

The Passing of the *Xarnego*-Immigrant: Post-Nationalism and the Ideologies of Assimilation in Catalonia

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As recorded in his 1997 memoir, José-Luis Bulla was a young man living in the small rural town of Santa Fé, Granada, when he immigrated to Catalonia in 1965. That year he bought a third-class ticket and rode North in the deteriorated “El Sevillano,” as it was popularly known, the train that carried enormous waves of Southern Spanish immigrants from Seville to Barcelona.

Like López-Bulla, throughout the sixties until the 1973 global oil crisis hundreds of thousands of impoverished peasants, unemployed rural Spanish men and women from Galicia to Andalucía, left behind farms, land, and petrified towns and villages. Internally, the migratory displacement moved to the industrialized cities of Catalonia and the Basque Country. Externally (and joining Portuguese and Turk rural workers) many Spaniards took the route towards Germany, Switzerland, and France, taking advantage of the bilateral pacts prompted by the European post-war economic boom of the '60s.¹

The city of Barcelona served as the main destination. It was also a transfer port to foreign European nations, or to close-by Catalan cities like l'Hospitalet del Llobregat, Terrasa, Santa Coloma, Sabadell, Sant Andreu, Viladecans, Gavà, Bellvitge, and Mataró. It was in fact Mataró, the quintessential industrial Catalan city, where López-Bulla chose to start his life as an immigrant worker. Following a classic universal migratory pattern, his choice was not prompted by cultural



or historical knowledge of his point of destination, but rather by a particular net of social relations and work opportunities. As López-Bulla explains:

Era igual el sitio concreto; por eso me pareció de perlas la oferta de un colega del dragaminas Genil—cuando yo hacía el servicio militar—que casualmente era socio de la empresa de cartónes [en Mataró] en la que yo me ganaría la vida después [...]. Mataró sería mi Tierra Prometida. Lo único que sabía de esta ciudad era la historia del primer ferrocarril de España en 1848. (15)

In spite of his *a priori* ignorance, once in place López-Bulla quickly absorbed the many Catalan cultural nuances of the Francoist period of the '60s. Soon after he arrived, he became the leader of the Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO.) Marxist union and he embedded himself within a strongly politicized network.²

The 1959-1969 years of the Francoist dictatorship are the “*década de la apertura*,” the period of a Spanish booming economic development fueled by the first and then the second *Plan de Desarrollo*. For Catalonia these were also years of extensive economic growth, massive immigration, intense political activity, and the re-emergence of the vibrant nationalist culture harshly repressed by Francoism. While goals and ideologies could be, and in fact were, vastly different, in Catalonia the anti-Francoist political activity of the time can be grouped around two main areas: one revolving around different propositions of Marxist denomination that tended to the proletariat, and another of an explicitly nationalist bent that belonged mostly to the lower-middle, middle

and professional classes of the native urban population.

The latter manifested itself as a strong, re-emergent Catalan nationalist sentiment wrapped in a traditional nineteenth-century romantic ideology of essentialist roots. Pointing to the historical victimization of the Catalan culture, the Catalan nationalists of the '60s pushed forward a civic nationalism that strongly aimed to achieve Catalan hegemony and linguistic visibility through an identity-based political and cultural agenda. The nationalist projects of the 1960s, however, (and in spite of the social interactions between the immigrants and natives) could not contemplate the impact that the then massive immigrant settlement of non-Catalans would have on them. Nationalist projects were enlightened projects. Most often native, urban, and groomed by the professional, well-educated Catalan-speaking class, they were aimed at Catalan cultural and linguistic hegemony and differentiation. While not necessarily antagonistic towards the immigrant population, they were, however, either at odds with the immigrant working class (mostly Andalusian-Spanish or Galician-Spanish speaking populations), or simply ignored it.

Nationalist projects and agendas of the time could not be a clear viable alternative for the many illiterate immigrant workers from rural areas and of different linguistic backgrounds. Instead they tended to gravitate towards or around Marxist or Marxist-influenced groups that, like the underground *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (P.S.U.C.) (the Catalan branch of the *Partido Comunista de España* [P.C.E.]), could account for Catalan particularities. While obviously non-nationalist by definition, the Catalan commu-

nist left and the PSUC in particular had already made a fruitful move at the beginning of the twentieth century when it engrained the cultural, historical and linguistic Catalan singularity within Marxist-Leninist proletarian internationalist universalism. It was precisely the bridging of Catalan cultural and historical idiosyncrasy with Marxist ideology that was the feature that proved to be most seductive for the immigrant population; a link that enabled the Catalan Marxist left, mostly through unions such as *Comisiones Obreras*, to function both as a political and cultural model for many of the immigrants to Catalonia at the time, and/or as a political tool to reach a much desired upward mobility.³ It is therefore in fact accurate to describe López-Bulla's deeply felt unionist engagement with *Comisiones Obreras* as not an unusual (although often less committed) choice for the many non-Catalan immigrants, who, like him, lived and worked in a rapidly changing urban and social landscape.

The emerging proletarian suburbs of the '60s literally sprouted as *ciudades satélite* profusely populated by non-Catalan speaking immigrants. Revolving around a Catalan center, these were satellite sites for the emerging neo-capitalism of the nascent postindustrial age that were sooner or later going to be the mark of the extraordinary ascendance of the Spanish economy in general and of the Catalan economy in particular. In the periphery and industrial suburbs of Barcelona as well as in its nearby cities, rampant capitalist urban development quickly mapped a chaotic arena increasingly populated by the new proletarians of non-Catalan origin, forever changing the face of urban

