

Cronfa - Swansea University Open Access Repository

This is an author produced version of a paper published in:

Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura

Cronfa URL for this paper:

<http://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa40414>

Paper:

Davies, L. (2018). Emotional Violence in Mexico: Portraits of Psychological Trauma in Fernando Del Paso's *Noticias del Imperio*. *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura*, 33(2), 54-70.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cnf.2018.0005>

This item is brought to you by Swansea University. Any person downloading material is agreeing to abide by the terms of the repository licence. Copies of full text items may be used or reproduced in any format or medium, without prior permission for personal research or study, educational or non-commercial purposes only. The copyright for any work remains with the original author unless otherwise specified. The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holder.

Permission for multiple reproductions should be obtained from the original author.

Authors are personally responsible for adhering to copyright and publisher restrictions when uploading content to the repository.

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/library/researchsupport/ris-support/>

Emotional Violence in Mexico: Portraits of Psychological Trauma in Fernando Del Paso's *Noticias del Imperio*.

Sáenz points out that “la literatura mexicana cuenta desde sus antepasados coloniales con textos híbridos en los cuales la historia no se puede deslindar de la ficción” (1992: 25). Such a tradition has been enhanced in relatively recent years by the works of both Carlos Fuentes (1928-2012) and Fernando del Paso (1935-) which illustrate what are now designated New Historical traits, particularly in their encyclopaedic range of references, their intertextuality and their deployment of the Bakhtinian concepts of the dialogic, the carnivalesque, parody and heteroglossia (Menton, 22-23).

While Fuentes is an important member of the so-called “Boom” generation of writers whose works enjoy canonical status, the novels of the much lesser-known Del Paso have been relatively slow to achieve critical recognition. Thus, while Mata acknowledges the near critical consensus on the status of *Noticias del Imperio* (1987) as a masterpiece (73), he offers a robust personal critique of Del Paso’s representation of the empire as “un mero castillo de palabras que se cimbra y se desmorona en los bostezos del lector [...] el discurso se convierte en verborrea, repetición demente de la historia [...]” (79).¹ For Fiddian, by contrast, *Noticias del Imperio* is a “brilliant piece of creative writing that is now universally acknowledged as the leading example of the Spanish American new historical novel of the 1980s” (5).

While the internationally-renowned Fuentes has long overshadowed the younger Del Paso who published his first novel when Fuentes was already established as a pivotal proponent of the *Nueva Novela* school of writing, several critics now hold the view that Del Paso is the most important contemporary Mexican writer (Fiddian 144). Sáenz, for example, claims that his works “marcan un punto culminante en la trayectoria de la novela mexicana del siglo XX” (64).

Del Paso’s period of residence in London from 1971 to 1985 reaffirmed his hostility to the former imperialist powers whose contempt, he claims, for the “Third World” persists (Fiddian 18). Yet, as Fiddian goes on to point out, Del Paso holds that Latin Americans are equal inheritors of the European cultural heritage, in contrast with Paz’s view of Latin Americans as “uninvited guests who came into the West via the tradesmen’s entrance” (quoted by Fiddian 22). He thus combines a deep sensitivity to Mexico as a colonized

country with an equally potent awareness that, as a Mexican and Latin American, he is party to European culture and history (Fiddian 20-21).

This apparent contradiction may explain, at least to some extent, his affinity with his protagonist in *Noticias del Imperio*, the Empress Carlota, whose monologues, found in alternate chapters of *Noticias*, form the cornerstone of the text: her feelings match, in their passion and intensity, Del Paso's own convictions although they are expressed inversely, she being a "high" European determined to claim, as an equal partner, her stake in Mexican indigenous culture.

Several critics have noted Carlota's pivotal status in the novel. Kohut, for example, points out that Del Paso's original intention was to base the novel on Carlota's monologues but then realized that more direct historical narrative was needed as a form of counterpoint (228); the monologue remains, however, the "espina dorsal de la novela" (233), a view confirmed by Del Paso himself: "la locura de Carlota en realidad será el tema central de la novela" (quoted by Mata 77). There may be gaps in Carlota's biography – "fue borrada prácticamente del mapa de la historia a los 26 años inmediatamente después de su derrumbe psíquico en el Vaticano [...] " (Iglesias 52) - and she, along with her husband, the Emperor Maximilian, may be no more than footnotes in history (Beardsell 176; Salinas 88) ² but such deficits in the historical record are amply redressed by Del Paso's imaginative account in which Carlota is the central figure, the prime source of the text's fascination: her complex and often contradictory character emerges in her residual regal dignity and distance that clash with her carnivalesque humour and with her Bakhtinian references to "low" bodily functions, including sexuality and menstruation. ³

Del Paso's portrayal of Carlota is informed by her madness and senility that are associated, for the most part, not with mental decline and the sterility of self-absorption but rather with mental vibrancy, sustained by a fertile imagination and a poetic sensitivity. Carlota may be seen as a 'living archive' but her memory, as she herself confesses, is fragile: "me di cuenta que si no encontraba mis recuerdos tendría que inventarlos" (24) She goes on to provide resounding confirmation of her imaginative powers, as we shall see.

In Carlota's case, senility is complemented by her hysteria and madness which make her creative powers more potent. Her free-flowing style - frequently repetitive, extravagant, excessive, neo-baroque, "expending its resources beyond its referential needs" (Faris 184) - repudiates the discipline and restraint associated with reason and logic: it is no accident that

Carlota frequently refers to her affinity with water: “mi carne nació para ser amada por el agua” (416); “La otra vez me fui a Bruselas a la fuente de las tres ninfas de cuyos pechos desnudos brota el agua [...]” (494). Here she conforms to the now archetypal feminist association of women with flow and fluidity (Braidotti 140). Such qualities often inform women’s writing, as is clear from the Argentine writer, Luisa Valenzuela’s reflections on her own practice: “I begin a sentence with a word meaning one thing, then all at once, in the middle of the sentence, the word begins to signify something else” (Garfield 150). Carlota’s language – sensuous, proliferating, excessive – shows a similar disregard for the rigour and logic associated with male patriarchal discourse and a propensity for new, often more positive and metaphorical interpretations: “una vez me metí el cuello de una botella y no quiso salir y me llevaron al baño para romperla y qué horror, qué susto porque el piso se cubrió de sangre, pero no, qué tontería se cubrió con tu vino de borgoña favorito y mis damas de compañía no me dejaron lamerlo” (424). Here Carota invents and re-invents, improving on her “first draft”. This is a form of spontaneous writing guided by darting lines of imaginative flight rather than by logic and reason, exemplifying, therefore, the conjunction between her living (imaginatively) and her writing: “Escribirlo todo, en una sola línea sin pausas y sin espacios, era vivir, al mismo tiempo, lo que escribía. Hay que separar las palabras, me decían: como si fuera posible separar cada instante de mi vida” (667).

