

## **Errantes en diálogo: personajes extraterritoriales en la narrativa breve de Onetti y Faulkner**

***Wanderers in Dialog: Extraterritorial Characters in Onetti's and Faulkner's Short  
Narrative***

***Errante no diálogo: personagens extraterritoriais na curta narrativa de Onetti e  
Faulkner***

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### **Resumen**

La influencia de la literatura de William Faulkner en los escritores latinoamericanos se ha centrado en aspectos temáticos como el fracaso y la construcción de espacios míticos. Además, se observa que la mayoría de los estudios se abocan al género de la novela. El presente ensayo se propuso el análisis e interpretación de dos cuentos, “Jacob y el otro” de Juan Carlos Onetti y “La melena” de William Faulkner, a partir del concepto de extraterritorialidad de Georg Steiner, el cual, si bien describe la experiencia de ciertos escritores ante el desplazamiento de un espacio a otro y de una lengua a otra, puede adecuarse al proceso de marginalidad en los terrenos de la cultura. El análisis empleó la propuesta narratológica de Genette, específicamente en la perspectiva del narrador y la descripción reiterativa de los personajes en relación con la configuración del espacio, para así dar sentido a las semejanzas entre las diferentes formas de representación.

La interpretación de estos cuentos permitió señalar las similitudes entre las estrategias narrativas del escritor uruguayo y las del estadounidense, con un enfoque en la heterogeneidad de visiones sobre los personajes extranjeros, los cuales son ubicados como “extraños” y, por tanto, imposibles de definir desde una mirada unívoca. Esto se evidencia en los narradores que proyectan una descripción imprecisa de las cualidades físicas y morales de los personajes, presentadas indirectamente a través de modalidades discursivas como “dicen”, “él me contó”, etc. La relación observada entre la apropiación de los espacios y la configuración de los personajes logró el esclarecimiento de las estructuras sociales, las cuales, en ambos cuentos, no van dirigidas al dinamismo intrínseco en la idea de progreso, sino al señalamiento de la perpetuación de formas culturales tendientes al conservadurismo. Así también, al poner en diálogo a los personajes de Onetti y de Faulkner, se aclararon los vínculos entre el sur estadounidense —cerrado, arcaico— y ciertas regiones de América Latina, por lo cual se pueden solventar las correspondencias espaciales y temporales encontradas en la narrativa breve de ambos autores.

**Palabras clave:** América Latina, diálogo, personajes extraterritoriales, representación.

## Abstract

The influence of William Faulkner’s literature in Latin-American writers has been centered in thematic aspects as in the concept of failure and the construction of mythical spaces. It is observed that most of the studies focused on the novels. The following essay reached the interpretation of two short stories, Juan Carlos Onetti’s “Jacob y el otro”, and William Faulkner’s “Hair”, as from Steiner’s Extraterritorial concept, which, although describes the experience of certain writers at the movement from one space to another, and from one language to another, it can be adapted to the process of marginality in culture’s terrains. The analysis used Genette’s narratology, in specific narrator’s perspective and reiterative descriptions of the characters, linked to the configuration of the space. These in order to the similarities between the different forms of representation make sense.

This two short stories interpretation allowed pointing the correspondences between the narrative strategies of Uruguayan and American writers, focused in the heterogeneity of visions over the foreign characters, those who are placed as “strangers” and, for that, their definition from a unique perspective results impossible. This is evident in the narrators, who display an

imprecise description of character's physical and moral qualities. These imprecisions are presented through discursive modalities as "someone says" or "He told me", etc. The link observed between the appropriation of spaces and the configuration of characters achieved the clarification of the social structures, which, in booth stories, do not tend to the inherent dynamics of the idea of progress, but to point the perpetuation of conservative cultural forms. Also, putting in dialog Onetti's and Faulkner's characters, clarified the links between the American South - closed and archaic- with some areas of Latin America, therefore, is possible to settle spatial and temporal correspondences founded in booth author's short narrative.

**Keywords:** Latin America, dialog, extraterritorial characters, representation.

## Resumo

A influência da literatura de William Faulkner em escritores latino-americanos tem se concentrado em questões temáticas como a insuficiência ea construção de espaços míticos. Além disso, observa-se que a maioria dos estudos são tropeçar em si para o gênero do romance. Esta análise redação e interpretação de duas histórias, "Jacob eo outro" de Juan Carlos Onetti e "Mane", de William Faulkner, foi proposto com base no conceito de extraterritorialidade de George Steiner, que, ao descrever a experiência certos escritores ao deslocamento de um espaço para outro e de uma língua para outra, você pode adaptar o processo de marginalização nas áreas de cultura. A análise empregue a proposta GENETTE narratológica, especificamente em perspectiva e repetitivo Descrição personagem do narrador sobre a configuração do espaço, tornando assim sentido das semelhanças entre as diferentes formas de representação.

A interpretação dessas histórias permitiram apontar as semelhanças entre as estratégias narrativas do escritor uruguaio e os EUA, com foco na diversidade de opiniões sobre os caracteres estrangeiros, que estão localizados como "estranho" e, portanto, impossível definir de um olhar unívoco. Isto é evidenciado pelos narradores que projetam uma descrição imprecisa das qualidades físicas e morais dos personagens indiretamente apresentados através de modalidades discursivas como "dizer", "ele me disse," etc. A relação observada entre a apropriação de espaços e de configuração dos personagens conseguiram elucidar as estruturas sociais que, em ambas as histórias, não são dirigidas ao dinamismo intrínseco na ideia de progresso, mas a marcação da perpetuação de formas tendências culturais para o conservadorismo. Além disso, ao colocar os

personagens em diálogo Onetti e Faulkner, as ligações entre a América do Sul I -em suas muitas variantes-, arcaico e partes da América Latina foram esclarecidas, para que possa resolver a correlação espacial e temporal encontrada no breve narrativa de ambos os autores.