Catalonia. Many cities like Terrassa and Sabadell, or López Bulla's own Mataró, had already been home in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the immigrant and working-class population attracted by the Catalan textile boom of the period. Other villages, however, like Viladecans, Gavà, or Cornellà remained vacation or farming towns until the 1960s population explosion. Others, like the *ciudades satélite* proper, were newly-constructed conglomerates built under the auspices of the Francoist economic boom: examples are "Ciutat Meridiana" or Bellvitge, habitats that emerged as cheap urban developments born out of the 1959 Francoist "*Plan de Estabilización Económica*." A few other sites were simply poor conglomerates made out of *barraques*, precarious groups of shacks sprouting up around the Barcelona city limits: Cases Barates, Can Tunis, Plus Ultra, and Port, among others, which in the 1960s were inhabited by gypsy populations as well as by previous immigrants from the 1940s and '50s.⁴

By 1969, the year of the enactment of the second part of the plan for economic development (the 1969 "*Segundo Plan de Desarrollo Económico*"), Catalonia had already experienced one of its periods of highest economic growth in modern history. A part of the general Spanish economic boom of the '60s, which was rooted in real estate speculation, in the then new and booming industry of mass tourism, and in *divisas* of the emigrated Spaniards, Catalonia, unlike the rest of Spain, also experienced a major population shift: by the end of the decade the proletarian immigrant workers of non-Catalan origin had densely populated the Barcelona periphery.

The rapid growth of the immigrant population proved to be extraordinarily beneficial for the Catalan economic development of the '60s. It formed, in fact, the working force platform from which the Catalan nationalist revival of the period drew upon for its economic strength. As documented by Francesc Candel in his ground-breaking 1964 testimonial memoir *Els altres Catalans*:

Aquest creixement desmesurat s'ha produït a tots els centres receptors d'immigrants [...]. Cornellà, que l'any 1939 tenia 8.000 habitants, ara en té 50.000. Es calcula que cada més augmenta en 1.000 habitants més la població, només d'immigrants. [...] Tota aquesta gent son paletes, metal·lurgics, fusters, peons, mecànics, en una paraula: obrers. (190, 220)

Cut between the political and the cultural, and fueled by a booming capitalist economy, a class, cultural, and linguistic split soon emerged between the proletarian population and the hegemonic middle and professional classes (mostly natives of Catalan or Catalan-assimilated origin). Unresolved and hesitant during its first moment, it is within the particular geocultural and geopolitical fabric produced by the massive immigration of the sixties that the term *xarnego* took hold in Catalan-speaking circles. The word was denounced first by Candel in *Els altres catalans*. Meant to derogatorily designate the workforce of non-Catalan origin, the term embodied the economic, cultural, and linguistic tension present at the time between newcomers and natives. Cutting sharply across lines of class, of regional and national identification, and of linguistic differentiation, the *xarnego* label of the sixties engulfed the many disperse terms

used until that moment to designate immigrants in the Catalan-speaking areas: words and epithets that ranged from the *jaeneros* term used in Andratx, Mallorca (the seasonal migrant Andalusian and/or Gitano workers coming to the almond harvest),⁵ to the *murcià* or *coreà* used in previous periods. In Candel's words:

Hi ha qui diu que *xarnego* és tot aquell que viu a Catalunya sense ésser Català. D'altres que és el fill d'immigrant nascut aquí. [...] Es l'antic 'murcià' o 'coreà'; el 'pa i ceba,' el 'no heu bufat mai cullera,' etc. (*Els altres catalans* 177)

Candel calmly acknowledges that "sobre la paraula 'xarnec,' 'xarnego' o 'charnegó' [...] ningú no està d'acord amb el seu significat" ("El xarnego," *Els altres Catalans* 177). He dutifully quotes from Catalans and non-Catalans alike, and carefully quotes linguistic and cultural disclaimers of non-subalternization:

Per al meu amic Jordi Delprat, *xarnego* és tot aquell qui viu a Catalunya i no és català ni parla l'idioma català. Segons ell, de seguida que aprenen la llengua, deixen de ser *xarnegos*. (177)

But for Candel, himself an immigrant from Rincón de Ademuz to Barcelona where he moved with his parents when he was two years old, the term *xarnego* is an unambiguous expression of class discrimination. Laying out his argument in a way that is in fact less politically naive than he wants the reader of his time to believe, he steps outside of the essentialist mode in which discourses on nationalist assimilation were, and still are, expressing themselves:

De Vic [the town of Vic] [...] em diuen que hi ha un menyspreu absolut pel foraster o *xarnego*. Els immigrants, pel compte que els té, procuren d'apendre i parlar el català, adaptar-se. Però ni així. (179)

Candel firmly presents the new immigrant population as a permanent working force on which Catalonia is wholly dependent. He unravels the cultural conflict in class and economic terms, unambiguously identifying the group targeted by the term *xarnego* as composed of immigrant workers. Explains Candel:

Crec que no cal fer una apologia de com és de necessari l'immigrant—el *xarnego*—a Catalunya, ni tampoc, si ho analitzem finament, de com li és de necessària Catalunya a ell. Barcelona, la província amb el nivell de vida més alt de la Península, és la que té l'índex de natalitat més baix. [...] L'immigrant és arrel de poble, del baix poble andalús, del baix poble castellà, del baix poble extremeny, del baix poble murcià. Té els mateixos drets que qualsevol altre poble, mitjà, alt o baix. (183)

Els altres catalans aimed mostly at calling attention to the class configuration intrinsic in the tensions between immigrants and natives. However (and despite the fact that Candel's tone was straightforwardly non-confrontational), some sectors of the nationalist intelligentsia quickly understood Candel's memoir to be a potentially subversive artifact. They responded with its own call for immigrant differentiation, effectively wrapping their discourses in its recurrent naturalized ideology of assimilation. In 1964, for instance, the same year Candel's book

came out in its Catalan version (the original Castilian being from 1963), Miquel Arimany, a known nationalist intellectual of the time, responded to Candel with *I els catalans també*, an angry piece that closely followed the ideological pattern of assimilation present since the inception of Modern Catalan nationalism.⁶

