muchos ensayos de historia. Pero, todo lo que se había escrito, antes, estaba marcado por la posición partidaria: o era blanco o era colorado. La mayor parte de los sitiados eran blancos, pero además no era una ciudad blanca, había italianos, había franceses, había brasileños, argentinos. Entonces los blancos que escribieron sobre esa ciudad le llaman la heroica, así no más, la heroica, la heroica Paysandú. Los colorados dicen que Leandro Gómez, el que dirigió la defensa, estaba loco porque en vez de rendirse y ahorrarle la masacre prefirió resistir. Pero él nunca obligó a nadie a resistir. Lo seguían a él porque estaban defendiendo, no una bandera política, estaban defendiendo la ciudad. Y ahí por primera vez en la historia del país apareció el concepto de soberanía, que la soberanía es el pedazo de tierra que te toca a ti, en tu país, ese pedazo de tierra donde tú estás de pie, es tu tierra, tú sos soberana por eso. Entonces qué podía hacer para no teñir, para no pintar de blanco o pintar de colorado la historia. Me gustaba buscar justamente un inmigrante a la fuerza, que era Martín Zamora, que estaba involucrado con una… el destino le llevó a involucrarse con una banda de ladrones de esclavos, de negros. Cuando lo capturan a los ladrones, da la casualidad que están cerca de Paysandú y cuando el sitio empieza Martín Zamora está dentro del sitio. Pero adentro del sitio, adentro del calabozo, de la celda, hay otro prisionero por espía, un espía de Bartolomé Mitre, el presidente argentino, ese espía es inglés y habla español con Martín Zamora porque él es un inglés de Gibraltar donde son bilingües. Y Martín Zamora viene de castellano de Andalucía. Y él de Gibraltar, y él como buen británico es cínico, es irónico, es inteligente, y sabe. Los dos están esperando la muerte porque uno va a ser fusilado por espía y el otro va a ser fusilado por ladrón de esclavos, por traficante de esclavos. Como llegan unos pocos días antes de sitio, y se precisa gente para defender la ciudad, los liberan a los dos. Y el inglés, Raymond Harris, tiene, mira qué casualidad, tiene experiencia en sitios, ¿sabes por qué? Porque estuvo en Cawnpore [en India], y sabe que los sitios no tienen salvación.

Entonces allí me gustó mucho, enfrentar a dos visiones de, ya no del sitio, [pero] de la vida contemporánea de ellos, de sus mundos. Y bueno, por esa razón, me gustó involucrar al andaluz y al inglés. Pero sobre todo porque, yo creo que una buena historia cuenta siempre un buen conflicto. Y un buen conflicto, esa oposición entre dos polos, opuestos, está contenida por lo menos en dos personajes. […] en mi historia son estos dos.

Y como no se respeta, en este sitio, como en ningún otro, los principios más elementales de lo que puede haber de la humanidad de la guerra. En la época contemporánea, en la guerra mundial, en Vietnam, en la guerra de Argelia, cuando los prisioneros caen dicen, ¿cómo se llama el tratado internacional de donde los prisioneros dicen, no, yo estoy bajo la protección del derecho internacional? […] de las naciones unidas, los prisioneros se refugian en ese tratado. En esa época, no había, solamente el honor, el honor entre los guerreros, entre los guerreros se respetaban, una vez que el hombre rendido, ya había dejado de pelear, había que tener piedad, había que tener compasión, había que tener respeto por el otro. En los sitios, no había eso. Por eso, el titulo que se me ocurrió cuando le estaba robando las botas a Leandro Gómez, y un oficial le dice, eso un buen guerrero no lo hace. *No robarás las botas de los muertos*, es una forma de involucrar a los diez mandamientos. […] entonces me ocurrió inventar ese mandamiento.

00.30.50

Te acuerdas de Rashomon, de Akira Kurosawa, donde hay un asesinato y cuatro versiones buscando la verdad.