Corral Peña refers to Carlota’s “apoyo sistemático en el aspecto emotivo y su abandono del aspecto conceptual” (219); Carlota herself refers to her own “recuerdos hechos carne, hechos el agua que bebo, el aire que respiro, la noche de terciopelo negro [...]” (568). Her imagination ebbs and flows, now lingering obsessively, often on an important source of emotional trauma such as Maximilian’s numerous failings, as we see below, now rushing randomly in all directions. Some of her obsessions derive from her persecution mania, for example, her conviction that people are trying to poison her (411) which gives rise to her compulsive cleaning (411-12); her mental torment is compounded by her sense of guilt over Maximilians’s death (482) and by the resentment she still feels towards her husband’s Indian lover, Concepción Sedano, a theme to which she returns frequently (248; 485; 552-53; 745). This obsession gives rise to her disquisition on “la mentira” which she associates with Maximilian: “Tan perezosa es la mentira, que duerme en los posos amarillos del ajeno y solo despierta en tus labios, cuando hablas de tu Imperio” (555). She subsequently engages in a comprehensive analysis of Maximilian’s character: “Maximiliano el magnánimo [...] Maximiliano el sordo, Maximiliano el inmisericorde [...] Maximiliano el inflexible [...]

Maximiliano el embustero [...] Maximiliano el iluso [...] Maximiliano el ingenuo [...] Maximiliano el romántico [...] Maximiliano el sabio [...] Maximiliano el fracasado [...] traidor de tu nueva Patria” (821-30). Yet another obsession relates to her awareness of other people’s perceptions of her madness (491; 839). However, her mind frequently changes gear to manifest not obsession but random flight; thus she refers to her collection of paperweights, each of which reproduces a castle in miniature and serves as the catalyst for a transhistorical discourse that takes in the Tower of London and a sighting of Anne Boleyn (560); Amboise, where she sees the bodies of Huguenots, decapitated on the orders of Catherine de’ Medici, being thrown into the Loire; and the Segovia Alcázar with Columbus kneeling before Queen Isabel. Then her mind darts in another direction introducing a sudden change of tone and mood as it returns to the sad and static present: “Y ahora que estoy vieja y sola, y que paso los días enteros sentada en mi habitación, con la cabeza inclinada y las manos en el regazo con las palmas hacia arriba” (561). But her mind is not slow to resume its flight, repudiating the mean reality of her present circumstances to contrast the insignificant and paltry lives of her gaolers with “lo infinitamente grande que son los pensamientos con los que le doy forma y sentido a un mundo y lo ilumino con auroras boreales, con relámpagos, con noches blancas”, culminating with Maximilian returning to focus as she expresses the hope that ‘esa espuma que dibujaba arabescos blancos en tu uniforme de marinero, bese con su sal tus heridas para restañarlas’ (561). In this way, Carlota displays a kind of nomadic thought “unbound by conventional ways of writing and speaking which recognizes no absolute boundaries but crosses frontiers of thinking and expression freely [...]” (Erickson 248).

Carlota resembles a writer since she has to invent on the basis of nothingness: she alternates between her consciousness of her life as nothing, of her status as “Baronesa de la Nada” (552) on the one hand and her revelry in filling her *horror vacui*⁴ with the outpourings of her unbounded imagination on the other. She is determined to redeem her emotional wounds: “no seré jamás la Emperatriz de nada [...]” (83). Her grand expectations following her marriage to Maximilian and her subsequent assumption of the role of Empress of Mexico were, of course, exposed as illusory: Carlota’s dreams turned inexorably – and within a relatively short time - to nothing. Her marriage was dysfunctional, owing largely to Maximilian’s infidelities; she was particularly sensitive to his affair with the gardener’s wife, the Indian, Concepción Sedano, as we have seen: “es una mentira perfumada y lisa, indivisible como un libro con las páginas en blanco. Es una mentira alada y negra como una mariposa de la noche” (Del Paso 553). The main catalyst for the political disaster was the

betrayal of the French who withdrew their military support. Carlota's experience of historical trauma was compounded by her misguided insistence that Maximilian should not abdicate despite his parlous military situation which would lead to his defeat and subsequent execution at the hands of Juárez's forces: "Ay, Maximiliano, cuánto no hubiera dado por estar en Querétaro, a tu lado en el Cerro de las Campanas [...]"; "no me lo dijo nadie [...] no me dijeron nada, Maximiliano, y todos te abandonaron" (244; 482). As Corti points out, the abdication of her grandfather, Louis Philippe, had made a lasting impression on her: "she could not bear the thought that she, a king's daughter, of the most noble Saxon and Bourbon blood, and her consort, the brother of the Emperor of Austria, should be driven from their imperial throne by republicans, and have to return home humiliated and crest-fallen [...]" (641).⁵

Villapando César notes that documents now available in the Royal Palace Archive in Brussels have largely undermined the "leyenda romántica" of the imperial couple and replaced it with "un trágico relato donde la ambición, la frustración, el desamor y los conflictos conyugales superan en mucho a la imaginación más desbordada" (71). Carlota, the dominant partner, compensated for her lack of sexual fulfilment by devoting herself to affairs of state: as a confidential memorandum noted, "she was wearing out her health and nerves in ceaseless activity in order to compensate her for the disappointment of not having a child" (Haslip 271-72). Given her aspiration to be the mother of the nation, her suffering evokes that of *La Chingada*, whom Paz describes as the Mother, "una figura mítica", a peculiarly Mexican representation of maternity, comparable with *La Llorona* with whom Carlota also bears comparison (68). The emotional violence endured by Carlota takes the form of a heightened sense of futility or of *nada*, as she puts it, which itself approximates her experience (straddling Europe and Mexico) to that of the typical Mexican, as identified by Paz: "El mexicano no quiere ser ni indio, ni español [...] Y no se afirma en tanto que mestizo, sino como abstracción: es un hombre. Se vuelve hijo de la nada". She mirrors the experience of her people: "El mexicano y la mexicanidad se definen como ruptura y negación" (Paz 78-79). Her failed marital relations with Maximilian who not only loved other women but abandoned her in her imperial bed, "para irte a dormir a un catre de campaña y masturbarte pensando en la condesita Von Linden" (14) resulted in her childlessness, again a fate particularly cruel in her case in view of her frustrated eroticism: "yo quería invitarte a bañarnos desnudos en las playas de Blankenberghe [...]" (244); she subsequently imagines making love to an imaginary, living Maximilian (422). His death means that he is one of the

“puros fantasmas” (94) with whom she communicates: he has been devoured by others – “a mí solo me dejaron tus sombras” (836). It is, of course, the figure of Maximilian as phantom that prolongs Carlota’s emotional trauma for sixty years.⁶ Her monologues may be seen as a form of self-administered “talking cure” which addresses, among other themes, the untold story of her married life. Rand identifies the significance of silence in this respect: “silence and its varied forms – the untold or unsayable secret, the feeling unfelt, the pain denied, the unspeakable and concealed shame of families [...] – may disrupt our lives [...] silence represents that which cannot be assimilated into the continuity of psychic life” (21).