Arimany's contestation claimed that only through total *xarnego* assimilation into Catalan culture, a successful *métissage* in the French sense, could be contemplated. At the same time, however, Arimany expressed strong reservations about the wisdom of such a move. While he claimed that the assimilation of the immigrant *xarnego* was desirable, Arimany's essentialist discourse drew clear ethnic and capitalist lines between the Catalan worker (exempted by him of any possible Marxist sympathies in his layout of patriarchal Modern Catalan industrialization), and the (for him) very suspect people that had come to Catalonia as immigrants (and as such suspected of potential proletarian, Marxist subversion). The politics of identity played out in Arimany's nationalist rhetoric is easily identifiable as a capitalist one, as seen in a paragraph stating that the social revolutions of 1910 and 1936 in Catalonia were insidiously promoted by non-Catalan immigrant workers. Disregarding the strong socialist base of the Catalan worker of the pre-war period, he accuses the earlier wave of non-Catalan immigrants of disrupting a (presumably) well-balanced *entente* between patrons and native workers:

el obrers castellans, gallecs, murcians, andalusos o aragonesos, d'allà on fossin, que anys enrera s'havien ofert a cobrar menys, perjudicant als altres obrers catalans. (63)⁷

Arimany's manifesto on immigration can be read as a symptomatic antagonism between the right and the left characteristic more of the period of industrialization marked by capital in what Fredric Jameson would call its second stage of development than that of the emerging third stage that was in fact already announcing itself in Spain as a whole and in Catalonia in particular. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán described the right-left confrontation of the period:

[Devant] la immigració dels anys cinquanta i dels seixanta [...] l'esquerra es planteja la posició integradora [...] [mentre] una part del nacionalisme tradicional s'estima més que aquesta immigració continuï com un exèrcit de treball necessari però amb pautes culturals pròpies, no sigui que hi hagi un mestissatge cultural 'que farà irreconoscible Catalunya.' (*Barcelones* 259)

As claimed by López-Bulla, Candel, and reiterated by Montalbán, class confrontation, more than linguistic or cultural confrontation, is what seemed to be at stake. While in the case of López-Bulla his political experience and committed unionism cannot be generalized to extend to all immigrants settled in Catalonia, the subaltern position given to him by the receiving locality is, nevertheless, apparent. Because of his status as an immigrant in Catalonia, López Bulla suddenly became a *xarnego*, a subaltern subject mostly to be recognized as such by a particular, and unavoidable, linguistic differential. As Vázquez Montalbán writes:

en el camp de la llengua [...] la immigració dels últims cinquanta i dels seixanta viu una bona part de la vida de la feina

i de lleure en una autofàgia cultural, en una autosuficiència vivencial que implica la no necessitat de l'idioma català, encara que no el contempli amb rebuig. (*Barcelones* 258-59)

In the '60s, and due to its specific subaltern position within the capitalist structure of supply and demand characteristic of the Catalan economy of the time, the immigrant's linguistic differential soon turned into linguistic creativity. An exuberant dialect emerged within the diverse immigrant community. Pulling from its rural Andalusian, Murcian, Castilian, and Galician roots, a new dialect was born—a fertile, ever-expanding jargon linked to Catalan. As a subaltern dialect, however, and because of its continuous friction against the native language, the immigrant linguistic differential had the potential to subversively and unexpectedly turn the Catalan language itself into jargon. If, as Giorgio Agamben has noted, all languages may turn into jargons (66-67), in the '60s the emerging *xarnego* dialect was felt by the Catalan nationalist intelligentsia to be putting a burden on the already precarious status of the Catalan language. Taking into consideration the important role that the capitalist economy with its proletarian immigrant work force played in the Catalan nationalist politics of the period, the potential subversion implicit in the hybrid Catalan/Spanish language was soon perceived as the revealing mark of the *xarnego*: a subaltern subject perceived by the middle class as both an economic necessity and a cultural and linguistic burden.

From the very first moment the *xarnego* jargon was linked to the Catalan language and culture through the capitalist economy and the distribution of labor.

López-Bulla's narration of his first encounter with this new and strange dialect unambiguously tells us so. Avoiding the term *xarnego* and renaming it *catalastellano*, he writes:

[En la fábrica, los mandos medios eran] los urdidores de un lenguaje anfibio, el *catalastellano*, una parla concreta, compuesta de retales catalanes con respuntes de castellano, que iba calando allí donde se meten las palabras: como si fueran antiguos ecolistas, los encargados creaban los incunables de esta lengua híbrida que transmitían imperativamente a la infantería, ordenando y mandando, mandado y ordenando: '¡Que te veo, noi! ¡No t'amaiguís, maricón!', '¿Ha arribat aquest pedido?, ¡rápido!', '¡No quiero merder!', voces que caían como chuzos de punta entre el personal. La voz de estos hombres de pelo en pecho era mayormente imperativa, porque así convenía a una serie de intereses encadenados, aunque a ellos seguramente les tocaba tan sólo una apariencia de pelliczo. (59)

The new hybrid language born in the '60s, deeply ingrained within the *xarnego* culture of immigration, cannot be properly understood without taking into consideration the role played by the macroeconomic, capitalist structure of the Catalan economy, as well as the nationalist drive that often accompanied it. Burdened by the essentialist identity politics embraced by many nationalist propositions, the new immigrant hybrid subject was soon framed in terms of *Catalanisme* (the politics of "being" Catalan) and *Catalanitat* (the "essence" or "sentiment" of all things Catalan).⁸ The impasse created by such an opposition is hardly sur-

prising. Exuding from an essentialist paradigm whose lingering effects are felt even today, the ideologies of assimilation have been strongly sponsored by practically all versions of Catalan nationalism.⁹ Evident since the *Renaixença* (which with a barely noticeable immigrant population of non-Catalan origin was mostly preoccupied with the literary status of the Catalan language), it quickly grew stronger. As Antoni Strubell explains:

Durant uns setanta anys (entre els primers Jocs Florals i la proclamació de la República) el catalanisme hegemònic esclatarà des de les posicions medievalistes, conservadores i apolítiques de la Renaixença fins arribar a l'assumpció plena del nacionalisme polític [...] es passaria dels tebis postulats de Rubió i Ors—per al qual Catalunya tot just podia aspirar a recuperar la seva llengua literària—al nacionalisme programàtic i desacomplexat d'homes com Prat i Macià. [...] Va en augment la conscienciació respecte al caràcter *nacional* de Catalunya. (63-64)

In the period loosely bracketed between the First and Second Barcelona Universal Exhibits (1888 and 1929) Barcelona and its surrounding experienced a significant influx of immigrants. Most, however, were of rural Catalan origin.¹⁰ During the 1931-1939 period, nationalist sentiment saw the political effervescence and party alignment of what Strubell has termed "el catalanisme socialment compromés" (160), with the political left mostly subsuming the immigrant linguistic and cultural difference into class terms. After the economic stagnation of the post-war period of the '40s and '50s, the heated

political and cultural debate on Catalan nationalism during the nationalist revival of the '60s was once again sponsoring ideologies of assimilation, linked to capital development.¹¹

It can easily be argued that the ideologies of assimilation sponsored by mainstream Catalan nationalism, closely linked to Modern capital development, were in fact responsible or at least one of the major contributing factors that serves to explain the truly successful story of upward mobility undergone by the '60s immigrant population. But, on the other hand, the ideologies of assimilation, as performed in the post-industrial age, also account for the silencing of the immigrant subject and its culture during the later years of the dictatorship and after the Franco period. As noted by Manuel Pedrolo in his introduction to *Si son roses floriràn*, we can practically count on one hand the literature on immigration produced by immigrants.¹² Besides *Els altres catalans*, among the literary works from the '60s we find Candel's sequel *Donde la ciudad cambia su nombre*¹³ and Juan Marsé's acclaimed 1966 novel *Ultimas tardes con Teresa*. In terms of film, there is Josep María Forn's 1968 film *Piel quemada*, a portrayal of Southern Spanish immigrants working in the then-booming Mediterranean coastal construction sites of Catalonia and their explosive encounters with blonde tourist goddesses from Northern Europe, and Francesc Rovira-Beleta's film on the Barcelona Gypsies, *Los Tarantos*. And from the late '60s on, important representations of the immigrant experience can also be found in the lyric songs of Joan Manuel Serrat.¹⁴

Leaving Serrat aside, however, the '60s production by or on *xarnego* culture

is not well known outside of Catalonia. Confined to the Catalan cultural arena, only Marsé's *Ultimas tardes con Teresa* can be cited as an example of a depiction of immigrant culture breaking regional barriers. And even in this case, practically no acknowledgment of the immigration phenomenon is made in the critical bulk of essays that the novel has spurred since it first came out in 1966. Furthermore, reference to *xarnego* culture practically vanishes after the demise of the Franco regime in the mid '70s. The most notable literary exceptions (never using the term *xarnego*) being Jaime Gil de Biedma—most of all his poem “Barcelona ja no és bona, o paseo solitario en primavera,” and the work of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán and Juan Marsé. The latter exposed *xarnego* culture most brilliantly in his uncannily lucid *El amante bilingüe* and in the superb *Ronda del Guinardó*; Vázquez Montalbán often addressed it in his literary fiction, the best examples being his character “Pepe Carvalho” from his popular detective series, and, in a most focused way the character “Paco” in the first part of his 1987 novel *Los alegres muchachos de Atzavara*.

To this short list produced in the post-Francoist period we could add the queer, urban cultural production that in the Barcelona of the political transition of the late '70s and early '80s magnificently displayed an unexpected mode of *xarnego* hybridization. I am thinking here of the works and “happenings” of the late “painter-travesti” Ocaña, as well as the radical pornographic comic books of Nazario (chiefly his *Anarcoma*). Ocaña's fascinating cultural hybridation and subaltern position within both the micro-politics of the hegemonic cultural Catalan

scene and the macrostructure of a local/global hegemonic patriarchal arena can be seen at work in the 1978 Ventura Pons film *Ocaña: Retrat Intermitent*. The film, a testimonial documentary, shows amidst all of its magnificent postmodern, post-industrial, post-neobarroque *plumerío* the radiant location of a specific culture: one that is at once proudly queer and *xarnego*.¹⁵ In the '90s, Maruja Torres's *Un calor tan cercano* (1998), and Maria Barbal's 1999 novel *Carrer Bolívia* are two of the best examples. More recently, a postmodern conciliatory re-writing of the history of *xarnego* Catalan culture has been addressed in TV3, the Catalan network, with postmodern products like the 2003 *María* once again making use of an ideology of assimilation.

The silencing of the immigrant *xarnego* culture in Catalonia in the aftermath of the restoration of democratic liberties in Spain is closely linked to the discourses of normalization as heralded and promoted by the *Convergència i Unió*, the party in power since 1981. A follow-up on the ideologies of assimilation of modern Catalan nationalism, they are, however, postmodern configurations, neatly falling within the neoliberal, neopopulist mode inherent to what Fredric Jameson and others have described as the third stage of capitalist development.¹⁶ The ideological Marxist banner that acknowledged the existence of a *xarnego* subject in class terms no longer found an echo in the postindustrial age of the last quarter of the twentieth century. In the period of the Cold War and of Western Marxism, in Jameson's words,

a complex analysis of ideology needed to be developed in order to unmask the persistent substitutions of in-

commensurate dimensions, the passing off of political arguments in the place of economic ones, the appeal to alleged traditions [...] as answers to new and unpredictable social experiments. (137)

At the end of the second millennium we were witness to a new passing: the disposal of the ideologies themselves as the mark of the new paradigm. "Now," continues Jameson,

it has become customary to identify political freedom with market freedom [...] the motivations behind ideology no longer seem to need an elaborate machinery of decoding and hermeneutic interpretation. (137)

López Bulla, a Marxist, is also very clear in this respect. He writes in his memoir:

En mis tiempos no había multinacionales en Mataró. En cambio ahora, ¿qué propiedades son de por aquí? [...] La caída de las viejas catedrales del trabajo lleva consigo el retiro de los empresarios de antaño sustituidos por una jauría de *destroyers* financieros. [...] Me huelo que con estos personajes empiezan nuevas sagas familiares [...] una parte importante de Cataluña se desplaza hacia las afueras de su propia historia, incluso de la reciente [...] los últimos doscientos años han conformado una Catalunya de fábricas, unas personas en torno a ellas, una manera de ser en torno a esas catedrales. Por eso la caída de esta arquitectura cambia radicalmente el paisaje y sus gentes. (198, 200-02)

More than thirty years after his arrival to Catalonia, in 1997 the *paisaje* had certainly changed. López Bulla's descrip-

tion of the fall of the industrial landscape as architectural devastation, as well as his references to Catalonia's displacement toward the outside of its own economic and cultural history, follows almost literally the Deleuzian deterritorialization effect as described by Jameson:

[Deterritorialization] implies a new ontological free-floating state, one in which [...] the inherent nature of the product becomes insignificant [...] while the goal of production no longer lies in any specific market [...], but rather in its transformation into that element which by definition has no context or territory and indeed no use-value as such, namely money. So it is that in any specific region of production, as [Giovanni] Arrighi shows us [in *The Long Twentieth Century*], there comes a moment in which the logic of capitalism [...] determines an abandonment of that kind of specific production, along with its factories and trained workforce, and, *leaving them behind in ruins*, takes its flight to other more profitable ventures. (153, my emphasis)

If then, as Jameson and others claim, at the third stage of capital development market freedom is (or was?) identified with political freedom (137), in post-Franco Catalonia the immigrant worker could no longer be the good proletarian as seen, for instance, through the romantic eyes of "Teresa" in Marsé's *Ultimas tardes*. Marsé's famous character "el Pijoaparte," the "lumpen-xarnego" of almost mythical, Hollywood proportions, no longer exists. Today, replaced by the new immigrant worker of non-Western origin, the old *xava* has thoroughly dissolved, assimilated into the new social order.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán understood such vanishing early on in *Los alegres muchachos*, insightfully noting Paco's fascination for the way of life of the shifting, already postmodern Catalan bourgeoisie of the late-Franco era. In his novel Vázquez Montalbán in fact replaces that former *xava*—depicted by Gil de Biedma in "Barcelona ja no es bona" as the Marxist hope for the new future—with a new apolitical subject, "Paco." From this novel on, what is portrayed in the literature of the post-Franco period is the passing of ideologies, a factor linked to the vanishing of the immigrant-proletarian-*xarnego* subject. Marsé in *El amante bilingüe* works in a similar way, turning the "Pijoaparte" character of his former *Ultimas tardes* into "Faneca," a schizoid former *xarnego* culturally and linguistically torn by his love/hate relationship with his wife, Norma. As noted by Ramón Buckley:

El amante bilingüe, de Marsé, no hace sino reincidir en lo que ya apuntaba en *Ultimas tardes*: [...] la historia reciente de Cataluña ha sido, para Marsé, la historia de un amor imposible entre la catalana burguesa y de buena familia y el *xarnego* achulapado de origen andaluz. (17)

Staged in a postindustrial Catalonia, "Norma" is a postmodern, recycled rendition of the young bourgeois "Teresa" of *Ultimas tardes*, the later being more of a romantic at heart than a pseudo-Marxist. Forty-something "Norma," as appropriately indicated by her first name, is in Marsé's novel the new Catalan upper class superwoman dreamt up by the *norma-lització* project. And as such, in the '90s she also appropriately works as the linguistic advisor for the Generalitat government of Jordi Pujol.

Marsé and Montalbán were very much aware of the spectral structure of the postmodern *xarnego*, who, at that point of the post-Franco period was already a vanished, thoroughly assimilated subject. Ghostly specters, however, vaguely reminiscent of the old *xavas* of Biedma, of Marsé's "lumpen-proletarians," and of Candel's *xarnegos*, kept and keep haunting the deterritorialized scenery of the post-industrial age. Mutated now as a working force of non-Spanish, non-Christian, non-Western origin, the new subaltern population inhabiting Catalonia's third-stage nationalist arena is inextricably linked to the third stage of capital development. The *xarnego* subaltern subject no longer exists; instead, it has turned into a "free-floating" ghost, an empty signifier that like capital itself has separated "from the concrete context of its productive geography" (Jameson 142).

Spectral nationalisms (or post-nationalisms) are a symptom of an ongoing deterritorialization marked by capital development in its third stage. They are signs of a new global form of sovereignty. The Catalan-owned, family-managed industries of the nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries are long gone, and gone with them is the proletarian working force they employed. The vanishing of López Bulla's old "catedrales del trabajo," markers and makers of the second stage of capital and nationalist development and of their immigrant work force has left behind a deterritorialized nationalist landscape. With the old local industries replaced by the new global corporations, a new, spectrally deterritorialized nationalist space is suddenly made available. According to Jameson, "capital itself becomes free-floating" and begins,

to live its life in a new context; no longer in the factories and the spaces of extraction and production, but on the floor of the stock market [...] in the form of speculation itself [...]. This is of course the moment of financial capital as such. (142)

Reclaimed by the free-market logic that equates itself with democratic freedom (Jameson 137), neo-liberal nationalisms become one with pure speculation. Nationalism is turned into a kind of virtual site, ready to be switched, traded, incorporated and re-appropriated as a commodity. To put it simply: the brokering of a postnationalist culture became possible.