**Palavras-chave:** América Latina, o diálogo, personagens representação offshore.

**Fecha Recepción:** Octubre 2018

**Fecha Aceptación:** Enero 2019

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## Introduction

The influence of the work of William Faulkner in the narrative of Juan Carlos Onetti and in Latin America is well documented. One of the first pages of this file includes the interview with Carlos Fuentes, an anthology by Jorge F. Hernández (1999), where he links the work of the American writer, through the idea of defeat, with the writers of the boom: in Faulkner with the defeat of the south after the War of Secession and in the Latin Americans with the loss originated by the history of colonialism of the continent (pp. 98-99). This particular perspective is articulated and acquires meaning with the construction of a narrative universe, Yoknapatawpha. As is well known, the mythical elaboration of this space is reinterpreted by other authors. Santa María, Macondo or Comala are similar configurations, inhabited by characters with universal impulses such as love, death, freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the studies that analyze the relations between the American writer and the Uruguayan one focus on that imaginary space and on the novels of these authors. The detailed work of Josefina Ludmer (1980) examines the relations between Faulkner and Onetti, particularly between *La vida breve*, *La novia robada* and "Una rosa para Emily". Alberto F. Roldán (2016) also explores the influence, focusing on elements such as faith, God and the flesh, from a hermeneutical approach. As in many of the studies reviewed, Roldán (2016) focuses on the novels, *La vida breve*, *El astillero* and *Absalón, Absalón*. Therefore, we consider it pertinent to focus the analysis on the stories as concrete examples of this influence, which at the same time

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<sup>1</sup> En este punto, el libro de Carlos Fuentes, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana*, puede servir de referencia en tanto que plantea una reflexión similar a la de Steiner. Fuentes considera que la novela hispanoamericana de la segunda mitad del siglo XX se vuelve tan novedosa debido a que deja de ser localista, reconstruye mitos universales, o bien, logra un equilibrio entre la recreación del espacio concreto y lo universal (Fuentes, 1969).

points to an unexplored direction: the marginal characters and their link with the symbolic construction of space.

The literary relations between one writer and another are not only inevitable, but fundamental in the processes of assimilation and in the extension of tradition. As Mario Vargas Llosa points out:

The great creators are so because they metabolize those influences in a creative way, incorporating them into their own voice, taking advantage of them in such a way that their presence becomes invisible, or a little less, since they have been integrated into their work until they become a constituent and inseparable part of she. (Vargas Llosa, 2009, p. 16).

Therefore, the search for these traces in specific texts is a necessary work for the researcher.

In the stories of Faulkner and Onetti, the struggle between the representable and the culture is recreated. There are societies that are torn between an apparently comfortable past and a future that never comes, but which threatens its stability; societies far from the big cities, from modernity. In this universe, progress does not go up, and when it does, society is in charge of watching it to maintain the state of things; it is the south with its habits, its traditions and its slavery, which refers to the calm of a Latin American people, protected by the rigidity of customs. These communities maintain certain elements of the archaic societies, in them there is no step of transition or rupture:

The place from which Faulkner read culture (the Southern French and peripheral context) helped him to define a position: he was out of place and saw everything from the outside and had nothing to do with the literary life of the East. He could read differently ("like a peasant," as he himself said with a very sophisticated irony) because he was elsewhere (Piglia, 2001, p. 127).

Before, Luis Vargas Saavedra (1974) explores the archaic, pre-capitalist or pre-industrial idea that defines Faulkner as a "primitive moralist" in that he despises the urban universe and the norms that construct it (p 258). This vision is a distinctive element of his work in relation to American literature, and is the starting point that links it with Latin America. The south, then, is larger, extends throughout the continent, begins in Jefferson, Mississippi, runs through the center,

flows into Argentina, Uruguay or Brazil. In this sense, the space delimits the marginality of the characters.

Before the incorporation of the Faulknerian into the writers of the boom, Onetti assimilates elements of the American narrative in his works. Faulkner's prose, rather than explain, segments and plays with the reader's ability to reconstruct the discourse: these same strategies can be observed in Onetti's short narrative, since neither the narrators nor the characters detail an objective world in which they move, rather they speculate, they imagine, they remember, they suggest. Faulkner transforms conventional realism, manages to cross certain habitual territories: his prose moves between narrative and deferred discourse, flees from the concrete, his characters transcend the frontier of the communicable, especially those that can not be integrated into the space that tries to delimit them. The Faulknerian narrative, due to its stylistic experimentation and thematic, dialogues with Latin American literature to the same extent that Onetti, to retake it, extends the tradition. The Uruguayan writer is the first of his heirs, or better yet, dialogues - afterwards will come Rulfo, Sabato, García Márquez, Guimarães Rosa, Piglia. To understand this idea, Juan Carlos Onetti's story "Jacob and the Other" (1961) is analyzed, in counterpoint to Faulkner's story "La melena" (1931), through the images of the primitive, the extraterritorial and the marginality in the characters, and their connection with the spaces represented.

## Methodology \*

The idea of the extraterritorial refers, mainly, to the plurilingualism that writers experience in the 20th century. For Georg Steiner (2002), the ability to go from one language to another is related to the construction of a more complex view, that is, it goes from language to culture, from language as a way of understanding culture. There would be a sense of linguistic and cultural uprooting that allows the subject a sustenance beyond the familiar. These writers, in "permanent exile", recreate in the literature a mythical substratum that concerns the human, for that reason Steiner (2002) presents Nabokov, Beckett and Borges as examples of extraterritoriality -from Russian to English, from English to French and vice versa. There is a metaphor that defines the term extraterritorial and refers to the faculty of the writer to get out of

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\* La presente investigación no se aviene a un análisis narratológico completo, por lo cual las categorías de descripción reiterativa y de perspectiva del narrador, tomadas de Gérard Genette (1989), se presentan en el apartado de "Discusión y resultados".

the family use that gives the mother tongue: "vagabonds through different languages" (Steiner, 2002, p.24).