On Uruguay's recent dictatorship

00.36.47

El Uruguay no quedó al margen de la guerra fría, del reparto del mundo entre el sector capitalista del planeta y el sector comunista del planeta. Es decir, la influencia de la unión soviética en América Latina fue muy grande. Generó todos los movimientos de reacción contra el imperio. […] nosotros eramos considerados, durante la Guerra fría, el patio de atrás de la casa, el patio trasero de los Estados Unidos. Entonces, eso generó un fortalecimiento muy potente digamos del pensamiento de izquierda y de las distintas formas de resistir. De resistir a través del voto, de las elecciones, o a través de las luchas sindicales, o a través en forma más radical de la lucha armada.

00.43.49

Durante el período ese tan traumático de la dictadura, era muy difícil, muy difícil, resistir, pensar distinto, muy difícil. Pero más difícil era en los pequeños pueblos. […] La gente huía de los pequeños pueblos, para refugiarse en Montevideo, en lo que pensaban que iba a estar más protegido. No, era todo igual, el estado dictatorial militarizado cubría todo el

territorio. Pero no solamente eso, todo el sistema de opresión estaba vinculado con el estado opresivo del Brasil, de Argentina, de Paraguay, de Chile, eran dictaduras por todos lados. Entonces, era aquello de lo del imperio inglés, dividir para reinar. Entonces, mientras que los ejércitos institucionalizaban las dictaduras estaban muy unidos al limite del famoso plan Cóndor. Los pueblos estaban muy separados, ellos se encargaban de mantenernos separados. Un escritor o una escritora, uruguaya, no tenía cómo saber lo que estaba haciendo una escritora o un escritor chileno o peruano o colombiano. Es decir, aparte de vivir la opresión, la censura, incluso la autocensura, además de eso estaba la incomunicación con el resto del mundo. […] éramos una burbuja, una burbuja verde.

00.50.00

El retorno a la democracia fue muy traumático también. Primero, porque empezaron a salir todos los presos, se empezó a luchar para saber la verdad, donde estaban enterrados los que murieron en la tortura, por ejemplo, que estaban desaparecidos. Pero también, apareció otro drama social, que era el retorno de los exiliados, miles y miles, que buscaban reinsertarse otra vez.

On Afro-Uruguayans

00.53.15

Yo me crie con muchos niños, compañeros de escuela, negros, nietos, bisnietos de esclavos. Yo me quedé fascinado con ese mundo, que venía del África. Entonces muchos años después, yo pensé, llegué a la conclusión de que no había que olvidar esas historias de negros y me propuse rescatarlas. Para mí la literatura es una operación de rescate, traerlos para que las historias no se pierdan, y eso formaba parte de *mi* identidad.

Excerpts from an Interview with Marcia Collazo Ibáñez

January 2019 (via email)

On Uruguayan history

En Uruguay existe una abundante tradición historiográfica, en la que se han destacado varios nombres. Podría mencionar a Pablo Blanco Acevedo, Juan Pivel Devoto, Alcira Rainieri de Pivel Devoto, Alberto Methol Ferré, Carlos Real de Azúa, J. P. Barrán, B. Nahum, Gerardo Caetano, Ana Frega y otros muchos. La identidad nacional se ha ido construyendo, en buena medida, en torno a las visiones de estos historiadores. Un gran punto de inflexión se dio a partir de 1930, en ocasión del centenario de la Constitución del Uruguay y del nacimiento del estado, cuando se buscó centrar el discurso sobre la identidad en torno a la figura de José Artigas; lo cual era bastante complejo, ya que el país no nació, desde el punto de vista de su estructura política y de su decurso histórico, a partir de las ideas federales de Artigas, sino más bien como producto de la intervención de tres países extranjeros: Inglaterra, Argentina y Brasil. Esta circunstancia hizo muy difícil la conciliación entre la historia política de nuestro surgimiento como estado, y el ideario artiguista. Sin embargo la historiografía logró llevar adelante ese proyecto. Otro gran punto de inflexión se dio en los años 80 con la aparición de Barrán y Nahum, dos historiadores que realizaron investigaciones a partir de la vida cotidiana y la sensibilidad de los individuos y de los pueblos. Salieron a la luz, gracias a ellos, nuevas facetas de nuestra identidad. Se trata de una historia intimista, que pretende echar luz sobre las vicisitudes humanas que transitan por canales distintos a los de la historia tradicional, centrada más bien en acontecimientos bélicos y políticos. Además es necesario mencionar a otros escritores, no necesariamente historiadores, que contribuyeron desde una mirada interdisciplinaria a conformar nuestra identidad a partir de la literatura, las artes plásticas, el ensayo filosófico. En tal sentido destaco a Juan Zorrilla de San Martín, Pedro Figari, Joaquín Torres García, Carlos Vaz Ferreira, Eduardo Acevedo, entre otros.