In the late Francoist period, or even during period of the transition, the transformation of the second stage of capital development into a third one (with its correlative gradual disappearance of the proletarian component of the *xarnego*-subject construct) was very much unforeseen by Catalan Marxist unions and socialist political parties. They were not able to see that the proletarian *xarnego*, as noted by Vázquez Montalbán with his portrayal of Paco, was more interested in reading *Hola* than *The Communist Manifesto*; more willing to participate in the collective euphoria fueled by the Barcelona Fútbol Club than in the collective internationalist utopia proposed by the Marxist left, and became gradually and increasingly more involved in recreating a hybrid Andalusian-Catalan *Procesión del Rocío* in Catalunya than in participating in the "Diada del 11 de septiembre," the day of Catalan nationalism, a date furthermore weakened by the power of the United States-based September 11 of 2001. But as López Bulla acknowledged, "¿cómo se

pueden mirar las cosas que no se ven?" (196).

Official Marxist ideologies failed to see that their potential conflict with a conservative Catalan nationalist agenda was rooted in the same global paradigmatic shift that made the disappearance of the proletarian worker possible in the first place. Biedma's poem "Barcelona ja no és bona" for instance, can be easily read in such a light. It lucidly and explicitly announces the clash between a nineteenth-century nationalist Catalan construct that first produced the *saltataulells* and later the subaltern *xarnego* subject that worked for them (termed *xava* by Biedma). In "Barcelona ja no és bona" the poet still believes in, and calls for, a radical leftist stance on the part of the "*xava*-as-proletarian" hero. The same can be said of Marsé's first novel, *Últimas tardes*, or even of Candel's testimonial.

The works of the post-Francoist dictatorship emerge in a very different geopolitical arena with "normality" and hegemony at its core. The aim of constituting Catalonia as a "normal," truly hegemonic society clearly finds its roots in the nationalist nineteenth-century movements, strongly grounded in Catalonia's economic growth during the height of its industrialization and modernization period—a period that, since the *Renaixença*, is located within the second classical moment in the theories of capital development. In Jameson's theorization of Giovanni Arrighi's model, in the second stage "money becomes capital, and is invested in agriculture and manufacture: it is territorialized" (141). In Catalonia, the nationalist cultural and economic territorialization of the 1800s can only be seen as continuous with the deterritorialized post-

Franco postnationalist period if we trace its origins along the lines of the "stages of financial expansion" (141), as Jameson explains quoting Ferdinand Braudel. It is in this view that Buckley's statement becomes relevant:

la campaña de normalización no hace sino continuar la tarea que Pompeu Fabra y los otros hombres de la *Renaixença* en el siglo pasado iniciaron. ("Andalunya" 17)

A postnational Catalan "normality" therefore would apply to the societal body that would follow in a reconverted, post-modern recycled way the parameters that molded and propelled Catalan national identity since Modernity.¹⁷ Within such parameters, the linguistic and cultural normalization program as proposed by *Convergència i Unió* during the last two decades successfully aimed at thoroughly assimilating lingering remnants of the *xarnego* subject and culture. As a fast-vanishing hybrid, a subaltern subject who no longer has value within the paradigm of a new hegemonic Catalan market, his/her disappearance also takes with it the cultural memory of his/her former existence.

A complex process is employed, since Catalan culture and language have occupied, and still occupy, non-hegemonic positions within the structure of the Spanish, Castilian-centered state. Catalonia has indeed been a victim, and the Catalan language is a minor, endangered language, one among the many languages of Europe. As such, the claims made from Madrid in the infamous "Manifiesto en defensa de la lengua castellana en Catalunya" in the mid '80s (Buckley, "Andalunya" 17), were, at best, politically destabilizing and not persuasive. The politically

innocent arguments launched by the Partido Popular in 1993 from Madrid, and some of the arguments endorsed by the non-denominational, Catalan-based group “Foro Babel” which emerged as an opponent of nationalism also engaged in the multiculturalist, neopopulist identity/essentialist discourse proper to global neoliberalism at large. But overall, these are instances and examples of an ongoing de-ideologization, part and party of de-territorialization which can, by the same token, be thought of as the corpus of essentialist/nationalist responses given to the “Foro Babel” by many intellectuals and cultural producers (see Víctor Alexandre’s 1999 collection of interviews).¹⁸ On different and opposite sides they cannot, however, be disentangled from a thoroughly new de-ideologized paradigm

Devoid of ideology, the confrontations between nationalists and non-nationalists at the turn of the second millennium emerged as clear examples of neoliberal populist politics in what appeared to be, or was, a post-nationalist mode. If we were, or we are (as Jameson and others claim) in the third stage of capital development, the locking of horns on issues of cultural hybridization was in fact *the* expected performance of the postnationalist stage before the global machinations of United States politics after September 11, 2001. Managed by free-floating capital, it seemed to be, after all, advantageous only for the corporate market.

In the market scenario on the verge of September 11, 2001, nationalist players did not have an ideology but something else akin to what has been identified by John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge as “market idolotry” (204). In the ’90s the official Catalan nationalist demands

of the party in power for recognition as a nation without a state, as well as the efforts of dissemination of the Catalan language through a massive program of normalization, were not only a local nationalist claim but necessarily responded to the global geopolitical order within which Catalonia occupies one of several hegemonic positions.¹⁹ In the Gramscian sense, as Corbridge and Agnew have stated,

a period of geopolitical order cannot be regarded as non-hegemonic simply because the hegemonic practices and ideas of the period are not identifiable with a single dominant state dominant on the global scale. Indeed, they may well be ‘competing’ hegemonies (and aspiring hegemonies) based in different states. (17)

In addition, competing hegemonies and aspiring hegemonies may be based in the same state and/or microregion. If hegemony, according to Gramsci, “refers to the creation of distinctive structures of orders based upon shifts in the social organization of the world economy,” (Agnew and Corbridge 17), the culturalist/identity projects for (and against) Catalan *normalització* at work during the ’80s and ’90s were hegemonic ones.

