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PROFILE

Supervisor

Professor Maria Delgado

Project Title

Travelling Players, Travelling Civil Wars: Spain and Yugoslavia on the Transnational Stage.

Abstract

I am a doctoral candidate at Central and member of the ARHC-funded project, Staging Difficult Pasts. My PhD thesis focuses on how two countries – Spain and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) – have staged each other's civil wars across various forms of artistic media: theatre, film, and literature. Drawing from Michael Rothberg's work on multidirectional memory, I explore how historical entanglements between these two regions have influenced (and, at times, inspired) these artistic representations.

It is estimated that between 1936 and 1939 over 1,900 Yugoslavs travelled to Spain to fight in the Civil War. The volunteers became national symbols of the fight against fascism in the Balkans and are today referred to as transnational heroes: 'Nas?i S?panci' [our Spaniards]. During the war in Yugoslavia, and in the two decades following the country's dissolution, engagement with the Spanish Civil War came to occupy a prominent role in the region's artistic output. Representation of the ideological divide in Spain of the 1930s has provided an avenue for Yugoslav artists to critically examine the history of internal strife in the Balkans, whilst simultaneously avoiding overt mention of local politics. One example of this phenomenon has been the long-standing interest in Jose Sanchis Sinisterra's emblematic play about the Spanish Civil War, *¡Ay, Carmela!*. The play was performed in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sarajevo between 1995 and 1999, and went on to become the longest running production in Bosnian history, performed at SARTR (Sarajevo War Theatre) for over twenty years with the original cast (1999-2020).

Conversely, Spanish news-coverage of the dissolution of Yugoslavia (and, in particular, the Siege of Sarajevo) brought up long-standing questions regarding yet-unaddressed traumas of the Spanish Civil War, e.g. with respect to exhumation, memory politics, and (more recently) secession. These questions have been explored by authors and playwrights such as Clara Usón, Slobodan (Boban) Minic, Hadi Kurich, Juan Mayorga, and Laila Ripoll, amongst others, through the creation of parallels with the Former Yugoslavia. Taking these historical entanglements into account, I suggest that engagement with 'other' civil wars in countries that have their own experience with dissolution has allowed artists a critical lens with which to explore local issues – while appearing to do precisely the opposite.

Profile

Prior to joining Central, I completed a BA (Modern Languages: Spanish and Portuguese) and MSt at the University of Oxford, specialising in Golden Age and contemporary Spanish theatre. My master's thesis, funded by the Clarendon Scholarship and supervised by Prof Jonathan Thacker, examined the influence of Cervantes' interludes on Lorca's juvenilia.

I am a member of the AHGBI (Association of Hispanists of Great Britain & Ireland) and the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association). From 2020-22 I was the co-editor of the MHRA journal, *Working Papers in the Humanities*; I am currently editorial assistant at *Contemporary Theatre Review*.

Teaching

Visiting Lecturer, University of Oxford
Michaelmas and Hilary, 2023/24

Stipendiary Lecturer, University of Oxford.
Michaelmas, Hilary, Trinity 2022/23

- Prelims Paper III: Introduction to Literary Texts (Cervantes, Calderón, Antonio Machado)
- FHS Paper VIII: Modern Spanish Literature (1811—present)
- Prelims and FHS Paper II: Literary Translation

Stipendiary Lecturer, University of Oxford.
Michaelmas Term, 2021

- Prelims Paper III: Introduction to Literary Texts (Cervantes, Calderón, Antonio Machado)
- FHS Paper VII: Period of Literature 1543-1695 (Calderón, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón)
- Prelims and FHS Paper II: Literary Translation

Publications

"From Golden Age to Civil War: Stages of Spain in Yugoslavia," in *Daring Adaptations, Creative Failures and Experimental Performances in Iberian and Transnational Contexts*, eds. Maria del Pilar Chouza-Calo, Esther Fernández and Jonathan Thacker (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), 203-222.

Pablo Messiez, *The Eyes*, trans. by Alma Prelec and Maria Bastianes (Cambridge: MHRA New Translations), *in press*.

Prelec, Alma, and Di Dodo, Emily (eds.). On Forgetting. *MHRA Working Papers in the Humanities* 17 (2022).

