

Rewriting *xarneguisme*/ Rewriting Cultures: *Xarnego* Poetry and Catalan Identity

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Focusing on a recent bilingual poetry publication, *Xarnegos/Charnegos (Antología)* (2010), this article aims at providing a new understanding of *xarnego* poetry. Seeking to argue for a positive reevaluation of the terms *xarnego* and *xarneguisme*, as well as for their inclusion in Catalan identity, the article acknowledges the cultural richness they offer and highlights the important contribution they can make to Catalan identity. This new understanding of *xarnego* poetry is interpreted as a mode of rewriting that offers poetic voices the opportunity for ideological progression and cultural development through the analysis of various emotional arguments –language, culture, art, history and territory (Guibernau, 2004). Arguing for a fertile hybrid identity present in the verses, the article adds to current debates on Catalan identity from a literary point of view, challenging the assumption of a rigid divide between Catalan and Spanish cultural logic and expanding ideologies in Catalan studies.

The word *xarnego* –or *charnego*, its equivalent Spanish form– makes reference to a negative and derogative characteristic of a person's identity. The expression, the more contemporary definitions of which range from that of an immigrant from a Spanish-speaking region living in Catalonia –according to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española*– to the children of immigrants in Catalonia that have not been successfully 'catalanised' –according to the *Diccionario de María Moliner*–, has evolved since its origins, when it was applied to a child of Catalan and French parentage (Candel 1964: 177-178). Nevertheless, the term has long been used as an insulting label –or at least a very uncomfortable one– that has helped to exclude and marginalize certain groups in Catalan society. Focusing on a recent bilingual publication in verse, *Xarnegos/Charnegos (Antología)* (2010), this article seeks to argue for a positive re-evaluation of the terms *xarnego* and *xarneguisme* as well as their inclusion in Catalan identity. This study will not attempt to

theorize identity but will instead analyse the anthology with the aim of providing a new understanding of *xarnego* poetry and its features. Through an examination of emotive confluences in this poetry, the article will strive to acknowledge the cultural richness of the two aforementioned terms as well as the important contribution they make to Catalan identity. This new awareness will be flagged up as a mode of re-writing that offers poetic voices the opportunity for ideological progression and cultural development. Sensitive to the fertile, hybrid identity present in the verse, it is hoped that the survey will add to current debates on Catalan identity, challenging the putative, rigid divide between Catalan and Spanish cultural logic and reducing exclusivity in the field of Catalan letters.

Spanish-language works by Catalan authors are by no means rare and they include highly acclaimed names such as Joan Boscà, Bonaventura-Carles Aribau, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán and Pere Gimferrer to name but a few. However, since the 19th century, when the *Renaixença* established Catalan language as the symbol of the nation's identity –and especially since Francoism, when Catalan language and literature underwent a period of veritable struggle–, literary activity in Spanish by authors born in Catalonia has been viewed by some with tangible apprehension.¹ And *xarneguisme* and *xarengo* literature add another layer of complexity to the matter, problematising it even more since what constitutes a *xarnego* writer goes beyond the use of Spanish in Catalonia whilst clearly seeking to explore a Catalan identity. Attempting to provide a nuanced definition of *xarnego* literature is a most difficult task due to the intricacy of the phenomenon and the need to be both flexible and coherent in its designation. Some academics have linked *xarnego* literature to linguistic connotations (Resina 1999a: 36, 1999b) and associated *xarnego* cultural production to that created by the 1960's migrant population (Vilarós 2003: 236). But *xarnego* literature is more than just the literary product of Catalan authors –those born and those who

¹ The most contentious issue in the definition of Catalan literature has undoubtedly been the choice of language. The debates around this subject, however, lie outside the scope of this article. For an excellent discussion of the topic, its limitations and possible redefinitions, see King (2002, 2005a).

live in Catalonia– that write in Spanish and is linked directly or indirectly to the waves of *xarnego* immigration from the Francoist period:² it implies the use of certain characteristics, tropes or topics that mark a text with Catalan tendencies and unmistakably strive to align it to Catalonia. Significantly, *xarnego* literature also denotes a sense of marginality, dislocation and tension –both linguistic and cultural –, related to the notion of belonging. All these characteristics provide a text that often seeks to end the struggle that having a Spanish ‘past’ involves, and that aims at finding its own space in Catalonia, even at present.