Steiner (2002) mentions the case of Nabokov who, without forgetting his language, Russian, appropriates English as an aesthetic instrument. But the assimilation of another language is partial, and for this reason it becomes a knowledge that can hardly be satisfied. A language never ends to learn, to dominate, not even your own. At this point we go from the linguistic to the cultural. If language is a representation of culture, a form of culture, there will be gaps to fill, with everything that is not understood or can not be absolutely conscious.

The writer moves in his own language as if he were an outsider, in his culture as if it were imposed and starts a fight against it. There is a conflict that can be seen in the literary language, derived from the perception of reality, from that difficulty in representing a concrete and finished world. That is, if language is more than an instrument of representation, it is due to the very consistency of a larger and more complex reality. Steiner (2002) considers that Faulkner will one day be seen as one of the last and only writers of literature "with a home" because he sees the context of the American South as a space for recreation in his novels (p.30). However, the literary language of Faulkner does not serve the author to describe a specific world. Steiner (2002) points out that there is a "display of reductive logic" (p.27) like the one the German philosopher mentions about Beckett, a use of language that departs from traditional realism.

## Discussion and results

### Where nothing happens, where everything is narrable: space

Yoknapatawpha and Santa María, universes where actions are developed, are archaic territories, with their implicit rules and their daily habits. In Faulkner there is a recreation of the prejudiced, defeated American south, after the Civil War, where progress or capitalism does not come, but neither does freedom or comfort: "A place of contradiction without remedy, where the human condition does not appear to be studied but interrogated "(Glissant, 2002, p.31).

Yoknapatawpha is related to Louisiana, but also to the Caribbean or to many regions of Latin America, territories that have the imprint of the old plantations, away from the splendor of the past and the well-being of the present; the majority of its inhabitants are disinherited, poor (rednecks), afro-descendants and mestizos, ruined, live a reality without the possibility of

transformation. Limited to the south by the river of the same name and to the north by the affluent of the Tallahatchie, the Faulknerian county remembers to those communities closed by the routine, where the hot air does not incite to the movement, only calcinates. It is a geographically demarcated, familiar and violent universe, where the truth is based on rumors and the solidary gesture is annulled for the sake of complicity. Everyone knows each other in Yoknapatawpha, although they do not know the world and do not want to know about it; This is how little Susan Reed, protagonist of "La Melena", lives when she arrives in town. At the same time, this closure seeks to retain an "original" temporality; it is the time of the hunters, that of nature as an enemy, from which arises the inevitable confrontation.

Yoknapatawpha understands the towns and forests, the transit roads, the rivers that run through the county, which flood it to nourish or annihilate it. Life is governed by habits, there is an order that encompasses everything, a permanent regulation, although defective, of the function of each of the characters within that space. Outside of this order is the forest, nature, but also the stranger, the one who has no roots or mission to attract chaos, such as Susan Reed and Henry Stribling. Foreigners are often seen as destabilizing the social order.

In the story, the north is threatening because it brings about change, not only because of the construction of roads or railroads, but because the imminent inversion of the status quo is foreseen. The north does not forget the defeat after the war, but neither does slavery as the foundation of the economic order and social stability. In Jefferson the last heirs and their servants live in apparent harmony. Although it is the "blacks" who persevere, as Faulkner (2001) points out in the "Appendix" of *Noise and Fury* (page 358); and persevere because they are not ghosts, despite the uncertain reality, they are not like the Compsons, the Griersons, the Bundrens or the Sutpens. Therefore the change in this south reminds of defeat, and can not be welcomed, even accepted.

In "La melena", Faulkner (2012) limits the spatial references to the information given by the narrator. The city is mentioned, Jefferson: "He was about five years old when Hawkshaw arrived in the city" (p.128); the hairdresser, "she kept going to see him, to sit in his hairdresser's chair" (p.129); the streets, "they saw her on the street", "she was not seen in the streets" (pp. 130 and 138); the trips to Division and the site that the then-young Henry Stribling wrote: "And the house was always closed; smoke never came out of the kitchen chimney" (p 133). The space is



the background of a whole that is configured in the rumors; thus, hairdressing is the essence of Jefferson, the place where the characters and their stories are known. In *Division*, the reader knows the house of the Starnes and the life of Henry Stribling from the gossip that occurs in the hairdressing salon that the narrator attends, that is, makes the stories possible, but does not accommodate spatial descriptions but to the experiential details that circulate and give life to the people.

On the other side of the continent is Santa María, near Buenos Aires or Montevideo. Onetti (2000) introduces the people from Prince Orsini's vision: "What a coast, what a beach, what air, what a culture!" (P 261). Santa Maria, like Yoknapatawpha, is an imaginary space. Onetti's realism does not seek to anchor us to a single context, but to enhance the recreated world. The Uruguayan appeals to a defective vision of reality, but not for that reason less poetic or legitimate, as opaque as the mornings of the insomniac or the glasses that filter the landscape.<sup>2</sup> It is reality from the point of view of the characters, according to Onetti: "My characters are disconnected with the reality of you, not with the reality of them" (Aínsa, 2012, p.30). It could be said that it is a realism tending to the subjective. Hugo J. Verani (2012) links it with Onetti's faithful reading of Franz Roh's book, *Magical Realism*, an interpretation far removed from that of the authors of the Boom:

Onetti, on the other hand, considers the notion of magical realism in its delimited meaning, without distorting the meaning proposed by Roh. The essential change in post-impressionist painting (...) consists in a return to the real, to a new objectivity and, above all, to an aesthetic that does not want to be imitative, descriptive or anecdotal, nor is it a reflection of nature, but rather a creation that reconstructs the world of the visible, showing the coexistence of the objective and the subjective, the irrational and the rational (p. 55).