Acknowledgment (beyond populist, neoliberal discourses) of the former existence of a complex *xarnego* subject is therefore overdue since the latest re-emergence of a spectral memory of a *xarnego* subject and its cultural baggage uncannily mirrors the current waves of immigrants of non-European origin. Although weak and blurred, such a memory clearly destabilizes neoliberal projects of subject normalcy since it forces us to trace important sectors of the Catalan nationalist construct

to its industrial, class-centered roots, instead of keeping our focus on its recycled, multicultural and postmodern version. Nationalist reaffirmations of quasi-total *xarnego* assimilation is made possible by the fact that its postindustrial “displacement towards the outside”—in López Bulla’s words—involves the at least two new social organisms: the “other Catalans” of today, the mostly African (North and Sub-Saharan) de-subjectivized work force that has replaced the old *xarnego* one; and the new “other capitalists,” that is, the global financial corporations of today. Explains López-Bulla:

Ya de bastante tiempo atrás, Catalunya está en una situación de interinidad: catedrales del trabajo que se caen por allí, mientras surgen chamizos tecnológicos por allá; dineros que vienen en un santiamén y que de la misma manera se esfuman; rostros pálidos que menguan y negritudes que aumentan. (202-03)

From the mid '90s on, Catalan culture and politics conformed itself in the face of the widespread displacements and immigration patterns of populations coming from Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Doubly baffled by its historical hybridity, bilingualism and diglossia, the question of “who is Catalan,” what is to be “normal” in Catalonia, and what is “proper” to Catalonia, should be reconsidered. But in order to do so, the unacknowledged former *passing* of the old *xarnego* subject needs to be brought back from oblivion.

How to do so is in fact one of the main challenges of Catalonia today. On the verge of the 2004 Fòrum de les Cultures, the former *xarnegos* are not only

xarnegos no more, but as a social group they form the most astonishing success story in their light-speed assimilation to Catalan culture and language as well as their upward economic status. Today, many of the old proletarian suburban, peripheral sites have been demolished and/or remodeled, some, like Diagonal Mar, giving way for the new corporate global ventures.

Diagonal Mar is not the Passeig de Gràcia—the Eixample built at the turn of the last century for and by the industrial Catalan bourgeoisie. As a neo-capitalist venture, as a *ciudad satélite* for the multinational, post-industrial super rich, Diagonal Mar is emerging as an oceanfront-Miami-style resort. Currently under construction, and catering to the corporate global financial system, Diagonal Mar positions itself as the ultimate uncontaminated and self-contained neo-capitalist urban site. As the newest form of real estate speculation, Diagonal Mar, however, uncannily emerges as a kind of phantasmatic memorial, perhaps in order to remind us that new theorizations and praxis between the local and the global are to be made. Within Catalonia itself, of course, but also *vis-à-vis* an astoundingly diverse Spain and Europe, Diagonal Mar is being born out of the ashes of spectral *xarnego* sites. And, as similarly underscored by José Luis Guerín for the site of the Raval in his documentary film *En construcción*, Diagonal Mar also uses for its development a transnational, de-subjectivized subaltern work force.

If action is required, we should discern to what or to whom the new immigrants are a subaltern work force. Diagonal Mar is a symbolic burial site that fosters traces of the former *xarnego* subject, a

ghost encrypted within its entrails and foundations. But within a post-nationalist landscape, this ghost is not the specter that may be now haunting Catalonia. It is the shadow of the new corporate financial system that may be haunting not only Catalonia, but also the world. After September 11, 2001, after the war in Iraq, a new mode of political thought needs to be sought for—a new understanding of the political, the cultural, and the economic that, going beyond identity politics, multiculturalism, and discourses of normalization or linguistic propriety, will tackle the pressing and emerging issues associated with sovereignty and de-subjectivation. “El ayer se desvanece y todos estamos interinos” (203), López-Bulla, a former *xarnego* proletarian, tells us. Distracted by identity politics, we seem blinded by the shadow that globalized financial capitalism has already cast on us. It is time, therefore, to open our eyes to the new and unfolding postnational scene.

Notes

¹ The bilateral pacts were part of the First and Second plan for economic development of 1959 and 1969.

² I refer to Carlos Sentís's novel *Viatge en Transmiserià* for a recent fictional account of the hardships of the immigrants in the 1960s. Josep Maria Forn's 1968 film *La piel quemada* is also one of the best fictional texts on this topic, with a fascinating exposition on traveling on “El Sevillano” train from a woman's perspective.

³ The arrival to the Catalonian urban areas of a considerable contingent of non-Catalan immigrants coincided with a moment of extraordinary cultural and political nationalist effervescence. It is interesting to note, for instance that since 1959, which marks the enactment of the “Plan de estabilización” by the Spanish government and the reforms that will inform the economic and social transformations of '60s Spain, *Serra d'Or*, a Catalan

cultural magazine published by the Abadia de Montserrat, was launched. It is also the year when the Catalan writer Lluís Serrahima published in *Germinhàbit* what is considered to be the first foundational manifesto of “La Nova Cançó catalana.”

Other chronological cultural and economic accomplishments bracketed between the two economic plans, as recorded by Jesús Mestre i Campí in *Cronologia quotidiana de la historia de Catalunya* include:

1961: The society “Omnium Cultural” is formed under the patronage of Catalan entrepreneurs, with the goal of promoting and funding Catalan culture; EDIGSA, the first recording publishing house in Catalan is formed.

1962: The launching of Edicions 62, a publishing house committed to the dissemination of literary works in the Catalan language—the first post-war literary award being the “Premi Joanot Martorell,” first awarded in 1959 to the best novel in Catalan under the initiative of Editorial Selecta; Joan Fuster publishes *Nosaltres, els valencians*; celebration of the European Movement Conference in Munich, Germany, with the non-official participation of 118 Spanish representatives; a claim for the return of democratic rights to Spain is made.

1964: Around 300 workers found “Comissió Obrera Central,” soon to become the “Comissions Obreres” (CC.OO.) Marxist-Leninist union; the first TV program in Catalan: an adaptation of the play by Josep Maria de Segarra, *La ferida luminosa*; *Tele-express*, a nationalist evening newspaper in Castilian comes to light in Barcelona (in the post-Franco period it will be replaced by the *Avui*, published in Catalan).