In the aforementioned context, recent events such as the Frankfurt Book Fair inviting Catalan culture in 2005 to be the Guest of Honour in 2007 (King 2006: 253-255) or the polemic *Estatut d’Autonomia de Catalunya* 2006 and its articles on language considered unconstitutional (Gómez Corona 2011), have only revitalized old debates regarding Catalan literature written in Spanish and *xarnego* literature. These discussions have given place in recent years to some fruitful studies on contemporary literature in Spanish by Catalan authors, most of them revolving around its narrative (Cramerí 2000, Heinemann 1996, King 2005a, 2005b, 2006, Resina 1999a, 1999b) with some inclusions of queer and urban cultures (Vilarós 2003) and theatre (Berger 2005). Some of the aforementioned studies, which attempt to frame the role *xarnego* writing plays in Catalan literature and the struggles it faces in the field, have made use of a postcolonial theoretical framework in their works, a useful approach as ‘Cataluña demuestra muchos rasgos comunes con otros países anteriormente colonizados si la vemos en términos del imperialismo cultural que llevaron a cabo varios regímenes centralistas, y dada la naturaleza de los medios adoptados por los catalanes para resistir tal dominación’ (King 2005a: 3). This approach has also helped to

² Francisco Candel’s book *Els altres catalans* (1964) remains the most complete work on *xarnegos* and *xarnegusime* to date and it is a key reference for any study that deals with the matter. See, for example, the chapter entitled ‘El “charnego”’ (173-183) for a comprehensive analysis of the term as well as an indication of the marginalisation and tension the *xarnego* faces in Catalonia.

highlight the fact that ‘the opposition between the colonizing and the colonized cultures and peoples is not as clear-cut as Catalan nationalism would have us believe’ (2006: 259), and has enhanced discussions around Catalan identity and Catalan literature. However, very little has been written about poetry in Spanish by Catalan authors from the point of view of *xarnego* studies, possibly due to language being considered a much more significant and essential trait in this genre. Aiming at drawing attention to poetry written in Spanish in Catalonia, this article argues that contemporary *xarnego* poetry does not need to be at odds with Catalan identity. Rather, it can play an important part in the construction of a Catalan symbolic imaginary, and its study can impart productive understandings of a rewriting process key for Catalonia.

In 2010, the *Diputació de Barcelona*, four city councils and six different cultural societies contributed to the publication of *Xarnegos/Charnegos (Antología)*, edited by Noemí Trujillo. This anthology brings together 18 contemporary poets from, for the most part, the outskirts of Barcelona (home par excellence to the *xarnego* community), and it includes a preamble by the bilingual poet Joan Margarit. The poets, some of whom were born in Catalonia, some in other parts of Spain –and one even in Latin America–, are all linked in one way or another with the waves of Spanish immigration that arrived in Catalonia from the 1950s to 1975, as clearly stated in the biographical notes that precede the work of each author. *Xarnegos/Charnegos (Antología)* is presented as a bilingual edition with one main aim: that of casting a positive light onto the term *xarnego* –openly discriminated against in Catalan society– reclaiming it as a positive and fruitful trait. In the introduction to the work Trujillo announces that ‘[e]sta antología surge con la intención de dignificar dicha palabra’ (2010: 15),³ and the editor and the different authors certainly endeavored to do so in the extensive promotional tour organized after the publication of the book. Not openly associated

³ With the intention of complying with the hybridity of *xarnego* literature, all quotations from this book will be in Spanish with the short title being the first word (in Catalan) and will, from now on, only include the name of the author and the page number.

to a specific political party's agenda, although clearly political in sociological terms, the intrinsic value of *Xarnegos* lies not in the quality of the poets whose work is anthologized –of very variable worth–, but in its potential to explore *xarneguisme* and its capacity to embody and portray a sense of true Catalan identity through the use of different emotional arguments in their verses.

Montserrat Guibernau argues that intellectuals make use of both rational and emotional arguments to develop nationalist identities and movements (2004: 28-32). Whilst rational arguments involve objective reasons –and in the particular case of Catalonia they revolve around self-government, individualized funding and the recognition of Catalonia as a nation (2004: 29)–, emotional ones appeal to a collective sense of identity: '[b]elonging to a nation, which is real in the minds of its members, confers on them a sense of continuity grounded upon the sentiment of being part of a group portrayed as an extended family' (2004: 29). According to Guibernau, the emotional arguments used to create a nationalist identity center around five clusters, which are language, culture, history, territory and art (2004: 30), as these are 'elements that have become symbols of a country' and 'contribute to defining the community to which they belong' (2004: 32). Language has been a key issue in the recent debates and discussions around Catalan literature and identity; and more so in those making use of a postcolonial theoretical framework due to language being 'central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to their entire universe' (Wa Thiongo'o 1986: 4).