This tense interaction between the objective and the subjective is a persistent aspect in the Onetti's storytelling work, even seen in his first publications, before the appearance of Santa María. In "El posible Baldi" (1936), the main character walks through the streets of Buenos Aires willing to found the Academy of Bliss, discovers, by the interference of a foreign woman, a

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<sup>2</sup> Para Josefina Ludmer (1980), en el estudio preliminar incluido en *Para una tumba sin nombre*, el tema de la opacidad en el vidrio alude a la perspectiva realista en Onetti. Ver "a través de" implica una mediación, un filtro, a diferencia del realismo-naturalismo donde la transparencia es limpia, perfecta (pp. 22-23).

Bovary of Congress Square, which he has worn " a slow idiotic life, like the whole world "(Onetti, 2000, p.53). Thus, the alienation of the woman provokes in Baldi not only a passing disgust, but leads him to invent a story from the evocations in the city space, which functions as an objective stimulus for the construction of a non-existent but possible, adventurous Baldi , with which the real Baldi is compared and results in a broken image of himself; that is, invented history subverts its subjectivity.

This cognitive tension between the known and the mysterious becomes the engine of the Onettian narratives, which is possible to see in stories like "Welcome, Bob" (1944), where the perspectives of the narrator and Bob in relation to age enter into conflict, until the last one arrives inexorably at the place where the first one is:

I do not know if I've ever welcomed Ines with such joy and love in the past as I welcome Bob into the dark and smelly world of adults every day. He is still a newcomer and occasionally suffers his crises of nostalgia (Onetti, 2000, p. 131).

Thus, the condition of "stranger" is not only presented in its geographical dimension, but also temporal and symbolic. In "Esbjerg, on the coast" (1946), "The album" (1953), "Matías el telegrafista" (1970) or "The dog will have its day" (1976) there is a fictional reality solved in the murmuring perspectives of characters settled in the networks of their tradition, which is in crisis due to the arrival of alien beings and, therefore, put space itself in a state of incisive tension.

In the story "Jacob and the other" the foundation of Santa María by Brausen is not mentioned, but characteristic spaces such as the Hotel Plaza, in which Prince Orsini and Jacob van Oppen are staying; Club Progreso, where the doctor receives the emergency call; the Cine-teatro Apolo, meeting place between Jacob and the Turk; the Santa María Hospital, to which the young challenger goes; or the newspaper El Liberal and its section "Deportivas", site where the challenge money is deposited.

Orsini is the one who frequently describes the space, his words give different perceptions of Santa María, depending on the interlocutor. Like the characters of Onetti, Orsini lies: if he talks about space with the inhabitants of the town, it will be with the intention of flattering them, but if he talks with Jacob or with himself, he reveals his true impression. Santa María is country, city and town, depending on the text and the character that recreates it. In "Jacob and the other" it is projected as a small space, as described by the narrator when introducing himself in the prince's

thought: "Here, in a small town in South America that only has a name because someone wanted to fulfill the custom of baptizing any heap of houses "(Onetti, 2000, p.281). Later, Orsini, fearful of Jacob's failure, describes Santa Maria as "this hole in the world" (Onetti, 2000, p.284).

Santa María is a delimited space, at least in this story.<sup>3</sup> Founded to maintain the state of things, or the fantasies of Brausen, its founder, in this town the stranger or foreigner is perceived as dangerous. As in Yoknapatawpha, Santa Maria breathes a stench of decadence, a decrepit air that contaminates, but that is part of the spatial order. There was another time when everything seemed new, but it was illusory. Here the projects fail, bewitched by desire or apathy. While the rhythm of life determines a way of narrating - actions are scarce, discourse focuses on memories or desires - one could say that both Onetti and Faulkner predominate a writing of loose ends, of unfinished stories and open endings In Yoknapatawpha and Santa Maria the truth multiplies in the rumors, spreads in other stories, escapes through the open windows of old rooms that hide corpses or small secrets. The truth is diluted and stored in the imaginary of space, and only circulates in the voice of the narrators.

### **Storytellers who stay with the words of the wind**

For Ricardo Piglia (2001) what sustains the intrigue in Faulkner's stories is the secret, the story is not revealed at all, even when the reader knows the atmospheres, the characters or the common situations (p.128). If the reader anticipates in the reading, establishing conjectures, guessing, he should continue the journey to confirm his hypothesis. There is a secret, sordid and terrible, an unhealthy rumor that circulates and is not finished. Faulkner narrates two stories and the crossing of both appears a third instance that gives meaning to the text. "La mane" tells the story of two characters who arrive at the town at different times, Susan Reed and a barber called Hawkshaw, but the story is only perceived from the rumors that go through the reading, that is, the versions are unstable and the testimony of the protagonists, in their voice, never appears.

The role of the narrators is fundamental, they are the filter, the emissaries, never protagonists, and therefore they play to achieve an objectivity that is not born from experience. Vargas Llosa

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<sup>3</sup> Recordemos que "Jacob y el otro" se publica en 1961. Onetti escribirá después otros textos, donde Santa María vive los cambios de muchos sitios en América Latina: la militarización, la dictadura, pero procurando mantener las jerarquías propias de la sociedad santamariana, así que, si bien hay cambios, predomina el silencio y la resignación.

(2009) describes the voices that coordinate the stories of Onetti and Faulkner as "intermediary narrators", insofar as they filter a collective point of view through the voices of witnesses:

As the inventor of Yoknapatawpha, he made the intermediary one of the masterpieces of his narrative strategy. Most of his stories are narrated by a neutral or involved witness if he is not the protagonist himself. Which means that whoever narrates acts as a psychological screen that, at the same time that counts, thinks, judges and guides the narrative, imposes a point of view to the narrated (p. 20).