Failure is harder to bear because of her dynamism and drive: Corti refers to her “astonishing activity and energy” (502) and to her ‘burning ambition’ (684) – confirmed by Del Paso’s reference to her ‘terrible ambición’ (615) - which can be coupled with her “obsesión por gobernar” and her qualities as a decision-maker (Del Paso 439; 540) – all unlikely to be realized, even in otherwise favourable circumstances, given Mexico’s *machista* society (Maximilian, by contrast, was weak and indecisive). In addition, her knowledge, linguistic ability - she spoke six or seven languages according to Salinas (22) - intellect and natural curiosity made frustration and sense of failure, as well as her sixty years of solitude and silence (Del Paso 94), all the more difficult to endure. Her response to nothingness is to unleash her imaginative powers and invent a new vision of history, tantamount to Dash’s notion of the counterculture of the imagination (66),⁷ that involves a re-visioning of history in favour of the silent, marginalized and dispossessed voices reduced to nothingness in the unequal colonial encounter and, concomitantly, opposition to history’s inherited and dominant perspectives and modes of discourse. There is, significantly, an emphasis on pregnancy – that may be seen as counterbalancing her sense of nothingness - literal in the instance where Carlota claims to have conceived Von Smissen’s child (12); imaginary where she fantasizes about becoming pregnant by a colibrí (93); and figurative where she talks of becoming pregnant with words and Maximilian making her “la madre del Divino Verbo” (567) and of becoming pregnant by everyone: “a mí todos me embarazaron, sin que yo me enterara” (902). Her persistent references to water may be a similar reaction to the sterility of the *nada*, which has blighted her real if not her imaginative life: she imagines prostrating herself before the Virgen de Guadalupe “para pedirle que me haga fértil con las aguas del Peñón” (565).

Carlota may be seen as a “living archive” but her memory, as she herself confesses, is fragile: “me di cuenta que si no encontraba mis recuerdos tendría que inventarlos” (24). She goes on to provide resounding confirmation of González Echevarría’s claim that “senility has become a force for exuberant creativity” (1990: 183). In Carlota’s case, senility is complemented by her hysteria and madness that make her creative powers more potent. Here she lends herself to literary recuperation: as Small notes: “Literature has been seen as possessing a privileged relationship to madness: a capacity to gesture beyond rationalism and beyond words towards the emotional tenor of an experience otherwise silenced by the language society gives us” (1996: 19).

A major aspect of *Noticias del Imperio* is its shifting perspectives. The text is intricately fragmented throughout but its broadest structural divide is that between the uneven and the even chapters. The uneven chapters, consisting of Carlota’s stream-of-consciousness reminiscences, conditioned by her emotional traumas, are informed by her overweening imaginative powers, impervious to real world circumstances, notably the death of Maximilian 60 years earlier. Fiddian notes that critical interest in the text – focusing on its metafictional and poetic dimensions – has resulted in the comparative neglect of the theme of empire. He claims that Carlota’s opening monologue with its references to the most powerful royal families and imperial dynasties of Europe “invites the reader to construe her as a symbol of European imperialism” (2000: 108-09). Fiddian is, of course, right but Carlota’s importance transcends this symbolism: after all, her imperial splendour is a distant memory in 1927 by which time she has spent the majority of her life within the walls of Bouchout Castle and is finally on the verge of death. It is arguably Carlota, as spectacular female “other”, “la loca de la casa” (418; 673), burdened by long-gestated grief and madness, who awaits critical attention. As Fiddian states, her madness “places a question mark over the category of the sovereign subject, which she literally personifies” (117).

Her madness also has wider implications since it projects her into pole position within the “fiesta delirante de la historia” (151). Her story serves as a feminine foil to history as master discourse, remaining open, as Fiddian notes, to “continuing interpretation and, in some particularly intractable areas, locked into a chain of unending speculation” (122). White argues that history has become “the refuge of all those ‘sane’ men who excel at finding the simple in the complex and the familiar in the strange” (1978: 50). Through the figure of the deviant Carlota, Del Paso offers history not as refuge but rather as an unpredictable foreign territory, energized by her “memoria viva y temblorosa [...] incendiada, vuelta llamas que se alimenta y se abrasa a sí misma, y se consume y vuelve a nacer y abrir las alas” (899).⁸ Carlota’s memory and her imagination are sustained by language which burns brightly and then dies as her narrative ebbs and flows. Her work consists of stirring the ashes: “cenizas [...] se han vuelto todos los demás” (24). She herself is an ember – “sueño al mundo en llamas, sueño que mi corazón es un ascua [...]” (321). Her imagination is, of course, dependent on language; “inventar, si quiero, un inmenso castillo de palabras, palabras tan ligeras como el aire en el que flotan [...]” (154). She constantly refers to language as if she were returning to its origins: she is “la madre del Divino Verbo” (483), as we have seen. Her language is not degraded by sense and reference: Derrida refers to “the power of the sign to gather meaning and sense (sens) arises from this degraded nonpresence, this crumbling and fragile otherness of language that makes the sign ‘the worldly and exposed residence of an unthought truth’” (1991: 8). Her language is informed not by empirical reality but by the desires and torments that underpin her inventions. She returns to the smouldering origins of language to recast it according to emotional rather than rational priorities.

Contrasting her own concept of “anxiety of origins” with Bloom’s “anxiety of influence”, Zamora claims that an anxiety of origins “impels American writers to search for precursors (in the name of community) rather than escape from them (in the name of

individuation); to connect to traditions and histories (in the name of a useable past) rather than dissociate from them (in the name of originality)” (5). Conscious that her own origins are far removed from her adopted country, Carlota invents radical new ones that even involve a change of skin brought about by her bathing in an enormous barrel of hot, foaming chocolate: “hasta mi piel de princesa borbona [...] se caiga a pedazos y una nueva piel oscura y perfumada, oscura como el cacao de Soconusco [...] me cubra entera, Maximiliano, desde mi frente oscura hasta la punta de mis pies descalzos y perfumados de india mexicana, de virgen morena, de Emperatriz de América” (10-11). This is a further symptom of her experience of emotional violence: her self-reinvention becomes desperate as she attempts to renounce her “high” European past and assume the physical attributes of the indigenous Mexican. Her change of skin colour illustrates what Slemon designates as that cluster of voices opposed to imperial conceptions of history that “tend to see history more as a kind of alchemical process” (414): Carlota is transmuted imaginatively from her original status as a representative of white European sovereignty to that of dark indigene and, concomitantly, her beliefs in regal power, as cast in the European mode, are radically undermined as her initial flaunting of her imperial possessions is repudiated in her final embrace of *nada*. Referring to postcolonial cultural studies, Slemon highlights the notions of “double visión” or “metaphysical clash” that emerge in the space of incommensurability between inherited notions of imperial history, on the one hand and, on the other, the revisioning of history which takes place when the voices or visions – “the counterculture of the imagination” as Dash puts it (65) - come into dialectical play with the inherited, dominant modes of discourse (1995: 414). Del Paso’s Carlota embodies in her own imaginative transmutation from white, regal European to dark-skinned indigene, this concept of “counterculture” as she abandons any notions of sovereignty and racial purity that were prominent in her earlier monologues ⁹ to embrace, ultimately, a committed, albeit imaginative, form of acculturation.