Nonetheless, the dangers and disadvantages of an excessive concern with language have also been highlighted by some (Renan 1990: 17) for the limitations it exerts, something intrinsically acknowledged in the anthology studied. *Xarnegos* resolves the aforementioned peril presenting itself as a bilingual edition, including bilingual introductions, presentations, preambles and epilogues. What is more, the reader of this anthology is never completely certain of which of the pieces are the original ones and which are the translations –it is declared in the anthology that some of its parts were originally written in Catalan, but it does not provide further specifics–, blurring what could be interpreted as the leading language. Catalan and

Spanish are presented with absolute parity, as the voices of each of the poets can be read in both versions, pointing at a sense of identity that can be traced beyond language.

The struggle that writing in Spanish in Catalonia presupposes, and the issue that has fuelled the strongest controversies regarding Catalan identity for the last thirty years, is almost completely absent from this poetry. In fact, the few mentions of animosity between the two languages refer to the moment when some ancestors arrived in Catalonia and encountered a different linguistic reality: 'Las primeras palabras que oyó,/ gritos en catalán que no entendió' (Carolina Ibac Verdaguer, 171). Once the difficulty is overcome all struggles cease and a sense of pure richness is achieved, presenting an unproblematic bilingual –and not diglossic– environment: 'Llegaba bilingüe a todas partes./ Su mente se abría sin control' (173). The presence of a particular language other than the one in which one writes is seen as just part of the landscape and the prosperity of the land, not a dilemma for the community: 'Por pasillos abiertos al sol/ navegas tú, Barcelona,/ lenguaje y piedra/ tendida al mar' (Marisa Morali, 111), 'una hermosa geografía/ que nos toca el alma/ con sus lenguas y su cultura' (Alicia Aragón Rodríguez, 134).

In this poetry the use of two languages does not threaten the sentiment of belonging to a certain community, which highlights Ernest Renan's opinion that '[l]anguage invites people to unite, but it does not force them to do so' (Renan 1990: 16), rather it draws attention to other possibilities, to the potential to rewrite languages and cultures. Stewart King has extensively analyzed the presence of Catalan language in narrative in Spanish by Catalan authors (2005a), in particular 'la presencia de palabras y modismos catalanes que impregnan tal hecho literario' (61). *Xarnegos* brings into play similar practices, alluding to Catalan words that require a footnote in the anthology for the non-native reader: 'Soy hijo de esta tierra,/ El país de los embutidos./ Espetec y longanizas./ Morcón blanco y negro./ Butifarra negra y blanca./ [...] Somos de aquí/ y mañana, quién sabe./ Canuts y alpargatas' (Carolina Ibac Verdaguer, 175). Moreover, it falls back on what could be considered rewriting Catalan language into Spanish:

YO, CHARNEGA POR NATURALEZA

Estaba en la barriga del buey,
donde ni nieva ni llueve.

Un día nací.

—Por casualidad—

Allí, entre tu tierra y la mía.

Y me dijeron catalana.

Soy de aquí, también de allí.

Podría haber caído del cielo,
a otros lugares, inesperados.

Una vez aterrizada,

abrí los ojos,

viendo los tejados,

tendida la ropa:

Una vieja barretina,

roja, bien roja, descolorida,

por el tiempo, que ahora nacía.

Orgullosa de ser catalana,

orgullosa de vivir en esta tierra.

Mis abuelos, mis ancestros,

por parte de madre, no eran de aquí.

A pesar de ello mamé sin cesar,

cultura, lengua, tierra

y sentimientos catalanes.

Me emocionan aún las cuatro barras,

al verlas colgadas de los balcones

cada Diada, el once de septiembre.

[...]

(Carolina Ibac Verdaguer, 177)

The first lines of the poem belong to the Spanish translation of probably the most popular folktale in Catalan literature, ‘En Patufet’.

and two of its most well-known lines: 'Sóc a la panxa del bou, on no hi neva ni plou'. The poet is offering here a re-writing of one language onto another and, by extension, the rewriting of one culture onto another, presenting the reader with the sentiment that this revision is possible and successful, and that one voice can improve and enhance the other without negating it. Language is presented here as a permeable entity that can accommodate one's identity without disturbing it. Also, the fact that a Catalan story is being re-worked into Spanish can be viewed not only as a translation but also as a rewriting that works in favour of Catalan and its influence, aimed at popularising its folk literature. The two languages are not in conflict in *Xarnegos*, rather they are fused to portray a sentiment or identity; and they work together to achieve this aim.