The narrative techniques that Faulkner uses in his novels, the objective narrative, the subjective narrative and the interior monologue, are simplified in the stories or do not appear in the same story. In the case of "La melena", the objective story is alternated with the subjective one, and this causes the inaccuracy, for example, there is no certainty of the link between the young Susan and the family that adopts her, the Burchett: "Niece or premium or whatever" (Faulkner, 2009, p.128); or the appearance of Matt Fox, the other hairdresser: "With eyes that seemed tired, or sad, or whatever it was" (Faulkner, 2009, p.129). Omniscience is impossible for this type of narrator, does not have the certainty of the facts, hence it describes from the others. The story is constructed with "Matt said", "Matt told me", "they saw it", "he told me", "I found out", "they told me", "everyone gave them to say", "some said " Even when the facts seem conclusive, the truth is diluted in the versions, there is an impossibility to know and understand reality.

The narrator acts as who organizes the story, provides the vision of the people, but not that of Susan or the barber, who are the strangers, the talk, the salt and the pepper from which the rumors are born. This is a witness narrator who tells the story of someone else, represents a collective point of view, that of the community (Genette, 1989, pp. 241-242). However, the characters remain inaccessible to the narrator and to the villagers, that is, they are seen from the outside, there is no subjective story, and at the same time they are seen from within the community. Glissant (2002) mentions that in Faulkner, blacks are rarely narrated from subjectivity and never from the interior monologue (p.72). Outsiders are also seen as objects or, in terms of narration, as triggers of the story. Hence the reading of Piglia (2001):

A "Faulknerian" notion of experience seems to indicate that the facts are always filtered. Events are never direct, when they have already been interpreted, by stories of others, by uncertain versions, by voices that come from the past and also, very often, by books (p. 129).

Faulkner's collective narrator travels a path in two senses: on the one hand narrates from the subjectivity of the people, but on the other objective to the characters, while not allowing them to tell their own story, because they are strangers, seen as events that happen, silent monuments or wild animals without voice and without ideas. The images of Old Ben or Emily Grierson in other stories exemplify this objectification of the characters, because even though the engines of history are understood from the imaginary of the community. Old Ben is the bear that refuses to be hunted, seen by hunters as an enemy and as proof of a pure nature; and Emily, the only survivor of the Grierson, is the testimony of a lost opulence, intact, that preserves the smell of a lineage and the dead that accompany it. These characters never give their testimony, they are narrated from the eyes of a people who see everything even if they do not know or do not want to know for sure what it means.

The narrator can not be concrete, his speech is as ambiguous as the truth itself; It wanders, it gets lost in memories, so it repeats phrases as a way of retaining what is dissipated in the imagination, in a vague time that can not be grasped. In this sense, Glissant (2002) mentions the presence of certain techniques coming from orality in Faulkner such as accumulation, repetition and circularity: "They agree to undo that vision of the real or true, which would be unicist -of ontological order- , and introduce the multiple, the uncertain, and the relative "(p.192). While the narrator picks up the rumors, there is a need to use these resources of orality. In the case of accumulation, the narrator constructs the meaning of a character through adjectives, as in the case of Susan Reed: "She was a skinny girl then, with big eyes, eyes of permanent fright, and a straight, long hair, neither blond nor brown "(Faulkner, 2012, p.128). This first impression of Susan refers to an image of innocence, but also indeterminacy by not specifying the young woman's hair, the origin of the meaning of the text, which becomes a synecdoche: the mane refers to the nature of the young, wild and imprecise .

The narrator describes these characters because their lives represent an event for the people. They are alien, ungraspable, as is their history. In the same way the sense of the barber, Hawkshaw, is constructed through enumeration and accumulation:

He was small, with a sandy complexion, and had a face that one would not remember, one that would not recognize one after 10 minutes, as well as wearing a blue suit, a twill suit, and a black bow tie, of which buckle from behind and sold with the ready made knot (Faulkner, 2012, p. 133).

The narrator presents the barber as a ridiculous, weak man, almost as scared as the girl. And for the meaning to be compelling, the story is constructed as a repetitive story, where the narrator enunciates several times what happened on only one occasion (Genette, 1989, pp. 173-175). Thus, the description of the hair appears, "neither blond nor brown", and of the appearance of the barber, "a blue suit, of twill, and a black tie, of tie", in numerous occasions (Faulkner, 2012, pp. 128 , 131, 134, for the first, pp. 133 and 136, for the second).

The repetition reiterates the image, it is used as a rhetorical device to construct the meaning of the text; inside the narrative, for the narrator, the repetition operates as part of a dramatic monologue that allows him to seek the coherence of the story, since the real interlocutor, the reader, only listens and does not interfere in the discourse: "Sometimes I thought that I would have to tell all of them "(Faulkner, 2012, pp. 138 and 139). To "them", the settlers, so that they have a complete sense of history, and not necessarily to us, the readers, who possess only fragments of the story. This phrase that is replicated contains the enigma of history, the secret that the barber hides and that explains the bond with the young woman.

The circularity is perceived, on the one hand, in the structure of "La melena": the text is composed of three parts, but the disposition of the facts does not correspond to the conventional form (introduction, development and conclusions), but is elliptical. In the first part, the narrator describes the initial situation, the arrival of Susan Reed in the village, her transformation and the relationship with the barber. In the second part, the narrator describes the antecedent of Hawkshaw, whose real name is Henry Stribling. In this section the two stories are crossed: once the fiancée of the barber, Sophie Starnes, dies, he looks for a kind of copy and finds it in Susan, years later. As in the first part, here are loose ends, the reasons for the actions are not evident, they are only interpretable. In the third section, it seems that the story concludes, and indeed it is,

but in a surprising and absurd way, because of this it does not constitute a closed story. For this reason, the narrator comes and goes from the past to the present, to give a sense to what is told, even if it does not go in one direction.

Stribling's life is cyclical: before she dies, Sophie tells Henry that she must take care of her mother and pay the mortgage on the Starnes house. Annually, in the month of April, the barber must go to pay the house, clean it and take care of Sophie's mother:

He spent two weeks cleaning and tidying the house so that she would be comfortable for another year, and she allowed it, for something was better family than he was one of those careerists that are everywhere (Faulkner, 2012, p. 135).