En cuanto a mí, considero que la historia se inscribe en el devenir incesante de los pueblos a través del tiempo y del espacio, en sus actos y en sus interpretaciones del mundo. La historia se desenvuelve a partir de las circunstancias y el sentido que le damos a esas circunstancias. La historia se expresa a través del lenguaje y de la hermenéutica, del juicio y del prejuicio, de la luz y de la oscuridad, de la elección más o menos arbitraria que

hacemos de datos y de personajes, de la memoria y del olvido. No se trata sólo de hechos, sino de ideas y elecciones.

On historical novels and *Amores cimarrones*

Precisamente son la memoria y el olvido los grandes ejes del discurso histórico. Los olvidados suelen ser los oprimidos, cuya condición puede ser muy variada. No me refiero únicamente a los pobres sino también a las mujeres, así como a los individuos de diversas procedencias étnicas; entre nosotros el indio, el negro y sus diversos cruces sanguíneos. La novela histórica puede llegar a ser un valioso instrumento en este sentido. Rescata las voces de los olvidados por la historia oficial, pone en evidencia los cambios y las permanencias, permite tender un lazo entre el ayer, el hoy y el futuro, y construye discursos que no le están permitidos al lenguaje de la investigación histórica. La novela histórica, desde su dimensión literaria, puede mostrar esperanzas, sueños, ilusiones, miedos, odios, ambiciones y tramas psicológicas. Es, además, formadora de mentalidades. La literatura, de la mano de una rigurosa investigación histórica, ayuda a los pueblos a verse a sí mismos y a comprender mejor sus propios derroteros. En mis novelas, lo primero que hago es respetar rigurosamente el dato histórico, allí donde existe. Si no cuento con ese dato, intento extraerlo a través de datos indirectos. Exploro en el espíritu de la época. Acudo no solamente al documento histórico como tal, sino también a la leyenda, la literatura, la música, la gastronomía, la vestimenta y todo lo relacionado con la época. Creo una trama literaria en la que el principal desafío consiste en mostrar a los personajes históricos como seres vivos, pensantes y actuantes, que van trazando su destino. En cuanto a las mujeres, de las que me ocupo especialmente, intento mostrar cuál ha sido su rol y su importancia histórica, en el día a día, en la cotidianeidad de la existencia, en su influencia en el hogar y en los hijos, y en las decisiones que tomaron o ayudaron a tomar a otros. Siempre que la novela respete el dato histórico, su quehacer está legitimado, desde que se trata de un discurso de interpretación sobre el mundo, tan ficcional en este sentido como puede serlo buena parte del discurso de la historiografía, con la diferencia antes señalada: en la novela vibra y late la vida, en sus más recónditos aspectos.