'Yo, charnega por naturaleza' by Carolina Ibac is also heavily inscribed with another cluster of the emotional arguments quoted by Guibernau. Ibac chooses to display in her poems a particular form of culture, the traditional and popular, making use of folklore with which Catalan identity is so closely linked.⁴ The poem by Carolina Ibac Verdager begins with two verses from 'En Patufet', drawing from folktales that have shaped the nation's culture and identity for centuries and finding a space in this tradition through the inclusion and adaptation of primary material.⁵ Also, the references to the 'barretina', the traditional Catalan red hat in the shape of a bag, a very representative element of Catalan culture and easily recognisable as such, is depicted in a most sentimental manner, highlighting its colour and the tradition it evokes ('descolorida,/ por el tiempo') as well as the continuity of the symbol at the hands of a newborn ('que ahora nació'). The 'cuatro barras', the *senyera* or Catalan flag, stir equally

⁴ The debate around popular culture in Spain is a wide one. The present article understands it as that which according to Diego Catalán is 'largely folkloric and underpins the shared cultural heritage of any given community' (in Godsland 2004: 4), drawing attention to its links with identity.

⁵ A similar circumstance can be observed in the appropriation of elements of Spanish popular culture in a Catalan context, such as the 'flamenco' and the 'flamenc català' or the 'rumba catalana'. See Saval (2008) for a revealing account of this.

emotional feelings in the poem, as does the 'Diada', the National Day of Catalonia. The use of various elements of Catalan popular culture also applies to other compositions by other poets in the anthology, such as 'Sardana' by Antonio García Lorente (29), a poem exalting the unity and the common consciousness in a 'pueblo' that the traditional and national form of dance of Catalonia offers. As King mentions, displays such as the *senyera*, the Diada and the *sardana* 'servían a los catalanistas para dramatizar el patrimonio cultural catalán' and they were seen as 'un espectáculo de la identidad catalana que une a los actores, es decir, a los catalanes, a su supuesta esencia inmutable' (2005a: 113-114).

This unalterable essence is challenged here as it is appropriated by Spanish language and a problematic *-xarnego-* identity, but its portrayal underlines its nature as 'a basis for an alternative process of nation formation' (Labanyi 2002: 17) and stresses its importance in the creation of an identity. *Xarneguisme* does not obstruct the appropriation of key aspects of Catalan popular culture as this culture is negotiated by the very people *-xarnego* people— who make it. Nevertheless, *Xarnegos* does not only rely on popular and traditional culture to delineate and create an identity, but also it draws on high culture or art.

Guibernau asserts that '[c]ertain selected works of art and artists turned into symbols of Catalan identity are often portrayed as part of a corpus of Catalan high culture which has received international recognition' (2004: 31). One of the most obvious examples of this are García Lorente's compositions, in particular 'Oda a la nopatria' (29) and 'El abrazo de la traducción' (35). The first is a clear allusion to 'Oda a la pàtria' by Aribau and to the history of Catalan literature in general: 'Si me pedís que escriba/ un poema a la patria,/ nunca seré maestro/ en gai saber. No importan/ menciones o laureles' (29). The 'maestro en gai saber' is an obvious reference to the *Jocs Florals*—a writer had to be awarded the three ordinary *Jocs Florals* prizes in order to gain the title of 'mestre en Gai Saber'—, which are the most customary Catalan literary prizes as well as a key element in the history of Catalan literature. On the other hand, 'El abrazo a la traducción' draws on highly acclaimed Catalan authors— some of whom wrote in Spanish—, and it does so to portray the

important role Catalans played in the literature of Spain and the development of the country as a whole. Significantly, it also applauds translation and what Catalans writing in Spanish can offer:

EL ABRAZO DE LA TRADUCCIÓN

Somos un pueblo agradecido
con quienes abren hacia nosotros
su almendra del alma
y no caen en la trampa del prejuicio
ni se mancillan con la grasa del odio.
Ramón Llull, Ausiàs March y Boscán
trajeron a Iberia luz moderna,
más ello al cerril nada le importa.
Al críticón Gracián criticó.
Más tarde cosimos
las ropas del desarrollo para España,
aún teniendo prohibidos los fueros
y siendo como tacaños definidos.
En el lecho un virus belicoso
nos postró,
George Orwell nos rindió homenaje.
Afirmando y ratifico la vida en tolerancia
y por ello me entrego al abrazo de la traducción,
igual que quienes me precedieron.
Ésta es nuestra catalana forma
de honrar a nuestros hermanos.
Esta tinta del amor
concede la Madre Tierra
y tú la avivas con generosa lucidez.