Once the mother dies, Henry keeps his promise until he finishes the payment of a house that is not his, to a fiancée who is dead. Henry's temporality is subject to this promise, that's why he does not take summer vacations, like the others, and he frees himself from this circularity once he pays off the debt and marries Susan. By not presenting the barber's point of view, the narrator must order the story of the characters. For both the narrator and the reader, the image of the protagonists is unstable, the judgment of the people represents a partial view: it is not known if Henry is an upstart, a pederast or a lover, nor is it possible to build a definitive image of Susan: protololite or victim?

Now, the story of Onetti refers to the Faulknerian narrator. In "Jacob and the other" there are three narrators: the doctor -which Diaz Gray may well be, while the name is not specified, but it is also clarified that it is not Rius, the other doctor of the town-, a narrator in the third person and Prince Orsini. The three narrators do not have the totality of the information and, although complementary, they do not close the story. The argument is apparently simple: two travelers, the wrestler Jacob van Oppen and his representative, Prince Orsini, arrive in town to make an exhibition of the skills of the so-called World Champion and launch a challenge.

The story begins with the ending. The first narrator, the doctor, corresponding to the first section and the first point of view, tells how his poker game is interrupted in the emergency of saving - or signing the death certificate - a young man who has been beaten. The doctor does not know the identity of the man and the circumstances of the accident, in addition he perceives in a confused way the reality because he usually sleeps a little and has drunk in the Club. This narrator gives the keys to the story, he presents himself as a detective: he undertakes the search

for the truth, he has a solitary image and he is an eternal insomniac. Despite "saving" the life of the unknown, the doctor does not release any clue about what happened in Santa Maria:

Before taking the pills I understood that I could never know the truth of that story; With good luck and patience, I might get to know about the corresponding half of us, the inhabitants of the city. But it was necessary to resign themselves, to accept as unattainable the knowledge of the part that the two foreigners brought with them and that they would be carried away in a different way, unknown and forever. (Onetti, 2000, pp. 259-260).

This narrator only reaches to grab a part of the story, that of "the inhabitants of the city", does not go beyond that knowledge, or better, the speculations that fill the gaps. He only describes the lives of others, his own does not interest in this story, although he mentions some aspects such as the state of his car, his dreams and his fatigue. It is closely linked to the narrator of "La melena", while both are part of a community that sees the life of travelers from a distance.

The second narrator of "Jacob and the other" recounts from a third person, but is not omniscient or objective, even focusing on Prince Orsini, largely because this character is the one who performs concrete actions: leaves the hotel, seeks publicity, he meets Adriana and the other. Thanks to this perspective, Orsini is less opaque than Jacob who, like Susan Reed, remains mute before the narrator's gaze. Both Orsini and Hawkshaw have certain antecedents, although imprecise. The second narrator introduces the character of the character, almost sympathetic to him: "The cards said Comendador Orsini and the talkative and restless man distributed them without avarice throughout the city" (Onetti, 2000, p.261). Sections two, three, four and five are narrated from this approach and in the beginning the image of the prince is drawn. Like the doctor, this narrator does not know the accuracy of the information: "On Tuesday or Wednesday Orsini brought the champion by car" (Onetti, 2000, p.262).

The narrator describes Adriana and Jacob. In the case of Adriana, the companion of the Turk, the enumeration is used: "She was small, intrepid and young, very dark and with a short nose on a hook, very clear and cold eyes. 'Jewish or something,' thought Orsini" (Onetti, 2000, p.265). He is a flexible narrator, he is allowed to enter and leave the representative's perspective to present an approximation of the characters. Jacob exposes it in a less definitive way, because it



is throughout the story that the information that describes it, as well as through the phrases that the fighter emits, the thoughts of the prince and that are transferred by the narrator.

It is in the last section, the six, where Orsini narrates without the mediation of another narrative voice. Here the impressions are issued directly, the Petiso no longer care about appearances, he is not interested in "convincing", only explaining everything that has happened. The words of the doctor, those that refer to the idea that only the version of the town will be known, are partially true, because Orsini recounts his impressions at the end, but the perspective of Jacob is not clarified or known. This narrator begins with the morning of the day of the fight, which gives circularity to the speech: if the doctor tells how a young man almost dying arrives at the hospital, in this last part we will know the identity of the character, Mario, the other, the Turkish, after the meeting with Jacob.

Orsini provides data and images, such as the location of Santa María: "It was a city raised from the river, in September, five centimeters or so to the south of the equator" (Onetti, 2000, p.288), as well as the moments before the fight. An important element is the indetermination: if at the beginning we know that the beaten youth survives, in the end Orsini tells us that this is Mario, but with the belief that he has died. That is, even when the reader has a certainty, for the characters the truth is unknown, even for the narrator in the third person, while it is focused on Orsini. The presence of three narrators in this story is no more effective than Faulkner's narrator when solving the problem of truth, since neither knows the reality, and the reader must conform to the story of the facts, without the knowledge of the motivations of Jacob, Mario and little Adriana.

### **Extraterritorial characters: dialogue in the margins**

In "Jacob and the other" the characters can be recognized through the strategy observed in Faulkner's text, "La mane". This recognition broadens the view, but they are not fully understood. There is a certain inconclusiveness surrounding them, derived from their foreign "nature". As in other works of Faulkner or Onetti -The noise and the fury, While I agonize (1930), Sanctuary (1931), or in "The possible Baldi", "The album" (1953) or "Esbjerg, on the coast" -, in "La mane" and in "Jacob and the other" the women, Susan and Adriana, detonate the story; according to Piglia (2001), these experiences are repeated in conservative communities, are an example of what can happen to a woman when she wants to be free (p.122). Susan is the orphan, her hair is

as ungraspable as her own nature, it could even be said that she is only nature, hence the original title of the story, "Hair", like the untamed, the previous to the culture. The initial descriptions present her as a "terrified guinea pig", but as the young girl grows, innocence vanishes and gives way to a certain perversion. The narrator, reproducing the beliefs of the people, introduces the image of the wild woman: "And nature does not attend to systems, and still less do women attend them, as they do not attend to anything" (Faulkner, 2012, p.30).