The mind of the mad Carlota is an insult to traditional male history founded – as White remarks - upon the disciplining of the imagination (1987: 66). Carlota is a “leaking vessel” whose physical incontinence is complemented by what a psychiatrist might regard as a diseased and intemperate imagination. Her carnivalesque mind often turns to low bodily functions such as masturbation (18) and excretion (334) ¹⁰ while the grotesque decline of her aging body is linked to her madness, offering a powerful portrait not only of human abjection but also of human endurance.

Carlota’s discourse, though originating in confinement and isolation, consistently maintains its note of “fiesta delirante”. Her language is imbued with desire and creativity, blatantly transgressing the norms of the ‘real’ world outside her castle. In some respects she reinforces the fissures found in the general coherence of the even chapters whose varieties of loss and leakage, for example, serve as pale reflections of Carlota’s abjection. Maximilian awakes on one occasion to find himself salivating (715); following his abortive first embalming, his body has to be drained: “abajo del cuerpo se colocó una vasija para recoger allí los líquidos que escurrían del cuerpo” (805). However, the unseemly liquids emanating from Carlota’s body remain uncollected: “sentada toda la noche, con las piernas abiertas y el camisón arremangado, me masturbo hora tras hora sin parar, y la baba que me escurre de la boca se junta con la baba que me escurre de las piernas [...]” (82). The embalming liquids dripping from Maximilian’s body contrast with the promiscuous potency of Carlota’s emissions, which speak of her female desire unchecked by extreme old age. Juárez faces death alone but his experience is dwarfed by Carlota’s sixty years of solitary confinement. Glimpses of madness are offered in the even chapters: the rambling discourse of the Mexican soldier who produces copies of Captain Anjou’s wooden hand to sell and who treats narration itself as a prized commodity (296-7); the ravings of Maximilian’s executioner whose guilt feelings plunge him into the other side of reason: “cuando nací no nací” (788) and make him crave the imaginative resources that Carlota

abundantly enjoys: “inventaría yo todo eso [Maximilian’s death and its aftermath], si tuviera bastante imaginación, si me atreviera. Lo inventaría para volverlo mentira [...]” (794). But while other characters merely stand at the threshold, Carlota enters boldly into the realms of madness, finding refuge in her “castillo de palabras” (162). She draws out of opposition terms that are normally seen as incompatible: thus she swallows the bullet that killed Maximilian “para hacerme vivir loca y lúcida, dormida y despierta, viva y muerta, sesenta años más” (333). She can re-construct reality by recourse to words (567) and can restore Maximilian to life by the sheer force of her imagination: “Te vuelves a vivir cada vez que te nombro” (423). Her feelings are conveyed by a searing bodily language: on hearing of Maximilian’s death, she does not resort to clichéd expressions of grief but to surreal images: “me salían las chinches de la boca y se paseaban por mis mejillas y por el cuello” (663). The fleas are a metonymic reference to Maximilian whose blood they drank. They also suggest a surge in Carlota’s libido at the moment of her awareness of loss on receipt of the fateful telegram - indicated too by the reference to worms and flies that cover her body (572). Torok notes that ‘hallucinatory fulfilment exults in orgasm’ (117). Like the flies, she had wanted to devour his body (332); but she wanted to go further, to absorb him so that their beings might merge: “emborracharme de ti, beberte hasta que tu amor y mi amor sean un solo amor, y yo sea tú” (909). Here she grasps for the literal, repudiating the discourse of tropes upon which the symbolic order is founded (Bronfen, 1992: 249).¹¹ Her intensity of feeling does not preclude carnivalesque deflation of imperial grandeur: she visualizes Maximilian crowned with his own intestines (328) and imagines dragging him around the street like the “buey gordo del carnaval” (477). She refers to Charles V of France seated on a “trono forrado de excremento” (559). She is, then, the pivotal figure in Del Paso’s depiction of the “fiesta delirante de la historia” (151). Her world of words will enable her to take Maximilian to the statue of liberty and to give birth (162). Carlota calls into question fixed identities and categories as she explores the poetic

potential of words and letters, ignoring their functional value: “hecha de palabras, mi alma se desgarrar su vestido de agua y vuelta tiras de serpentina de agua se enreda en tus dedos y en el cuello de las garzas y con sus látigos de agua azota tus párpados y azota el regazo de las montañas” (665). This poeticism is triggered, of course, by emotional violence and trauma; it offers one of the most spectacular literary vindications of Belsey’s description of desire as “a kind of madness, an enchantment, exaltation, anguish” (3). The lover’s discourse is typically constrained by cliché – “Lovers speak and yet in doing so they are spoken by a language that precedes them” (84) – but Carlota’s bodily language, energized by the liberating undercurrents of trauma and madness, speaks with a searing force and originality wholly free of formulaic expression.

Carlota’s inventive power is brought to bear on history: “[...] yo invento cada día la historia” (904); she also invents Mexico (908) whose skies, orchids and colours had driven her mad (90). Carlota’s bond with Mexico is cemented by her ability to view life and death as one, removed from their traditional opposition. She visualizes her own funeral, reviewing the mourners and, more particularly, those who did not attend, including her putative son, General Weygand (406-07). In her peculiar historical world, the dead play active roles and her seemingly irrational excesses – “aunque sé que estás muerto le pido a Juárez que no te mate” (841) – find resonance in a country such as Mexico where there is no clear divide between life and death: “México y yo somos la misma cosa” (903).¹² Here we detect a further dimension of Carlota’s acculturation: in her repudiation of western rationality, she embraces that extension of the categories of the real associated with magical realism and thereby distances herself further from the basic principles of the dominant culture. In typical magical realist style, she breaks out of the fetters of common sense to typify that “desrealización” (Chanady 27) that undermines both conventional views of reality and that “realidad mezquina” that drives her mad (493). Here the magical realist overlaps with the neo-baroque whose rhetorical madness

“works toward a veritable ontological recasting of the sensible as an operation of thinking” (Bucci-Glucksmann 66). The logically impossible takes its place within an expanded concept of reality: Carlota uses an invisible telephone to talk not just to the living but also to the dead (840). For Carlota, as already noted, Maximilian is not dead as she never tires of affirming - and all the more assertively in her role of intruder in the new age of modernity that has no memory of her husband: “Maximiliano no está muerto, les dije, y me abrí paso entre la multitud que visitaba ese día la Exposición Internacional de París [...]” (662). She contaminates the Exhibition, that high sanctum of cutting-edge modernity, by introducing into its post-sacred world the spirit of an ancestral magical realist perspective. Carlota can be seen as a recent reincarnation of the pre-Hispanic myth of *La Llorona* (“Lloraría sí, por todas tus vísceras”, 83). Iglar points out that *La Llorona* is mentioned in Fray Bernardino de Sahagún’s *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* (1566) as the incarnation of the goddess, Cihuacóatl: “la arquetípica madre vestida de blanco que llora por sus hijos resulta en el caso de la emperatriz una alusión irónica a la ‘Mamá Carlota’ de la burla popular” (404). Hers is a ghostly existence that survives out of its time and place. Her discourse falls within the “funereal baroque [...] an accumulation of traces and marks, dramatized in a convulsive death” (Buci-Glucksmann 98).