(Antonio García Lorente, 35)

From the very beginning the author aligns himself with the Catalan ‘pueblo’, kind to those who are kind to it, and remarks on the prejudices and hatred that have marred certain relationships with Spain in the past. Key figures in Catalan literature are then attributed

with bringing literary modernity to Iberia –thus surpassing Catalan borders–, and the workforce of the nation is depicted as the one bringing Spain forward despite the criticism Catalonia constantly endured. A ‘pueblo’ worthy of homages, such as the *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell (1938), an account of the journalist’s experiences in the Spanish Civil War, Catalonia materializes through translation as the perfect paradigm of acceptance and tolerance.

High Catalan culture, embodied in the names of authors portrayed as Catalan symbols –Ramon Llull or Ausiàs March–, highlights the praise Catalonia has achieved, and it is used by the poets as a corpus they have interiorized. Writing in or translating to Spanish, especially when linked to major authors that did so in the past without compromising their status as Catalan symbols, is seen as a way of bridging differences, an advantage that involves an added cultural richness setting Catalonia apart from Spain, and also embodies an intrinsic characteristic of the Catalan ‘pueblo’: that of making the most of a situation for its own good. In any case, writing in Spanish is never seen as a burden since high Catalan literature has done so, repeatedly, in the past; rather it opens up new spaces, and provides a new ‘*lucidez*’ crucial for *xarnego* literature.

Most of the poets anthologized in *Xarnegos* pay close attention in their verses to history. Key historical events, those ‘invested with particular meaning and capable of arousing an emotional response when Catalans “tell their history”’ (Guibernau 2004: 30), and which may include the *Guerra dels Segadors* or the *Diada* (2004: 35, 177), are most recurrent in the book. History and the depiction of vital moments serve to shape an identity and align it inextricably to Catalonia. However, the historical moments in which they themselves, or their ancestors in many cases, came into contact with Catalan culture also become crucial events for the formation of their identity. These episodes become an experience that holds a unique and distinctive meaning for them, an essential axis for their personality, as the poem ‘Yaya Paquita’ (Carolina Ibac Verdager, 171-172) reveals.

The poetic voice’s grandmother, born in Madrid in the second decade of the 20th century, joins the Red Cross during the Spanish Civil War and travels to Barcelona, where she meets her husband-to-

be and starts a new page in her history and that of her descendents. Events such as this become foundational moments of what could be considered *xarnego* history since they are invested with particular meaning and significance and they must also be regarded as key historical events since they certainly ‘tell their story’ and participate in their history. A striking feature of these poems illustrating the ancestors’ journey to Catalonia is the sentiment of debt the poetic voices feel towards them. Such feeling stems from admiration towards their courage and in particular the sacrifices they made when they immigrated to Catalonia:

BALDOMERO

Baldomero, señor, jamás señorito,
persona cabal que rió con sus amigos,
desde su amada Alpujarra,
ayer paupérrima,
hoy rehabilitada y cuna del Dalai Lama
vino años ha a Catalunya,
a vivir, a trabajar,
a casarse, a trabajar,
a cobijarse, a trabajar,
a ser padre, a trabajar,
a trabajar, a trabajar.
De luna a luna era su jornada:
a las cinco de la mañana
abandonaba la cama,
y regresaba al lar,
cuando el crepúsculo
enfriaba aceras y aquietaba las almas.
[...]
Cuarenta años, una vida,
dedicada a Catalunya.
Pagó estudios a su hija,
hoy empresaria importante.
[...]
Yo le vi pulir, transportar, conducir, limpiar,

madrugar,
llegar exhausto...
Me pregunto qué sería de muchas empresas
sin la incondicional dedicación
de tantos Baldomeros.
Nada le fue regalado,
que todo lo laboró.

(Julián Miranda, 51)

The poem reveals an almost religious esteem towards the hard work the immigrant generation carried out so that their children and grandchildren would enjoy a much better life than they did, but the verses also divulge a certain pride in what the immigrants contributed with their efforts: they endeavored to build Catalonia as it is today and shaped its future. Such contribution to the nation by immigrants had already been pointed out by Francisco Candel, who stated that '[a]quests altres Catalans [...] es veuran cridats a una curiosa tasca: la revaloració de la novíssima Catalunya' (1964: 364). The poem 'Baldomero' bears a strong resonance to the ideology present in *Els altres catalans*, and the totality of Candel's book can, in fact, be interpreted as a eulogy to the contribution of *xarnegos* to building Catalonia and determining its future (1964: 185-192, 220, 347-364), an aspect that has recently re-emerged (Farràs and Cullell 2009).