On women's history and literature:

Mi novela es una visión femenina del pasado, pero es además una visión humana en un sentido integral, porque el mundo se ha construido con hombres y con mujeres. Escribo, además, desde mi condición de mujer y desde mis particulares intereses, preguntas y expectativas. Escribo para rescatar el pasado, y dentro de ese pasado, para rescatar a esas mujeres injustamente olvidadas, que cuentan y que importan en sí mismas, con independencia del vínculo que pueden haber sostenido con Artigas. No creo, sin embargo, en la literatura de género. Creo que ese concepto rebaja a la literatura escrita por mujeres a un lugar secundario, relegado de modo artificial, y por lo tanto falso. La literatura no puede tener, en este sentido, género. El hecho de traer a las mujeres del pasado no se inscribe en el género, sino en la interpretación de la realidad, en la naturaleza y en la vida. Como lo digo en mi obra, ellas estuvieron ahí. En cuanto a la diferencia entre el pasado femenino y el masculino, creo que se trata más bien de una interpretación. Se atiende sólo al pasado masculino, ya que son los hombres los que sobresalen en el aspecto público, hacen guerras, ocupan cargos de gobierno, se dan a conocer, van por las calles y escriben libros. El pasado de la mujer y del hombre está condicionado radicalmente por esta circunstancia, por este hecho de la visibilidad de unos y la invisibilidad de otros. Pero, ¿puede la literatura limitarse a imitar pasivamente esas estructuras, a reiterarlas, a transitarlas de manera acrítica? La importancia de la novela histórica está dada en los conos de luz o de oscuridad que arrojamos sobre esos seres; en el diferente rol que asumieron hombres y mujeres en el pasado, y en las interpretaciones que desde el hoy realizamos sobre dichos roles. Priorizar a la figura masculina en detrimento de la femenina es una constante de la historia. En mi literatura intento rescatar las voces de las mujeres y de los oprimidos en general, pero no a través de una construcción que pase por el elogio o el reproche, ni por la reivindicación o la denuncia, sino por medio de una mirada descriptiva, centrada en el natural devenir de sus existencias. Estuvieron ahí, pensaron, actuaron, hablaron o callaron, eligieron, buscaron, realizaron. En base a eso, las escucho y las recupero.

On Isidoro de María and Luis Bonavita and *Amores cimarrones* as counter-history

Hay un discurso negador o minimizador de la figura femenina, como podría ser el caso de estos dos historiadores, y hay un discurso literario que interpela esa mirada y aborda

el asunto desde otro lugar. Es importante precisar que yo no hago historia, sino literatura histórica. Pero desde la literatura histórica realizo, en cierta medida, una contra-lectura de esas lecturas, y muestro que en realidad no hay vacíos, no hay oscuridades, no hay sombras, sino que hay intenciones. A esto se reduce todo. Está la intención de mostrar o de ocultar, la intención de ignorar o de nombrar, la intención de investigar o de no investigar. En el caso de Bonavita, cuando dice que Isabel no es más que una sombra, desde el punto de vista documental tiene algo de razón, pero no tiene toda la razón, ya que a pesar de las carencias, existen algunos documentos sobre ella. Es a partir de ahí que viene la literatura histórica para pretender recrear la vida y su contexto.

On the fictional Anunciación

Anunciación aparece recién al final de la novela, en el último capítulo. Es una especie de privilegio que me doy como escritora; el juego de introducir un personaje de ficción me permite ampliar enormemente el discurso, y me da la libertad de observar a los personajes históricos desde la pura palabra literaria. Pero se presta, además, para mostrar la terrible condición en que vivían esas otras mujeres. Estaban más marginalizadas, sí, respecto de las damas o matronas de familia. La familia operaba como un muro, una contención, un escudo protector en esos tiempos. Estas mujeres lanceras no contaban con ese muro. Estaban arrojadas al mundo, a la existencia, metidas en el drama de la vida, en la peripecia del destino, y tenían que luchar o morir, en el mejor sentido de la palabra. Anunciación narra esa peripecia de una manera cruda, directa, sin intermediarios; su propia vida basta para manifestarlo. Anunciación era necesaria, porque esas lanceras existieron, sobre todo entre las indias guaraníes, que marchaban a la guerra con su hombre y con sus hijos, y a través de la creación de este personaje, yo puedo reconstruir la vida de innumerables lanceras que fueron por el mundo desperdigando hijos, amores y sufrimientos.