O'Kell, Hayley, and Prelec, Alma (eds.). Desire. *MHRA Working Papers in the Humanities* 16 (2021).

Reviews (commissioned)

Jovanovic, Zeljko, 'Twentieth-Century Sephardic Authors from the Former Yugoslavia', *Modern Language Review*, 118.2, 2023: 271-272.

'Power Politics on Campus: Laura Kipnis' Unwanted Advances,' *The Oxford Magazine*, Second Week, Trinity, 2019: 12-13.

Conference Presentations

'Don Juan, Partizan?' Oxford Golden Age Symposium, Trinity College, University of Oxford, 12 March 2024.

'Badly Behaved Pasts: On Monuments, Graffiti, Films, and Plays that Refuse to Go'. Panel, British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (BASEES) Annual Conference, University of Cambridge, 5-7 April 2024.

'Fuenteovejuna without a Revolution: A Yugoslav Reinterpretation (1993)'. Oxford Golden Age Symposium, Merton College, University of Oxford, 17 May 2023.

'Esto es teatro: The Autobiographer as Trickster in Teatro de la Resistencia's GRAD'. AHGBI Annual Conference, University College Dublin, 17-18 April 2023.

'Multidirectional Memory and Theatre of Civil War: Transnational Entanglements'. Logic, Limits, Contingency, EXC Temporal Communities, Freie Universität Berlin, 27-30 March 2023.

"Me he acordado de ti, y aquí estoy": Staging Spain in the Former Yugoslavia'. Sub-Faculty of Spanish Research Seminar, University of Oxford. 30 November 2021.

'From Sarajevo to Spain: Voices Under Siege'. AHGBI Annual Conference, University College Dublin, 29-31 March 2021.

'Theatre and Civil War: Yugoslavia re-imagines Spain'. Third Biennial Iberian Theatre and Performance Network Conference (ITPN), School of Advanced Study, University of London, 25-27 June 2020. (*postponed due to Covid-19*)

'El activismo social y la (re)creación del pasado: Teatro español en los balcanes'. Congreso Internacional Performa, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 27-29 November 2019.

'Let's talk about you, not me': ¡Ay, *Carmela!* and the Spanish Civil War in postwar Yugoslavia'. AHGBI Annual Conference, University of Durham, 8-10 April 2019.

'Teatro (breve) bajo la arena': Lorca in "dialogue" with Cervantes.' XVIII Forum for Iberian Studies, University of Oxford, 20 - 21 June 2018.

'[El secreto de todo no existe: \(ir\)realidades documentadas en La piedra oscura de Alberto Conejero](#)'. XXV Seminario Internacional del SELITEN@T, UNED Madrid, 27-29 June 2016.

Moderator (Speaker: Mar Zubieta). XXXV Jornadas de Teatro del Siglo de Oro: Ciclo Académico, Universidad de Almería, 12-14 April 2018.

Panel Chair (Speakers: Alberto Gutiérrez Gil and Monserrat Fernández Crespo). XXXIV Jornadas de Teatro del Siglo de Oro: Ciclo Académico, Universidad de Almería, 10-13 May 2017.

Awards and Funding

- AHRC Doctoral Scholarship (Full-fees plus maintenance grant), 2019-2022
- AHGBI Postgraduate Conference Award, 2020
- Clarendon MSt Scholarship (Full-fees plus maintenance grant), 2017-2018
- Ramón Silva Prize, University of Oxford, 2017

- Arteaga Prize, University of Oxford, 2017
- Wadham College Undergraduate Scholarship, University of Oxford, 2016
- Scatcherd European Scholarship, University of Oxford, 2015
- Kolkhorst Exhibition, University of Oxford, 2014

Practice

While my research is not practice-based, I have been involved in the cultural sector in various capacities, including in festival curation, live (consecutive) translation, event moderation, poetry recitals and performance. Affiliations include:

- The Theatre Times (Co-Artistic Director, 2020 and 2021 IOTF)
- The ICA (Research Team, 2020 Frames of Representation Film Festival)
- Multistory Productions (Co-Founder)

As a theatre practitioner, I have performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and at the Soho Theatre (London), and trained at the Oxford School of Drama. I am a member of Actors' Equity UK and am represented by Jewell Wright LTD (UK) and Alsira García Maroto (Spain).