Further to this, there is a sense in *Xarnegos* that these ancestors actually worked actively to become part of Catalonia, that they are empowered by it. In the eyes of the poetic voices such actions fast-tracked the ancestors' rights to become part of Catalan society, and earned their way into Catalan identity as well as into its history. Ernest Renan, in his essay 'What is a nation?', argues that a nation, as a spiritual principle, is constituted by two elements which lie in the past and in the present respectively: '[o]ne is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form' (1990: 19). The mention of a continuing legacy seems to point out to a third element, which lies in the future, and this is particularly evident in

Xarnegos. Many of the poets remark on building a future for their children ('Años más tarde', Gerardo Guaza González, 219), and it is precisely the descendants, as much as the poetic voices' arrival in Catalonia, who epitomize another emotional argument in their history. The future, as much as the present and the past, contributes to a sense of belonging: 'Me siento tan catalana/ como me siento extremeña:/ allí di mis primeros pasos,/ aquí los dieron mis hijas' (Ana Otero, 155). The almost million and a half Spanish immigrants that arrived in Catalonia from the 1950s to 1975 –with their previous histories and the ones they forged after their arrival– cannot, and must not, be easily disregarded. They are part of the recent history of Catalonia, whose own history became embedded in the one they occupied, interwoven in the highly powerful emotional arguments clearly perceptible in the poems.

Xarnego history becomes quickly entwined with territory – Catalan territory– in the poetry collected in *Xarnegos*, leading to another emotional argument to be found in the verses. Regarding this particular argument, Guibernau states that '[i]t is worth remarking on the great importance of territory in all nationalist movements, [...] because territory is the nation's 'continent'. Territory provides resources and is where people build their homes and create their towns and cities (Guibernau 2004: 31).

Many of the poems in the anthology stand out for their spatiality and their robustly situated nature, underlining a strong attachment to the territory and landscape of Catalonia. The preamble by Joan Margarit, 'Balada de Montjuïc', is the perfect example of this, where the territory of Barcelona, and the landscape of Montjuïc cemetery, mix with the history of the land and the poetic voice's identity. The poem starts with the poetic voice travelling to the cemetery at dawn, where its gaze drifting over tombstones, pantheons and niches evokes significant moments for Catalonia. Such an act emphasises the idea that '[p]articular landscapes are emotionally charged and portrayed as embodying Catalan traditions, history and culture' (Guibernau 2004: 31):

Por no encontrarme a nadie vengo al alba.
Hay luces encendidas todavía

en los depósitos de gas y en las grúas del Puerto.
El mar se enfrenta a la ciudad entre restos de niebla.
Es como siempre, pienso: no era necesario haber venido.
Pero vuelvo, me gusta reencontrar
el morro al que desgarran barrancos y canteras,
un promontorio cuyo flanco gangrena el cementerio.

No quiere ser un campo intemporal de estatuas.
Defiende su pasado de barracas y fusilamientos.
La exacta y empedrada memoria de los muros,
las señales grabadas en troncos de cipreses.
[...]
Los recuerdos que oculto,
igual que el foso guarda, bajo alfombras de flores,
los pasos de las víctimas y de los asesinos.
Aún, dentro de mí,
los viejos, verdes árboles envuelven
fuentes y chiringuitos, los bailes de arrabal.
[...]
Montjuïc es la culpa dentro de la ciudad.
Abandono mi mano sobre un cañón de bronce:
se alza dentro de mí una montaña muda
que oculta nuestra historia.
Vengo al alba por no encontrarme a nadie:
sólo un frío cañón que acaricio
igual que a un perro lobo indiferente.

(Joan Margarit, 21-23)

Site of an Iberian setting in the 3rd century B.C., a Jewish medieval cemetery and the location where many executions took place during the Spanish Civil War –including that of the then president of the Generalitat de Catalunya, Lluís Companys, who is buried there–, Montjuïc has played a key role in the history of the city of Barcelona. In this poem, Montjuïc encompasses part of the history of Catalonia and its inhabitants, making constant references to significant moments that shaped the future of the nation and took place in that space. The

landscape of Montjuïc is depicted as a figure that retains all its memories ('No quiere ser un campo intemporal de estatuas./ Defiende su pasado de barracas y fusilamientos'), and does not intend to let them go ('empedrada memoria', 'señales grabadas'), a history with which the poetic voice mixes its own. The poetic voice's identity becomes entangled with the territory, producing a decidedly situated identity that incites overwhelming and persistent feelings. Montjuïc, as part of the territory the poetic voice relates to, generates emotional roots that set the limits of its identity. This space becomes an almost compulsory aspect to consider ('no era necesario haber venido./ Pero vuelvo') when looking at the demarcation of one's character.