On Rosalía Rafaela Villagrán

La memoria nacional sobre Rosalía simplemente no existe. […] Es tal vez la más ignorada de todas las mujeres de Artigas. Por eso me fue bastante difícil elaborar su historia y meterla en mi literatura. Me llevó mucho tiempo conocerla, imaginarla, escuchar su voz. El desafío era mostrar a una Rosalía débil pero a la vez fuerte, callada pero no sumisa, capaz de observar el mundo y sacar conclusiones, y mostrar luego el lento camino de su

locura, que no termina de manera plácida, sino que se expresa a través de la indiferencia, primero, y del odio después. Tenía sus motivos para el odio y para la rabia. En primer lugar, se trató de un matrimonio arreglado, sin amor, en el que el novio declaró en forma manifiesta que se casaba con ella para rescatarla de un destino de solterona. Artigas no intentó siquiera ocultar esto. Al contrario, lo expresó en forma oficial. Seguramente para Rosalía constituyó una humillación y un duro golpe. De él sólo recibió indiferencia y abandono, y esto no es un dato menor a la hora de calibrar su locura. Paradójicamente, es la esposa oficial de Artigas, la única reconocida en la historiografía oficial, y a la vez la menos importante desde el punto de vista amoroso. A ella le tocó lidiar con una personalidad abrumadora, la de él. Y está además la imponente figura de la madre de Rosalía, la tía de Artigas, sobre la cual recaen todas las responsabilidades al final.

On Isabel Sánchez

[…] Entre Isabel y Artigas hubo sin duda pasión –recordemos que ella estaba casada y tenía varios hijos- pero yo creo que se llegó a conformar un verdadero hogar, con esa mansedumbre propia de los pueblos de tierra adentro, que tal vez tuvo mucho de maternal para él. Sobre todo, tuve en cuenta que esa relación fue bastante larga. Duró nada menos que catorce años, lo que nos habla de una intención de perdurabilidad, de una cosa sostenida en el tiempo, de un pacto consolidado entre dos personas. Y hay otro dato interesante: el hijo que tuvo con [Isabel], Manuel, fue para Artigas el más amado de todos. Es evidente, en las cartas, esa preferencia; y muchas veces, aunque no siempre, el hijo preferido está asociado a una historia de amor entre sus progenitores. Pero reitero que hasta pocos años antes de la publicación de mi novela, el silencio en torno a las mujeres de Artigas era casi absoluto, y consistía más que nada en rumores.

On Artigas's grandmothers:

En el caso de las abuelas, ese vacío se agrava, es cierto. Mi intención fue, en efecto, llenar el hueco histórico sobre ellas. […] Es necesario ensamblar partes, a veces muy alejadas entre sí, para asomarse a la vida de las abuelas. La ficción me permitió abordar sus retratos psicológicos, sus angustias ante la dureza de la vida en un rincón del mundo tan solitario como la bahía de Montevideo, y sus esperanzas de lograr algo mejor. Las abuelas eran una gran interrogante, que fui llenando con escasos datos históricos y con una

imaginación siempre orientada al contexto en que les tocó vivir, a la relación con sus hombres, a las costumbres imperantes y a las vivencias universales que en todo tiempo y lugar pueden llegar a tener las mujeres. Esta última parte constituyó el núcleo duro de la ficción y fue mi mayor desafío.