The stereotype of the evil woman, in this case of Susan, is linked to freedom. The narrator lets see the social condemnation towards the character, but he, contradictorily, also claims it. The bad woman is like a man, does not know of submission or respect. That's why he laughs out loud, escapes from school, enters and leaves the system while he does not find a place in that society. For the people, this young woman recreates the image of the negative: she is free and sexualized, unlike the spinsters or the weak mothers. Evil is feared by the people, but for Susan it is a form of individuation. Susan's fate is fixed by the absence of referents: without parents, without a starting point to build a trial, their actions are the basis of the sentence: "They saw her on the street at all hours with two or three other girls, laughing softly, laughing like a fresh one, when they should have been in school "(Faulkner, 2012, p.30). While there is no internalization, Susan can not be conceived as a subject, just as in a conservative society women are seen.

In Onetti the female characters are recreated from an external perspective, it is the male who presents them, but not with a Manichean vision, because indetermination does not give rise to a purely masculine construction. For example, in *El pozo* (1939) or in "Avenida de Mayo-Diagonal Norte-Avenida de Mayo" (1933), women are the source of the characters' restlessness. In the short novel, the judgment on the intelligence of women is incorporated:

I have read that the intelligence of women ends up growing at twenty or twenty-five years. I do not know anything about the intelligence of women and I'm not interested either. But the spirit of the girls dies at that age, more or less (Onetti, 1994, p. 21).

However, the female characters are not completely finished. In "Jacob and the other", Adriana is satisfied with the social order, is authoritarian and domineering, wants the money of the fight to marry Mario and because she is pregnant. Erratic and angry, Adriana does not obey more than

her own interests, the impulse of what she imagines will make her happy.<sup>4</sup> Like Susan, Adriana is irrational and capricious; thanks to the first the people of Yoknapatawpha murmur and build fictions, likewise, Hawkshaw finds in it what he has sought so much; and because of the second, the doctor's story begins and Mario lives his tragedy.

In addition to the female characters, in both stories the protagonists are strangers, that's where the story begins, with the intrusion of individuals that disrupt the routine of the people. The perception that the natives have of them goes through a process of objectification. When Henry Stribling arrives in the town he does not integrate himself into the daily dynamics, only through work, but in a mechanical, superficial way. So also remain Revered Susan, Jacob and Mario. There is in them a component that bothers the inhabitants, which provokes rejection, seen in some way as precivilizational, as long as they do not adapt to the social code of spaces. That is, these others are different, wild in that they can not adapt to the community.

Jacob and Mario are presented as primitive beings through their enormous strength, their fragmented communication and an absence of referents. Orphans, without filiations that link them to that environment, Susan, the barber and Jacob flee from the curse that entails belonging to the family. According to Glissant (2002):

The people who resist in the county, those who face their opacity, only come from themselves and do not extend into offspring. This confirms the denial of filiation and legitimacy, those insurmountable foundations of any foundation (pp. 124-125).

Orphanage here is resolved as freedom, there are no ties that link them to a social function, because they are the heirs of that past failure made who bear the burden of belonging to society. In hermetic societies, incomprehension and repression is the price paid for the protection of the group.

Susan, Jacob and Mario are closer to the beast than to the human, for their sense of movement and uprooting. Different but related is Hawkshaw, whose image does not stabilize until the end, when through Judge Stevens the narrator finds out that he finally married Susan

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<sup>4</sup> Hay una relación más nítida entre Susan Reed y Adriana en la película *Mal día para pescar*, basada en "Jacob y el otro", pues se introduce una historia, ausente en el texto de Onetti, donde se explica cómo es que la mujer y Mario se conocen: Adriana, siendo muy joven, va con un barbero, quien en apariencia la ofende. Mario sale en su defensa y desde entonces están juntos. El signo del abuso, sin duda, recuerda al cuento de Faulkner (Brechtner, 2009).

Reed. If the young Susan has an unstable image in the social sense, the barber is the pilgrim character, who goes out to look for, in this case, a hair "neither blonde nor brunette". Recall that Henry's nickname is Hawkshaw, named after the people who see him as the comic strip detective. For the people, the barber is perceived as a seeker, someone who can not remain still, even when the narrator does not explicitly state the reason for the nickname. But not for this the barber denies, for him the truth is not something that belongs to society, hence not suffer neither the claims that lives as Henry nor those who experience as Hawkshaw:

The errant Faulknerian flees from the established and consequently from the idea of system, which is the one that projects and decides any foundation, any appropriation of a territory and that in turn has become an absolute condition of its being (collective, family, or furiously individual) and vital drive (Glissant, 2002, p. 114).

The characters travel to recognize themselves on the road, it is an exercise of survival, their way of being free, they experience an alternative temporality, sustained in the denial of everyday practices. Even when they wander, they resist that civilizing order, that of social coexistence and that of the rituals on which it is based. They escape from the system, even when these people do not integrate themselves into the cultural forms that dominate the big cities. In their own way, the inhabitants of Yoknapatawpha and Santa María are governed by their own rules, archaic, but cultured. That is to say, as much the foreign personages as those of the town resist to the civilization like so.

As well as uprooting, the absence of ambition or contempt for money are frequent in uncivilized characters. Except Orsini and Adriana, the characters manifest an indifference towards money. In "La Mane" Hawkshaw pays a debt and assumes the commitment without putting up a resistance; Susan does not mention any monetary relationship, even when the rumors imply a type of prostitution; in the case of "Jacob and the other", the protagonist resolves the anguish of his representative by giving him an excessive amount of money to pay for the challenge. In this scene, Orsini discovers Jacob's motivation:

He gave me another lit cigarette and put the left foot, which is more sensitive, on the table. He undid the knot of the gray shoe, took off his shoes and came to show me a roll of green bills. It was real money. He gave me five ten-dollar bills and had a bluff.