Names and mentions of neighbourhoods and childhood landscapes are in fact a recurrence in *Xarnegos*, something Francisco Candel also highlighted in *Els altres catalans* as a characteristic trait of *xarneguisme* ('Els infants del suburbi, aquesta esperança', Candel 1964: 347-366). These references are noteworthy in the sense that they ground the poems within a particular territory, as 'Can Vidalet (Barrio de la infancia)' (81-83) and 'Plaça de Catalunya' (79) by José Luis García Herrera, 'Poema del que fue' by Alicia Aragón Rodríguez (131-133), or 'Verano del setenta' (189) by Felipe Merino. The territory is felt by the various poetic voices in the anthology as almost another tangible character in the compositions, one endowed with skin and voice, with whom they can interact and establish an emotive relationship. The scenery they portray, inhabit and journey through is invested with a particular trajectory:

Por pasillos abiertos al sol
navegas tú, Barcelona,
lenguaje y piedra
tendida al mar,
descalza, sobria
por avenidas
de itinerarios góticos.
Recojo tus plazas
su luz y las fuentes.
Te busco presente y pasado
entre murallas, mosaicos

vidrieras repletas de cielo,
balcones neoclásicos y modernistas.
Me asomo a ti por tu piel
que es la mía,
por tu nombre que es mi nombre,
pálida y aprisa
por avenidas y andenes.
Barcelona
salpicando de púrpura y gaviotas,
ocupada de horizontes que no pesan,
me tienes prendida a la solapa
de tus Ramblas
como a un broche antiguo.
Ya, contemporánea de tu luz
y para siempre.

(Marisa Morali, 111)

Land and territory become a body with which the poetic voice can blend, their limits blurred to acknowledge a symbiotic connection between the two: 'Me asomo a ti por tu piel/ que es la mía,/ por tu nombre que es mi nombre'. In *xarnego* poetry, territory is strongly invested with particular significance, charging it with an emotional capacity that transforms it into a new space and allows specific nuances to their identity.

The new spaces that culture, language, history and territory open up in *xarnego* poetry bear a strong resemblance to the ideas of hybridity and the 'Third Space' by Homi Bhabha (1990), which have already been pointed out by King (2006, 2005a) in relation to Catalan narrative written in Spanish. According to Bhabha, in postcolonial contexts cultural binarisms disappear to conform 'a new, hybrid space of cultural difference' (Bhabha 2004: 294). This Third Space then gives ways to a cultural hybridity that, whilst being different, does not work according to any hierarchies (5). In this sense:

the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts

together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses. It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (1990: 211).

Hybridity and the Third Space work as a starting point that allows other positions –or in the case of *xarnego* poetry another identity– to surface. The term *xarnegisme* would equal this new space, as it gives rise to a new Catalan identity born of a cultural rewriting. *Xarnegos* aptly presents a hybrid identity, one which allows the negotiation of what has been considered by some as opposed intrinsic characteristics in Catalan distinctiveness. Catalan traditions, popular culture and high literature, history and territory become at the hands of *xarnegisme* a new tool to rewrite their identity and challenge unyielding cultural divides. *Xarnegos* have long been viewed as second-class citizens of Catalonia, an observation poignantly stated in the anthology –‘Estos poemas son para todos los que se sienten o se han sentido alguna vez extranjeros en su tierra’ (Trujillo 2010: 17)–,⁶ and their identity has always been considered in opposition to Catalanism, a stance that has created very restrictive dichotomies.

It is obvious a revalorization of *xarnegisme* is needed in order to acknowledge what it can offer, and works such as *Xarnegos* go a long way in providing positive and powerful examples of it. *Xarnegisme*, with all its hybridity, inspires almost a sense of pride in the poets studied here. What is more, it professes confidence in its capacity to proffer meaning upon Catalonia and Catalan identity. *Xarnego* poetry challenges established dichotomies (those of

⁶ The complexity attached to the notion of ‘belonging’ in contemporary Catalonia, however, is not solely restricted to *xarnegos* but can also be applied to many native Catalans. The idea of an ‘internal exile’ has been paramount in 20th century literature in Catalonia. Trujillo’s quote, however, successfully highlights the strong desire to belong and ‘fit’ felt by many in a society that struggles to accommodate them within a given geo-political configuration.

xarneguisme vs. Catalanism, *xarnego* vs. Catalan, Catalan citizen vs. non-Catalan citizen, etc.), and it excels in its rewriting abilities, opening up new modes of inscription and interpretation, stressing the transitory nature of a culture and the possibilities of negotiating different discourses away from hierarchies. *Xarnegos* showcases a permeable cultural identity in which Catalan is rewritten in Spanish and vice versa. The boundaries between the two are blurred thus one identity does not necessarily exclude the other:

COMÁMONOS LA CULTURA

[...]