On Artigas

La figura de Artigas ha sido interpretada y reinterpretada de diferentes modos, y apropiada por diferentes sujetos históricos, de acuerdo a sus expectativas e intereses propios. Esto suele suceder con todos los próceres. Pero Artigas fue un hombre que se hizo a sí mismo en un mundo de grandes inequidades, en el que no existía un ejército nacional ni cosa parecida. Lo único que había era el ejército español, impuesto a través de la conquista y colonización de América, y en éste los criollos como Artigas no podían pasar de capitanes. Artigas fue nombrado jefe y general por su propio pueblo, de una manera espontánea, no forzada, dictada por circunstancias muy especiales, signadas por la opresión y por la idea de liberación. Todo eso yo no lo asocio ni lo podré asociar jamás con la idea de un ejército oficial, institucionalizado, que para colmo suele ser utilizado –al menos en América Latina- para oprimir y para reprimir a la población. Creo que esto ha quedado claro para la sociedad uruguaya, en especial después de la dictadura militar, y a ello ha contribuido ciertamente nuestra historiografía. Y por otra parte, mi intención como novelista era dejar a Artigas, un poco en segundo plano, y sacar a relucir a sus mujeres como principales protagonistas de un mundo en formación, en crisis, en pugna por salir adelante.

Ethical Approval Documents and Consent Forms

University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

26 October 2016

Dear Karunika Kardak

Thank you for submitting your ethical application which was considered by the Modern Languages Ethics Committee meeting when the following documents were reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form
2. Participant Information Sheet
3. Consent Form

The Modern Languages Ethics Committee has been delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has granted this application ethical approval. The particulars relating to the approved project are as follows -

Approval Code:	ML12415	**Approved on:**	24.10.16	**Approval Expiry:**	
Project Title:	The Uruguayan Historical Novel (1981-2011)				
Researcher(s):	Karunika Kardak				
Supervisor(s):	Prof. San Román and Dr. O'Leary				

Approval is awarded for five years. Projects which have not commenced within two years of approval must be re-submitted for review by your School Ethics Committee. If you are unable to complete your research within the five year approval period, you are required to write to your School Ethics Committee Convener to request a discretionary extension of no greater than 6 months or to re-apply if directed to do so, and you should inform your School Ethics Committee when your project reaches completion.

If you make any changes to the project outlined in your approved ethical application form, you should inform your supervisor and seek advice on the ethical implications of those changes from the School Ethics Convener who may advise you to complete and submit an ethical amendment form for review.

Any adverse incident which occurs during the course of conducting your research must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee who will advise you on the appropriate action to be taken.

Approval is given on the understanding that you conduct your research as outlined in your application and in compliance with UTREC Guidelines and Policies (http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/guidelinespolicies/). You are also advised to ensure that you procure and handle your research data within the provisions of the Data Provision Act 1998 and in accordance with any conditions of funding incumbent upon you.

Yours sincerely

Secretary of the School Ethics Committee (SEC)

cc SEC Convenor, Supervisors

School of Modern Languages Ethics Committee, modlangs@st-andrews.ac.uk

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University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

13 April 2019

Dear Karunika,

Thank you for submitting your amendment application which comprised the following documents:

1. Ethical Amendment Application Form
2. Participant Information sheet
3. Participant Consent form

The School of Modern Languages Ethics Committee is delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has approved this ethical amendment application. The particulars of this approval are as follows –

Original Approval Code:	ML12415	**Approved on:**	24/10/2016
Amendment Approval Date:	06/06/2018	**Approval Expiry Date:**	24/10/2021
Project Title:	'The Uruguayan Historical Noval (1981-2011)		
Researcher(s):	Karunika Kardak	**Supervisor(s):**	Prof Gustavo San Roman and Dr O'Leary

Ethical amendment approval does not extend the originally granted approval period of three years, rather it validate the changes you have made to the originally approved ethical application. If you are unable to complete your research within the original five year validation period, you are required to write to your School Ethics Committee Convener to request a discretionary extension of no greater than 6 months or to re-apply if directed to do so, and you should inform your School Ethics Committee when your project reaches completion.

Any serious adverse events or significant change which occurs in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration, must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee, and an Ethical Amendment Form submitted where appropriate.

Approval is given on the understanding that you adhere to the 'Guidelines for Ethical Research Practice' (http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/UTRECguidelines%20Feb%2008.pdf).