Maximilian is stabilized in death, frozen in his youthful splendour. In his case, the disruptive potential of the corpse is neutralized through aesthetic intervention: it is turned into a kind of art object. Carlota, by contrast, remains dangerously unstable, defying any attempt to categorize her. She is aware of her multiple identities, referring to “todas las Carlotas que he sido en mi vida” (317) and hovers between life and death, an anachronism in an age which has superseded her own. She becomes a solitary though potent beacon against that “realidad mezquina” that she resents so much. Though buried in the past she is alive in the present; though burdened by old age, she experiences the desire of youth; though born a woman she

acts as a man (391), inverting normal gender roles. She overcomes conventionally compartmentalized perceptions of life and death by resuscitating Maximilian through her creative madness.

She wanders across centuries, across epistemes and across gender divisions: as Jardine puts it: “that which disturbs the Subject, Dialectic and Truth is feminine in its essence”.¹³ After all, Carlota embodies “la locura de la historia” that has replaced the idealistic notion of “la Historia universal” (873). Scientists may invent the washing machine, traffic lights, tanks, and machine guns but she reinvents the whole world (98).

Carlota lives in the present but is clearly obsessed with the past, displaying in this respect one of the salient features of hysteria. Freud remarked that the hysteric “cannot get free of the past, and for its sake neglects what is real and immediate” (160). “Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences” remarks Breuer (Breuer and Freud 7); Carlota’s focus is consistently upon Maximilian and their short-lived empire: when she does acknowledge the present, she superimposes the past upon it, as we have seen. Hysteria is, of course, associated with women and is usually triggered by trauma, an experience of psychic or physical shock, in Carlota’s case, primarily by the execution of her husband Maximilian for which she herself felt partly responsible.

Hysteria has also been associated with unsatisfied sexual desire, being about “surrogate sexual gratification” (Porter 264). Carlota was obsessed with giving birth – she thought she was carrying the child of Colonel Van der Smissen (12) and dreamt of multiple pregnancies: “a mí todos me embarazaron [...]” (902). Carlota manifests further hysterical symptoms in her ambivalent attitude towards Maximilian which alternates between opposing intensities of feeling: love and affection on the one hand, bitterness and resentment on the other: “yo soy todas las voces [...] la voz del rencor y de la ternura” (153). She shows too a desire for fusion

with Maximilian, an impulse to relinquish self-identity, to “emborracharme de ti, beberte hasta que tu amor y mi amor sean un solo amor, y yo sea tú” (909). Elsewhere, the desire for fusion gives way to her cannibalistic urge to consume or devour, whether it be the body of Maximiliano or the shard of the smashed mirror which once captured his image – “y quise devorarlo para llenarme con tu recuerdo” (562). These cannibalistic traits cannot but evoke indigenous ritual practices;¹⁴ they give some credence to Carlota’s claim that “México y yo somos la misma cosa” (903). Here, as we have already noted, the dismantling of the sovereignty of the self is all the more striking for being enacted through one of the supreme representatives of sovereignty.

In Carlota, the irrational coexists with the rational both complementing it and colliding with it. As Young states: “madness is inside, always already a part of reason, but it is the element that reason is unable to comprehend, and will therefore work disruptively” (108). This balance often appears to be inverted in Carlota whose lucidity disrupts her madness: she is lucid about her madness, referring frequently to others’ perceptions of her – “O cuando les digo que voy a escribir al Museo de Madame Tussaud para que me manden la cabeza de mi bisabuela María Antonieta y la cabeza de Robespierre y la del Cura Hidalgo [...] entonces sí que ellos pueden pensar y decir que estoy loca” (316-7). Indeed, she makes a conscious decision in favour of madness, choosing to remain in her dream (“elegí soñar y quedarme en el sueño”, 664), albeit at the cost of inhabiting a kind of no man’s land where she is “siempre viva y muerta al mismo tiempo” (664), echoing here her earlier resolve to “vivir loca y lúcida, dormida y despierta, viva y muerta, sesenta años más” (333). It is the vitality and force of her madness, initially induced by emotional trauma, that overshadow her lucidity: here too she conforms to the typical profile of the hysteric who is “excessively imaginative” (Beizer 19)¹⁵ using her imaginative power to counteract her failing memory. Carlota’s dynamic cycles of creation and annihilation,¹⁶ her metaphorical pregnancies on the one hand and her obsession with *nada* on

the other suggest a Nietzschean will to power: “it is *not* the satisfaction of the will that causes pleasure [...] but rather the will’s forward thrust and again and again becoming master over that which stands in its way [...] the will is never satisfied unless it has opponents and resistance” (Nietzsche 370). The resistance or hindrance in Carlota’s case is provided by her intermittent lucidity, the fleeting intrusion of a mean reality; her pleasure and power derive from her imagination, madness, hysteria that repeatedly overcome resistance while never completely eliminating it.

Like an artist, she considers what language she might use and what verbal time should frame her narrative (22-4). She seeks to revive Maximilian by the sheer force of her imaginative drive: “Ándale, Maximiliano, levántate que vamos a inventar de nuevo nuestra vida” (97). She subsequently envisages time itself going into reverse mode and Maximilian returning to life (249). Her *raison d’être* is her imagination: “yo no soy nada si no invento mis recuerdos” (899). Her inventions, which assume a markedly carnivalesque character, are shaped by her “inmenso castillo de palabras” (154). These words do not, however, take on the inert character of stone nor does her writing evoke death and stasis as in the even chapters; rather, they display the flowing qualities long associated with feminist discourse, as noted earlier.¹⁷ Thus she envisages her soul washing Maximilian’s soul with words (665-8); her writing forms a river “que ondulaba en las emes, giraba sobre sí mismo en las oes, zigzagueaba en las zetas” (667). She derides the bureaucratic writings generated by the Empire (including those relating to Maximilian’s trial and sentence) which, she claims, are sufficiently voluminous to “alfombrar el camino de Viena a Querétaro [...]” (833). Hyperbole, as Small points out in discussing George Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), retrieves on the woman’s tongue, “the traces of its Latin link with dementia, becoming the natural figure for a grief suicidal in its extremity” (76).

The past is kept alive, then, not by anodyne reminiscence but by the hysterical force of Carlota's madness: "Para Carlota, Maximiliano estaba vivo mientras estaba loca" (819). Her madness sustains Carlota's refusal to accept Maximilian's death: for her, the normal work of mourning has been interrupted. Abraham and Torok have suggested the crypt as a figure for the process that suspends mourning. Here the circumstances of Maximilian's death are significant: its abruptness and violence were compounded by the desecration of his corpse, his hair being removed and his heart cut up (814). The embalming process was ineffective, failing to arrest decomposition (805). In addition, news of his execution was conveyed to Carlota belatedly – in January 1868, almost six months after the event - and the usual period of mourning did not take place: "se prohibió que los empleados de Miramar se pusieron de luto [...] se editaron unos cuantos ejemplares del célebre catálogo de la nobleza europea, de los cuales se suprimió la referencia a la muerte de Maximiliano en Querétaro" (814-15). Even Maximilian's mother did not mourn properly: "ella no volvió a llorar, nadie lloró [...]" (151).