Espetec y longanizas.

Morcón blanco y negro.

Butifarra negra y blanca.

Todas las razas.

Me lo como todo,

sin contemplación, hasta el fondo.

Y en Navidad, encargo un pata negra,

que venga de donde venga,

me lo zamparé con deleite,

perdiendo el sentido,

con o sin orientación,

sur o norte,

no importa.

Somos de aquí

y mañana, quién sabe.

Canuts y alpargatas,

ideas y espíritu liberador de ángeles.

Querámonos sin márgenes,

aprendamos los unos de los otros.

Seamos todo aquello que sintamos

sin sentir lo que los demás no son.

(Carolina Ibac Verdaguer, 175)

Even the title of this poem ('Let's eat culture') highlights the plurilingual and pluricultural nature of contemporary poetry written in Catalonia in Spanish whilst debating rigid cultural divides. In the poem, a culture is almost scatologically interiorised and then rewritten, reworked, onto another: the poetic voice declares its intention to eat *embutidos* from all parts of Spain for Christmas, which will cause it to lose all sense of geographical orientation.

Catalan culture and identity become a palimpsest capable of accommodating rewriting, transition and change: 'La pureza del grupo no existe, somos únicos,/ la diversidad es la que crece, y permanece, eterna,/ el mundo evoluciona sin censar/ y no lo paremos/ [...] Aquí me tenéis/ charnega de los pies a la cabeza,/ no me avergüenzo de ser lo que soy' (Carolina Ibac Verdaguer, 185). These verses highlight the need for a more plural understanding of Catalan identity and emphasize the argument of the present article: that of making a case for the inclusion of *xarneguisme* in Catalan identity.

Candel stated in the 1960's that the *xarnegos* 'no formen un món a part, sinó que els obliguem a formar-lo' (1964: 269), a circumstance that originates in the way the problematic relationship between Catalonia and Spain have been represented in Catalan nationalist discourses. Nevertheless, if '[t]he emotional dimension of nationalism springs from the feeling of belonging to a particular group and from sentiments of solidarity towards fellow countrymen and women with whom the individual shares his or her love for the nation' (Guibernau 2004: 32), it can be claimed that the verses in *Xarnegos* do precisely this, and that they illustrate the fact that *xarneguisme* can work towards the same goals as Catalanism. The various emotional arguments present in the anthology lay claim to a very real Catalan sentiment and an obvious devotion and dedication to the nation. Therefore, Catalanism, an essence that is constituted by a legacy gathered over a certain period of time (Guibernau 2004: 161), must claim and incorporate *xarneguisme* into its nature and work towards including it in the Catalan symbolic imagery:

Catalanism should not be a *modus vivendi*, an excuse for political inaction, or a reason to maintain or generate social inequalities, but rather a progressive ideology, a tool for the social integration and the cultural,

ethical and political regeneration of the country (Guibernau 2004: 164-165).

Catalonia, a nation with a long history of immigration, has always been able to adapt to the changes that migratory flows entail, embedding its culture in its newcomers and absorbing the customs they bring. And it should strive to continue to do so, particularly in view of the new and important waves of immigrants from Latin America and the north of Africa settling in Catalonia over the last two decades.⁷ *Xarneguisme* is a reflection of the transition an identity must go through –the amassed heritage demands continuous additions–, and it constitutes just an example of the various shifts and changes Catalanism will go through throughout its history. In this sense, *Xarnegos* argues for a rewriting of cultures that can bring forward a hybrid interpretation of Catalan identity more adequate and suited to present times, and relies heavily on emotional arguments to do so. In a global world such as today's, *Xarnegos/Charnegos (Antología)* is an exemplary paradigm of the way Catalan identity can be negotiated. The inclusion of *xarneguisme* in Catalan identity will defy the unyielding split between Catalan and Spanish cultural logic, broadening ideologies in Catalan studies and contributing to the emergence of a more plurilingual and pluricultural understanding of Iberian Studies.

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⁷ *Jo també sóc catalana* (2004) by Moroccan-born Najat El Hachmi is an example of the work by immigrants of non-Spanish origin that need to be approached, as they offer another striking point of view on identity and can greatly contribute to debates on Catalan identity.

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