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EDITOR

Surendra Singh Negi

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Surendra Singh Negi

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Contrary to Adorno's well-known warning that it would be an act of barbarism to write poetry after Auschwitz, the task of representing, remembering and interpreting the extreme events that occurred in the Southern Cone dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s has only become more complex and widespread in the 21st century. Indeed, in recent decades, representations of what 'should not have happened' –as Hannah Arendt said about the extermination and what we think about state terrorism– have proliferated in literature, journalism, cinema and theatre, documentaries, performances and also in critical and theoretical studies on history, trauma, and memory which reflect on their writing in the body and in the symbolic. Within this proliferation, the intense work of the second generation of victims and survivors stands out, that is, the 'generation of children and grandchildren' born during or after the dictatorships, who elaborate and rework personal and social traumatic experiences, problematising recent history, trauma and postmemory from an interdisciplinary perspective that crosses arts and literature, literary and cultural criticism. It is within this framework that the current issue of *The EFL Journal* is dedicated to Latin American Studies with a special focus on History, Trauma and Postmemory in Latin America (2000 – 2020). The main purpose of this issue is to bring together researchers, professors and specialists from different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to reflect on the traumatic postmemory of recent Latin American history from various thematic perspectives and from a broad spectrum of arts and disciplines such as anthropology, art, cinema, historiography, literature, museology, music, photography, sociology, and theatre, among others. We are interested in expanding the boundaries of these studies and, to this end, the articles in the current issue of *The EFL Journal* incorporate social and political manifestations that have emerged in recent decades into the discussion.

In "Transmemories: The Intimate Archive as a Refuge of Identity and Joy in Times of Oppression in Latin America", Ariel Florencia Richards discusses the possibilities photography can open up, as a medium that fixes an instant, to explore gender, and further argues that, if gender is

assumed performatively and constantly, photography can capture them, especially in historical contexts in which free expression of gender gets systematically restricted through violence. In her article, Richards studies dictatorships in the Southern Cone seen not through official, public, or exemplary photographs, but rather homemade images which were shot, spontaneously, behind closed doors that transgender people took of themselves during those years that not only show their lives and the spaces they used to live in but also important tactics of subversion to the binary imposition of gender.

In “Skyvans: Argentina’s Death Flights’ Memories in Narrative Journalism and Photography”, Edoardo Balletta asserts that photography is unquestionably an expressive medium with a vital relationship to the struggle for human rights and memory, especially in the case of Argentina, where its significance manifests in both the private and family space as well as the public and political realm. Balletta argues that what happens in Argentina from the mid-1990s onwards –and with crucial importance in the new millennium– is the production of new images that, although often containing or referring to an archive, are produced *ex-post*. He tries to examine how the same story of the death flights in Argentina during the dictatorship can be represented from two different expressive means, and what intermediate connections are created between one expressive code and the other (word/image and vice versa). Secondly, he attempts to compare the two texts (the journalistic investigation and the photographic representation) by also considering the different places of enunciation from which these two productions take their cue.

In “Anti-visit: Performative Re-elaborations of the Second Generation on the narratives of ESMA”, Florencia Larralde Armas analyses the performance *Antivisita: Formas de entrar y salir de la ESMA*, written by Mariana Eva Pérez, and directed by Laura Kalauz, with the dramaturgical collaboration of Miguel Algranti. Pérez belongs to the “second generation”, as she is a daughter of disappeared parents, and her mother was pregnant at the time of her abduction. Armas’ article is based on the analysis of observational records of the *mise en scène* of the performance during one of its performances (July 2, 2022), audio-visual records, and secondary sources. Her study of this performance

makes us wonder about the expansion of meanings, voices, experiences, and temporalities that are introduced in the account about ESMA as a clandestine detention centre, as well as about the new questions with which this generation interrogates the past; the caution, openness, and criticism in doing so; the coordinates, support points, and doubts that arise in the narrative; and the forms of appropriation of an alien past, of which one has not been a part, and which, in turn, is necessary to understand one's own identity as the daughter of disappeared parents.

In "From Cultural Stagnation to Renewed Hope: Exploring Pop-Rock Band *La Ley*'s Depiction of Postdictatorship Chile", Mara Favoretto discusses how historical memory builds a series of cause-and-effect explanations that weave a narrative of the present in the making, wherein the present is a consequence of the past. Favoretto claims that in the case of Chilean youth, following the cultural stagnation produced by the military dictatorship of 1973 – 1989, the lyrics of pop-rock songs from the 1990s are characterised by a general state of apathy, confusion, and residual negativity, which are often seen in parallel with love and heartbreak stories enacted by mere spectators of a paralysed world. In her research she claims that some of the pop-rock bands' song lyrics, rather than lingering on memories of the past, seem to prefer to grasp their present and look towards a future through an analysis of two music videos by the pop-rock band *La Ley* (The Law), in which the remains of the past are seen to make way for a new present: a "Day Zero" or *Día cero* (La Ley 1995); a "Here and Now" or *Aquí* (La Ley 2000) where to start rebuilding, perhaps with optimism, with renewed energy, with a clear individual intention of "blowing the ashes of yesterday."

In "Mayan *Testimonios* and the Armed Conflict in Guatemala" Morna Macleod, examines five testimonial works on or by Mayan women and men written during or after the armed conflict in Guatemala (1960–1996) wherein she discusses the complex issue of authorship, the presence—or not—of intermediaries in the crafting of the *testimonios*, looks into the renouncing of traditional gender roles, and reflects on Mayan culture and cosmivision, and the *long durée* sense of time in the *testimonios*, in particular about suffering, poverty, and racism. Macleod situates these *testimonios* in terms of (self)representation, and the attempts to visibilise the struggles and collective memory of the Mayan peoples of Guatemala.

In “Memorialisation and Contested Memories in Post-dictatorship Chile: A Case Study of Villa Grimaldi Peace Park”, Surendra Singh Negi problematises the long and intense wave of memorialisation as, after a long process of memory struggles, the post-dictatorship Chilean society witnessed severe disputes between different socio-political actors and their perspectives on what memories constituted. Negi argues that, in such a scenario, there have been multiple attempts to construct a hegemonic collective memory in the country, yet memory actors from different ideological and political camps often fail to recognise that these efforts stem from differing perspectives, making it nearly impossible to establish a nationally accepted collective memory. He further claims that the state-sponsored initiatives of building museums, memorials, and monuments to reinforce this hegemonic collective memory are not always successful in a sociocultural and political sense, as they are contested by other memory actors who do not agree with the official or the state’s version regarding the recent traumatic past.

Teresa Basile bases her article “Children in Argentine Exile during the Dictatorship (1976 – 1983): Inherited Exile” on the premise that the “exiled children” experienced first-hand exile since they left Argentina as children, leaving behind their classmates, school, neighbourhood, house, and friends. She further maintains that they also had to face a new country to rebuild their lives, and in the process, they (unconsciously) know about their country of origin and keep memories of their exile. For them, Basile further argues, exile work implied, in many cases, the trauma of leaving Argentina, the losses that come along with it, and the challenge of reintegrating into a new society, and in these scenarios, intergenerational transmission plays a fundamental role through the transfer carried out by exiled parents to their children, creating a phantasmagorical imaginary, especially about Argentina and the revolutionary struggle. She also believes that, due to the need to know the causes of the exile undertaken by the parents, the desire to understand their militancy as well as the context of persecution and annihilation they suffered, these “exiled children” take up a whole search task that becomes more urgent when the parents surround the past in silence.