Such circumstances are eminently conducive to Abraham and Torok's psychological concept of "incorporation" which often results when the process of mourning is interrupted or refused. Carlota was already showing signs of madness when she eventually received the news of Maximilian's execution. While "introjection", according to Abraham and Torok, is the process of transcending trauma, adjusting to internal or external upheaval and change, "creating forms of coherence in the face of emotional panic and chaos [...]" (Rand 14), "incorporation" implies "taking possession of the object [...] by putting it into the body or the psyche" (113), thereby prolonging the trauma rather than assimilating it. Here, the traumatic object remains lodged within the ego as a foreign body: "expressing a refusal to reclaim as our own the part of ourselves that we placed in what we lost, incorporation erects an intrapsychic tomb where the loss is denied and the lost object is buried alive" (Avelar 8). Carlota demonstrates several instances of such reaction: "devoré tu corazón y tu sangre [...]" (15); she refers to eating his

viscera: “me las comería a besos” (83); “con tu lengua y con tus ojos, tú y yo juntos vamos a inventar de nuevo la historia” (97); “quiero comerme tus huesos, tu hígado, y tus intestinos [...] quiero devorar tu lengua y tus testículos, quiero llenarme la boca con tus venas” (332). She will miniaturize him, “para hacerte un niño de pecho y enterrarte en una caja de zapatos [...] Para hacer que no hayas nacido y un día de estos enterrarte vivo, en mi vientre. Con esto, lo que quiero decirte es que te voy a dar a luz en cualquier momento, para que todos sepan que es mentira que estás muerto” (155). She repeatedly addresses Maximilian as though he were alive, as here, and denies that his death ever happened: “tu muerte fue una mentira” (556); “Maximiliano no está muerto, les dije [...]” (662). Maximilian survives in Carlota’s psychic crypt which resonates throughout the text through its literal analogues, principally, the Castle of Bouchot in which Carlota is confined. Throughout her long life Carlota has had intimate connections with crypts: “conozco cada rincón de Bouchout. Conocí cada rincón de Miramar y de Terveuren, de Laeken. Y a veces pienso que mi vida no ha sido sino un largo peregrinar por casas y castillos, por cuartos y corredores [...]” (240). Her paperweights contain miniature castles (560). In some respects, Carlota can be seen not only as a living archive but as a living crypt: “Soy niña y lo seré siempre [...]: mi pureza y mi inocencia tienen la altura de una catedral gótica” (673). Abraham and Torok claim that the crypt is “comparable to the formation of a cocoon around the chrysalis” (141). Here, too, Carlota’s self-description suggests a crypt-like existence: “las arañas viudas que me trajo el mensajero bajaron de mi peluca para hacer su nido en mi pubis y tejieron sobre mi sexo una teleraña tornasolada de hilos de acero” (673). But a series of metaphorical crypts are also associated with Carlota. She herself is a kind of living crypt or archive, a survivor surrounded by death – “sólo yo estoy viva” (483) – living outside her own time, an anachronism who belongs to a past age. She neither acts her age nor is she as pure and innocent as she claims: she gives forceful and uninhibited expression to her female desire, for example, as she recalls intimate details of Maximilian’s physical attributes: “Soñé

el otro día que estabas tendido en un lecho de césped azul y que tu miembro era un taco de billar largo y barnizado [...]” (148). She may be confined within a castle and her body enclosed by a steel web but her sexual urges lose nothing of their youthful potency and her imagination remains free to create artistically in the manner of Heine and Rilke (673). But if she is obsessed with sexuality and with creation, she is equally obsessed with death: she anticipates her own death and funeral. (406-7). She makes constant reference to literal burials, for example, those of Maximilian’s ancestors in Austria (247) and she wants to dig Maximilian’s grave, “con mis propias manos y mis propios dientes” (842); to imaginative burials, such as that of the living Maximilian in her belly (155); and to metaphorical burials: she wants to bury the horrific reality of Maximilian’s final demise (163-4). Here Carlota inverts the standard Greek gendering of death rituals whereby mourning is feminine, burial is masculine (Bronfen 1992: 197). While Carlota refuses mourning, she is unsurpassed in her experience of burial: “yo enterré a todo el mundo [...]. Yo enterré a mi hermano Leopoldo también y también a Margarita Juárez, también a sus hijos, yo enterré al siglo, Maximiliano [...]” (94).

Closely associated with burial is the messenger who appears regularly to Carlota and is mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the text. A messenger is a communicator of news: his words convey information which is new, up to the minute, clear and significant. But Carlota’s messenger is different: the news he brings can only relate to an increasingly distant imperial past and therefore lacks currency. Rather than bearing factual news, he is “cargado de recuerdos y de sueños” (10). In some ways he is a mirror image of Carlota, an anachronism belonging to a previous age. Like Carlota, he assumes multiple identities and takes on different guises, appearing for example as both the Archangel Gabriel (92) and Benito Juárez (830). Carlota considers asking him to come disguised as a grave digger equipped with Mexican soil so that she can bury Maximilian and see if he can finally learn to “estar muerto bajo esas tierras donde nunca te quisieron” (94). The messenger is associated with Carlota’s cryptic

unconscious: his presents include a “relicario con algunas hebras de la barba rubia que llovía sobre tu pecho [...]” (11) and, significantly, another kind of box with others contained within, suggesting the multiple layers within the psychological crypt: “un estuche de cedro donde había una caja de zinc, donde había una caja de palo de rosa, donde había, Maximiliano, un pedazo de tu corazón y la bala que acabó con tu vida’ [...]” (11). As Archangel Gabriel, the messenger announces that she is to have a child: although Carlota may be incapable of that, she is certainly pregnant with words – as Corral Peña notes, “el embarazo del personaje de *Noticias del Imperio* es ante todo un embarazo de palabras [...]” (208) – and it could be added that the messenger, a purveyor of words, is her metaphorical impregnator. But sexuality is again linked with death since, in his incarnation as Juárez, the messenger holds a skull oozing blood, representing the Mexicans who died during the Empire (830).