Yours sincerely

SEC Administrator

cc Supervisors

School Ethics Committee details

The University of St Andrews is a charity registered in Scotland No SC013532

Participant Consent Form
Identifiable / Attributable Data

Project Title
The Uruguayan Historical Novel (1981-2011)

Researcher(s) Name(s)
Karunika Kardak

Supervisors Names
Prof. Gustavo San Román and Dr. Catherine O'Leary

The University of St Andrews attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. We therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are happy to participate in the study.

What is Identifiable/Attributable Data?

'Identifiable/Attributable data' is data where the participant is identified, such as when a public figure gives an interview, or where consent is given by a participant for their name (including perhaps gender and address) to be used in the research outputs. The raw data will be held confidentially by the researcher(s) (and supervisors). The published research will clearly identify and attribute data collected to the participant.

Consent

The purpose of this form is to ensure that you are willing to take part in this study and to let you understand what it entails. Signing this form does not commit you to anything you do not wish to do and you are free to withdraw at any stage.

Please answer each statement concerning the collection and use of the research data.

Statement	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I have had my questions answered satisfactorily.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree to being identified in this interview and any subsequent publications or use.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I understand that my raw data will be kept securely and will be accessible only to the researcher(s) (and supervisors). I agree to all data collected being attributable to me and being identified as mine at all times. I also understand that in the published research any contribution made by me will be clearly identified and attributed as mine.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree to my data (in line with conditions outlined above) being kept by the researcher and being archived and used for further research projects / by other bona fide researchers.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I have been made fully aware of the potential risks associated with this research and am satisfied with the information provided.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree to take part in the study	☑ Yes	☐ No

Part of my research involves taking tape recordings. These recordings will be kept secure and stored with no identifying factors i.e. consent forms and questionnaires.

Photographs and recorded data can be valuable resources for future studies therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain data and images for this purpose.

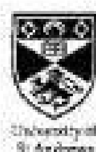
I agree to being tape recorded	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree for tape recorded material to be published as part of this research	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree for my tape recorded material to be used in future studies	☑ Yes	☐ No

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and your consent is required before you can participate in this research. If you decide at a later date that data should be destroyed we will honour your request in writing.

Name in Block Capitals

Signature

Date



Participant Consent Form
Identifiable / Attributable Data

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I agree to take part in the study	☑ Yes	☐ No

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I agree to being tape recorded	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree for tape recorded material to be published as part of this research	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree for my tape recorded material to be used in future studies	☑ Yes	☐ No

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and your consent is required before you can participate in this research. If you decide at a later date that data should be destroyed we will honour your request in writing.

Name in Block Capitals

Signature

Date

Participant Consent Form
Identifiable / Attributable Data

Project Title
The Historical Novel in Post-Dictatorship Uruguay (1988-2011)

Researcher(s) Name(s)
Karunika Kardak

Supervisors Names
Prof. Gustavo San Román and Dr. Catherine O'Leary

The University of St Andrews attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. We therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are happy to participate in the study.

What is Identifiable/Attributable Data?

'Identifiable/Attributable data' is data where the participant is identified, such as when a public figure gives an interview, or where consent is given by a participant for their name (including perhaps gender and address) to be used in the research outputs. The raw data will be held confidentially by the researcher(s) (and supervisors). The published research will clearly identify and attribute data collected to the participant.

Consent

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Statement	Yes	No
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I have had my questions answered satisfactorily.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree to being identified in this interview and any subsequent publications or use.	☑ Yes	☐ No
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I have been made fully aware of the potential risks associated with this research and am satisfied with the information provided.	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree to take part in the study	☑ Yes	☐ No

Part of my research involves taking phone recordings and/or recording email conversations. This data will be kept secure and stored with identifying factors i.e. consent forms and questionnaires.

Recorded data can be valuable resources for future studies therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain data for this purpose.

I agree to being recorded	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree for recorded material to be published as part of this research	☑ Yes	☐ No
I agree for my recorded material to be used in future studies	☑ Yes	☐ No

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and your consent is required before you can participate in this research. If you decide at a later date that data should be destroyed we will honour your request in writing.

Name in Block Capitals

Signature

Date

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