-Plus?

"It's fine," I said. Surplus (Onetti, 2000, p. 289).

To the surprise of others, these characters do not see an end in money. Their searches are other, for that reason they are even more primitive. The characters persevere in the survival instinct and in a certain form of freedom. Following this route, there is another element that presents the characters as bestial: language. In Faulkner, neither Susan nor Hawkshaw dialogue with other characters except on one occasion when the barber feels his role threatened: "-I finish on a volley," he said. I take care of her "(Faulkner, 2012, p.128). In "Jacob and the other" the fighters are characterized as savages by their physical strength and their expression. Jacob is said to be a "beast", emits grunts. Mario's identity also fades: "They call him the Turk. But it is Syrian" (Onetti, 2000, p 266). It is "the other", the unsuccessful, the dying, the one that does not matter because he has lost, the one who barks instead of speaking.

Jacob also does not speak, hums a German song, "Lili Marlen", and utters a word that for the narrator is a prayer, *verdammmt*,<sup>5</sup> which is nothing but a curse. In the end, Jacob remembers his triumphs from a distant place: "And I always won, Jacob van Oppen wins always" (Onetti, 2000, p.282). The transition to the third person allows us to identify that feeling of strangeness that the same person experiences with himself, not only present in him, but in other characters of Onetti's stories (Baldi, Bob, Larsen or Doctor Díaz Gray). The absolute whiteness resembles Moby Dick, that enormous whale that historically has recreated the image of the other and the attempt to dominate it: "White, enlarged by the shadow, Jacob slowly lowered the arm with the bottle and made the glass sound against one knee" (Onetti, 2000, p.280). This character represents the image of others, of innocence, of a natural world alien to that of men; the value that is given is physical strength, the ability to fight or survive. In Faulkner the other is not only the foreigner or the animal, also the madman, like Benjy in *Noise and Fury*, halfway between the innocence of the

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<sup>5</sup> Recordemos de dónde proviene la palabra *bárbaro* que los latinos emplean para referirse a los pueblos del norte de Europa, por considerar que su lengua no es sino apenas un balbuceo. En este sentido Jacob y Mario son bárbaros, fieros, toscos, incultos, excesivos.

child and the fury of a beast. Benjy is described as "a trained bear" (Faulkner, 2001, p.288), drooling, a foreigner in his family.

In "Esbjerg, on the coast", Kirsten can be seen as Jacob's double: white, voluminous, longing for that natural world that does not exist in Santa María. Both characters are apparently Nordic, nostalgic and innocent. In "History of the Knight of the Rose and the pregnant Virgin who came from Liliput" (1956) the couple of travelers has a correspondence with Jacob and Orsini, one large and the other small, but above all because they are configured as circus monsters, seduce and convince to survive, provoking both fascination and rejection among the villagers.

There are also foreigners accustomed to the order of Santa María, like Orsini or the Turk. Although the young Mario is no more expressive than Jacob, his sentences are fragmentary, reduced to the simplest enunciation: "Adriana, I, vermouth, yes tome" (Onetti, 2000, p 271). The origin of this character is unknown as that of Jacob, and it is the woman who mediates between Mario and the world, even when he has his own instincts such as the desire to take or the fear of fighting with the Champion. There is no direct relationship between the characters and reality; only through specific, almost obsessive actions, are they kept alive. These actions are orders, acts of respect, because before the impossibility of integrating, they learn to fulfill a specific function: Mario, lowering the grass in the warehouse; Jacob, make the exhibition; Orsini, show the album; and in Faulkner, Hawkshaw, to pay the mortgage, and Susan, to cut her hair only with her barber.

Orsini is the foreigner who learns to survive through lying. The representative of the fighter is a small capitalist who understands the feeble relationship between individuals and reality. The prince takes advantage of the rumors to build the image of Jacob, cheats to live, but also out of pity, seeing the decadence of the old giant. He is the most civilized of foreigners; he works with lies and illusion, base of Santa María. However, Orsini lies to avoid revealing his origin, has an Italian accent and at the same time "an unplayable sound" (Onetti, 2000, p.261); despite his appearance, he is as orphan, as marginal as the others, his wandering brothers.

By making clear the links between the Onetian and Faulknerian characters, through the concept of extraterritoriality, the present investigation, centered on the relations between the ways of perceiving the characters and the symbolic configuration of space as an element that reveals social structures, opens a gap of possibilities for further analysis, whether it focuses on

the particular strategies of representation of the characters, spaces, or the timing of other Onetti stories. This last aspect, not being considered in depth here, would broaden the horizon of Faulkner's influence in Latin American literature, as well as a greater understanding of it.

### **Conclusions: Nature and margin**

The similarities indicated in the narrative strategies of the Onetti and Faulkner stories, in terms of the reiterative description of the extraterritorial characters, seen as strange, savage and irrational, and their links with the configuration of a closed space, closed for them, they are directed to defer the representation of the truth, to play with the concept. When the characters dare to be in the world they find ways to do it, such as lying, with the aim of surviving, since, in the face of such closure, for the beasts truth is unnecessary.

These characters, in turn, are linked in the flight: the barber and Susan leave Jefferson, as Orsini and Jacob leave Santa Maria. They are roving characters, hence it is impossible for them to anchor themselves in a specific space, because they disregard many of the social conventions, such as family or money. In Yoknapatawpha and in Santa Maria, the lives of peripheral characters are recreated, almost free, not happy or full, the "others" of these stories remain on the edge of the margins, a place where it is possible to live without remaining static in the lies or in stereotypes.

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Curación de datos	NO APLICA
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