Blau notes that, for Benjamin, “it is in the imminence of death that the unforgettable emerges” (31). In the case of Carlota, her anachronistic existence, which enables her to see history from within, together with the imaginative force deriving from her hysteria and madness, combine to offer a memorable protagonist who interrogates the traditional limits of the historical by subsuming it within the hysterical. She represents a locus of instability which exposes sexual difference and “reality” as themselves the products of representation. Del Paso, like García Márquez in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, has acknowledged the potent otherness of old age, traditionally relegated to the domain of cultural waste: as Fiddian remarks, “the narrative of *Noticias* responds to an aesthetic impulse that emphasizes the ‘grandeur’ and ‘magnificence’ of Carlota’s extraordinary life, evoking a range and intensity of experience that flatly contradicts the empress’s disavowal of ‘the trivial story of my madness and loneliness’” (129). Felman notes that madness is informed by a kind of rhythm: it is the story of “the slippage of a reading *between* excessive fullness and the excessive emptiness of meaning” (254). Ironically, Carlota’s madness stems in large part from the death of Maximilian: she

reacts to the meaninglessness of that event by jettisoning such fixed values as meaning, truth and acceptance of the basic dictates of the “real” world as her story assumes distinctly magical realist characteristics, as we have seen. In some respects she merely exaggerates the New Historical trends discernible in the even chapters but rather than restricting her historical imagination to the filling in of gaps left in the historical record, she indulges in wholesale reconstruction which defies the finality of any limit, including that of death.

From a more specifically political perspective Carlota - once at the centre of imperial power - may be seen as reinventing herself as a kind of postcolonial heroine. It is true that as the self-proclaimed mother of the Mexican people (“yo soy la madre de todos ellos [...]” 910), she exercises authority over her “infant” people, the colonized under her control. But she disrupts “natural” norms and hierarchies, transgressing, for example, racial boundaries. Her status as postcolonial heroine is linked to her gender: Gilman notes that when Freud discussed the ignorance of contemporary psychology concerning adult female sexuality “he referred to this lack of knowledge as the ‘dark continent’ of psychology, an English term with which he tied female sexuality to the image of contemporary colonialism and thus to the exoticism and pathology of the other.” (107). In her madness, Carlota can be seen as an exemplar of Freud’s “dark continent”. Bhabha points out that the black child “turns away from himself, his race, in his total identification with the positivity of whiteness” (76). While the black child yearns for whiteness, Carlota craves the reverse, as we have seen.

Carlota’s physical decline, her incontinence, her cannibalistic fantasies, her manic imagination all suggest the stereotype of the colonial other as degenerate, savage and diseased, beyond the pale of civilization. Locked up at Bouchout she evokes – startlingly in view of her regal background – a kind of female Caliban figure who has learned to curse (Greenblatt 1990). Her irrationality suggests too the “opacity” (Britton 19) of the colonized as conscious defence against the colonizer’s will to understand and master that can often assume an aggressive

aspect, constructing the other as an object of knowledge. Carlota's "madness" evokes the cultural resistance of the native and the psychological abyss between cultures, her carnivalesque deflation of imperial authority suggesting an anti-colonial rhetoric: she wonders why Maximilian did not decorate himself with the great chain of the "Orden Suprema del Gran Pendejo" (838); and she rejects the wealth of Europe: "Y a mi prima Victoria La Reina de Inglaterra y Emperatriz de la India, dile, Maximiliano, que el brillante Koh-y-Noor de la Corona Inglesa, dile que se lo meta por el culo [...]" (908).

Her final self-portrait offers a striking counterpoint to her grandiose opening statement: "Yo soy María Carlota Amelia Victoria Clementina Leopoldina, Princesa de la Nada y del Vacío, Soberana de la Espuma y de los Sueños, Reina de la Quimera y del Olvido, Emperatriz de la Mentira [...]" (915). Here the Nietzschean undercurrents are clear: although Carlota does not forget, she does have the capacity to deny. Her refusal of a single, all-encompassing truth may be seen as the most profound manifestation of Carlota as anti-colonial icon. Her deviation from the proper paths of conventional reason and logic can also be seen as facilitating the creative work of her imagination that provides some redemption from the sense of sterility and nothingness to which she was consigned by her emotional trauma.

Lloyd Hughes Davies

Swansea University

¹ Mata's title, *Un océano de narraciones* recalls Vargas Llosa's reference to "la oceánica acumulación" found in Lezama Lima's *Paradiso* (Vargas Llosa 174). Lezama Lima's thematic range and neo-baroque style suggest comparisons with Del Paso.

² Igler points out that, predictably, Maximilian has received more attention than Carlota in the cultural-literary arena: apart from Igler's own brief essay of 1997, "hasta la actualidad no se ha hecho un estudio centrado exclusivamente en este personaje femenino" (22).

³ Corral Peña refers to her "carnavalesque alternation between her personal grandeur and her sorry state" (210).

⁴ A fundamental neo-baroque concept that Carlota experiences in its literal intensity: her husband, her contemporaries, her youth, her beauty and her imperial grandeur, have disappeared; she must fill the void by recourse to her imaginative power.

⁵ Haslip makes a similar point (80).

⁶ “Phantom”, as used here, does not correspond to Abraham and Torok’s transgenerational sense, of course, although it is true that Maximilian’s untimely death prior to the advent of the spectacular technological advances to which Carlota refers (pp. 98, 162), suggests that he belongs to an age previous to Carlota’s.

⁷ A concept comparable to Lezama Lima’s “contraconquista” (2010, 34). Zamora notes that “under the sign of the Neobaroque, Latin American writers have engaged in the expressive forms of the historical Baroque to create a discourse of ‘counterconquest’ [...] that operates widely in Latin America” (2006: xvi).

⁸ Here again Carlota represents a neo-baroque trait: “the symbolics of fire found throughout baroque poetics that sees in the ‘miraculous bird of happy Arabie’ – the Phoenix – its figure, the point of illuminating connection among streams of light, ashes of love, and the burning moment of death: perpetual rebirth” (Buci-Glucksmann 119).

⁹ An important aspect of the emotional violence endured by Carlota results from Maximilian’s infidelity, as we have seen. She is particularly resentful of one of his lovers, Concepción Sedano, to whom she returns obsessively, and berates Maximilian for belittling himself: “¿Qué elixir, qué agua bebiste en los ojos de Concepción Sedano que te impidió ver que ella era también una india ajena a tu raza?” (248).

¹⁰ Here she evokes the Argentine poet, Perlongher’s concept of the *neobarroso*, that combines *barroco* and *barro* (the mud of the River Plate) and connotes the low, the base and the vulgarly sexual (Bollig 167).

¹¹ Carlota also manifests her inclination towards the literal when she focuses on the meaning of the phrase used by her Spanish teacher rather than on its value as linguistic performance (126).

¹² Discussing the significance of *Todos Santos* (Day of the Dead), Cursio-Nagy states that “death is not the end but rather a new beginning that is still linked to life and to this world” (162). This view is represented in modern Mexican literature, notably in the work of the novelist and short story writer, Juan Rulfo (1917-1986).

¹³ Carlota’s neo-baroque credentials emerge here too: Moraña notes that the baroque ethos destabilizes the “solidity of ‘strong epistemologies’ working from the residual and ruinous – from vestige, from *difference*, from loss and grief [...] in a disjunctive and disruptive direction with respect to the principles and legacies of modernity” (269). Kaup points out that Foucault theorized the baroque as “epistemic rupture” (40).

¹⁴ Cannibalism associated with human sacrifice was widely practised by the Aztecs, for example (Smith 218-19).