1966: “Caputxinada.” Aborted by the police the founding of a democratic student's union, “Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants de la Universitat de Barcelona (SEDEUB).

1967: Construction of Autopistas de Catalunya (toll-highways); the building in Catalonia of the “Central Nuclear Vandellós” (Tarragona), the first nuclear facility in Spain.

1968: Founding of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

1969: The constitution of the “Coordinadora de Forces Polítiques de Catalunya” (1969).

1969: Enactment of “II Plan de Desarrollo Económico.”

1970: The formation of the “Assamblea Permanent d’Intellectuals catalans” in the Montserrat Abbey: A politically diverse group of around 300 people, they claim refuge at the Benedictine monastery—longtime sympathizer through its publishing house of the Catalan cultural/nationalist cause—in protest of the military process against ETA members, known as “el proceso de Burgos.”

⁴ While many of these sites have either been demolished (Can Tunis, Cases Barates, Port, etc) or in some cases improved, many still remained nowadays as the receiving space for the wave of North and Sub-Saharan immigrants.

⁵ The Majorca writer Baltasar Porcel reported on the Gitano seasonal migrant population, and on the use of the *jaenero* (“coming from the province of Jaén”) term (20). As late as 1976, another Majorca, the acclaimed photographer Toni Catany took a series of photographs of many *jaeneros*, of which the picture shown is part (photo courtesy of Tony Catany).

⁶ The diversity of peripheral nationalist claims for a politics of identity include Joan Fuster’s book *Nosaltres els valencians*. But be it conservative nationalism (Arimany), or progressive (Fuster), in the ’60s, and partly due to the main focus given to the politics of identity, the strong cultural push for a vernacular expression of *catalanisme* and *catalanitat* mainly assumes assimilation of the immigrant population. We can infer from Joan-Lluís Marfany thesis on the origins of *catalanisme* that the politics of assimilation manifest in Catalan nationalism take their roots in the fact that in the nineteenth century: “l’intent de construcció d’una Espanya basada en la tradició cultural castellana va ser experimentat per molts catalans com una intolerable amenaça a la catalanitat,” (*La cultura del catalanisme* 384)—not to mention the strong anti-Catalan sentiment of the central Castilian power throughout Modern Spanish history.

⁷ Manuel Vázquez Montalbán has continuously alerted his readers from many of his public sites of the social and historical damage inflicted by current neoliberal nationalist discourses, as they continuously engage in a memory-erasing politics of the socialist historical roots of Catalan workers

(of immigrant and natives alike). Vázquez Montalbán, a Marxist, mostly targets the nationalist politics of Jordi Pujol’s government. Pujol’s neopopulism is seen as its most exemplary in the funding that TV 3, the Catalan TV network sponsored by the Generalitat, gives to neo-historical series such as *Poble Sec*, which aims at a portrayal of a washed-out version of the class-root conflicts in early-twentieth-century Catalonia between the industrial bourgeoisie and its working, proletarian population.

⁸ Joan-Lluís Marfany has deeply analyzed in his controversial book *La cultura del catalanisme* its historical and political roots, pointing to its Catholic conservative inception in the nineteenth century.

⁹ For a historical account, see Michael Keating’s chapter on Catalonia in *Nations Against the State*. See also Albert Balcells’s *Historia del nacionalisme català*.

¹⁰ Eduardo Mendoza’s novel *La ciudad de los prodigios* gives us one of the most fascinating accounts of the period. One that, not surprisingly, is also a reference for the new Barcelona of the 1992 Olympic Games.

¹¹ See Albert Balcells’s chapters “El moviment cultural catalanista sota el franquisme” and “L’oposició catalana al franquisme entre el 1962 i el 1975” in his *Història del nacionalisme català* (175-202). Balcells notes that there was no real workers-movement before the ’60s decade (195). He does not explicitly link the immigrant population with the socialist, communist underground unions. But by acknowledging their potentiality for disengagement with nationalist politics, Balcells points to the immigrant, non-Catalan base of unionist engagement. He writes:

La participació de CC.OO., el 1967, en la jornada nacional catalana de l’Onze de Setembre [...] contribuiria a evitar la divisió de la classe obrera de Catalunya per la qüestió nacional. (196)

¹² Quoted by Josep Maria Huertas in his introduction to the 1998 edition of Francesc Candel’s *Donde la ciudad cambia su nombre* (7).

¹³ Candel has written more than 50 literary pieces, plus all his newspaper collaborations.

¹⁴Margarita Rivière book on Serrat, *Serrat y su época*, focuses on a light overview of the culture of the political transition through Serrat's lyrics. It does not study Serrat's hybrid positionality. Rovira-Beleta's *Los Tarantos* is one of the few cultural texts that focuses directly on the Gypsies life in Catalonia; it gives an orientalist social-realist account, but it is still very much worth seeing it.

¹⁵Ocaña does not use in the film the term *xarnego*—it was, I must remind, a derogatory term. Nevertheless he asserts himself proudly as a queer/rural Southern immigrant. And it is precisely the rural (and queer) Andalusian roots he displays in his work and happenings, and his very conscious and explicit positionality, that turns his work as a proud manifestation of a culture—the immigrant/*xarnego*—that was mostly dismissed in the general public arena. For more information on Ocaña, see my own *El mono del desencanto*.

¹⁶See Jameson's chapter "Culture and Finance Capital" in his book *The Cultural Turn*.

¹⁸See Vilarós's "A Cultural Mapping."

¹⁹See the Foro Babel collection of essays, *El nacionalismo y las lenguas en Cataluña*, and the response given to it by Víctor Alexandre's published interviews, *Jo no sóc espanyol*.

²⁰See Arcadi Espada's *Contra Catalunya*, for a discussion on the processes that link Catalonia's *Convergència i Unió* to corporate capital.

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