¹⁵ Elizabeth Bronfen notes that by the mid-18th century, hysteria had emerged as a ‘disorder of the imagination’ (see Bronfen 1998: 149).

¹⁶ Carlota’s cycles can be seen as reminiscent of Aztec mythology marked by multiple creations and destructions (Smith 253).

¹⁷ The leading theorist in this respect is Hélène Cixous who claims that the rhythms and articulations of the mother’s body, which continue to influence the adult self, provide a link to the pre-symbolic union between self and m/other, and so affects the subject’s relationship to language, the other, himself and the world. See Cixous and Clément 1986: 88-100.

Works Cited

Abraham, Nicholas, and Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.

Abraham, Nicholas and Maria Torok. “‘The Lost Object – Me’: Notes on Endocryptic Identification”. Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994. 139-56.

Avelar, Idelber. *The Untimely Present: Postdictatorial Latin American Fiction*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1999.

Beardsell, Peter. *A Theatre for Cannibals: Rodolfo Usigli and the Mexican Stage*. Rutherford [N.J.]: London: Fairleigh Dickinson UP; Associated UP, 1992.

Belsey, Catherine. *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

-
- Blau, Herbert, "The Makeup of Memory in the Winter of Our Discontent." *Memory and Desire: Aging – Literature – Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Kathleen Woodward and Murray M. Schwartz. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.
- Bollig, Ben. *Néstor Perlonger: the Poetic Search for an Argentine Marginal Voice*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2008.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*. Trans. Elizabeth Guild. Oxford: Polity, 1991.
- Breuer, Joseph and Sigmund Freud, *Studies in Hysteria*. London: Hogarth and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1956.
- Britton, Celia M., *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance*. Charlottesville and London: UP of Virginia, 1999.
- Bronfen, Elizabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992.
- Bronfen, Elizabeth. *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and its Discontents*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998.
- Buci-Glucksmann, C., & Baker, D. *The Madness of Vision: On Baroque Aesthetics*. Trans. Dorothy Z. Baker. Series in Continental Thought 44. Ohio UP, 2013.
- Chanady, Amaryll Beatrice. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomies*. New York: Garland, 1985.
- Cixous Hélène, and Clément, Catherine. *The Newly Born Woman*. Trans. Betsy Wing. London and Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986.
- Corral Peña, Elizabeth. *'Noticias del Imperio' y los nuevos caminos de la novela histórica*. Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1997.
- Corti, Egon Caesar Count. *Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico*. Trans. Catherine Alison Phillips. Achon Books, 1968.
- Curcio-Nagy, Linda A. "Faith and Morals in Colonial Mexico". *Oxford History of Mexico*. Ed. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley. Oxford UP, 2000. 151-82.
- Dash, J. Michael. "Marvellous Realism – the Way Out of Negritude". *Caribbean Studies* 13.4. 1973. 57-70.
- Derrida, J. *Cinders* Trans. Ned Lukacher. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1991.
- Erickson, John D. "Magical Realism and Nomadic Writing in the Maghreb". *A Companion to Magical Realism*. Ed. Stephen M. Hart and Wen-Chin Ouyang. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005. 247-55.
- Farris, Wendy B. "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction". *Magical Realism. Theory, History, Community*. Ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1995. 163-90.
- Felman, Shoshana. *Writing and Madness (Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis)*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1985.

-
- Fiddian, Robin. *The Novels of Fernando del Paso*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2000.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Hysterical Fantasies and Their Relation to Bisexuality'. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 9. London: Hogarth, 1959.
- Fuentes, Carlos. "La novela como tragedia: William Faulkner". *Casa con dos puertas*. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1970. 52-78.
- Garfield, Evelyn Picon. *Women's Voices from Latin America: Interviews with Six Contemporary Authors*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1985.
- Gilman, Sander L., *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1985.
- González Echevarría, Robert. *Myth and archive a theory of Latin American narrative*. (Cambridge studies in Latin American and Iberian literature; 3). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Haslip, Joan. *Imperial Adventurer: Emperor Maximilian of Mexico*. London: Cardinal. 1974.
- Igler, Susanne. *De la intrusa infame a la Loca del Castillo: Carlota de México en la literatura de su "patria" adoptiva*. Frankfurt: Lang, 2007.
- Jardine, Alice A., *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Kaup, Monica. *Neobarroque in the Americas: Alternative Modernities in Literature, Visual Art and Film*. Charlottesville: U. of Virginia P., 2012.
- Kohut, Karl. "Fernando del Paso: Realismo loco o lo real maravilloso europeo. Algunas observaciones a propósito de *Noticias del Imperio*". *Literatura mexicana de hoy. Del 68 al ocaso de la revolución*. Ed. Karl Kohut. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1995. 223-29.
- Lezama Lima, José. "La curiosidad barroca". *La expresión americana*. La Habana: Letras Cubanas, 2010. 33-56.
- Mata, Óscar. *Un océano de narraciones: Fernando del Paso*. Puebla: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, 1991.
- Moraña, Mabel. "Baroque/Neobaroque/Ultrabaroque: Disruptive Readings of Modernity". *Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context*. Ed. Nicholas Spadaccini and Luis Martín-Estudillo, (Hispanic issues; 31). Nashville: Vanderbilt U Press, 2005. 241-81.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Random House. 1967.
- Paz, Octavio. "Los hijos de la Malinche". *El laberinto de la soledad*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959. 59-80.
- Porter, Roy. "The Body and the Mind, the Doctor and the Patient: Negotiating Hysteria". Sander L. Gilman et al., *Hysteria beyond Freud*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993. 225-85.

Rand, Nicholas T. "Introduction: Renewals of Psychoanalysis". Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994. 1-22.

Sáenz, Inés. *Hacia la novela total: Fernando del Paso*. Madrid: Pliegos, 1994.

Salinas, David. "Realidad y ficción en el diálogo interno de Carlota: Una aproximación comparativa entre *Noticias del Imperio* (1987) de Fernando del Paso y *Una emperatriz en la noche* (2010) de Laurence van Ypersele". Diss. Arizona State U, 2015.

Slemen, Stephen. "Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse". *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1995. 407-26.

Small, Helen. *Love's Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity 1800-1865*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.

Smith, Michael E. *The Aztecs*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

Spadaccini, Nicholas and Luis Martín-Estudillo, eds. *Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context..* (Hispanic issues; 31). Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2005.

Torok, Maria. "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse". Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994. 107-24.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. "Paradiso: una summa poética, una tentativa imposible". *Recopilación de textos sobre José Lezama Lima*. Ed. Pedro Simón. Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1970. 169-74.

Villapando César, José Manuel. "El dinero de Carlota". *Más nuevas del Imperio. Estudios interdisciplinarios acerca de Carlota de México*. Ed. Susanne Iglér y Roland Spiller. Madrid: Iberamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2001. 71-84.

White, Hayden, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.

---, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987.

Young, Robert J. C. *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson. *The Usable Past: the Imagination of History in Recent Fiction of the Americas*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Zamora, L. *The Inordinate Eye: New World Baroque and Latin American Fiction*. Chicago: T U of Chicago P, 2006.