Title:

Crossing Representational Borders in Lola Arias' *Minefield/Campo Minado*

Abstract:

Minefield/Campo Minado (2016) is a Spanish-English bilingual play by Argentinian writer, theater director, and performer Lola Arias that reunites six veterans of the Malvinas/Falklands War to collectively rebuild—and relive— their war experiences and subsequent traumatic memories. Despite presenting two very distinct views of what happened in the war, the play encompasses dialogue and openness among the Argentinian and British veterans as the performance of their memories on stage is not fixed but a changing matter in the process of collaborative remembering and self-discovery. This paper aims to analyze *Minefield/Campo Minado* within the theoretical framework of borders and border crossings by exploring the ways in which boundaries are reflected, enacted and negotiated throughout the play. Arias' representation of identities from each side of the dispute and her blending of temporal, spatial and aesthetic elements might not only suggest an effort to challenge, reframe and deconstruct fixed categorizations around the conflict but also a gesture towards the crossing of representational borders. We will therefore study the articulation of several borders as devices for verbalizing, preserving and negotiating the continuities and discontinuities between "fact" and "fiction" and between the "self" and the "other" in an attempt to assess to what extent *Minefield/Campo Minado* constructively manages the anxiety arising from the urge to tell and the need to forget that is experienced by those who have endured war trauma. Since it does not seem to be possible to impose just one true perspective towards the conflict, our contention is that diversity emerges as a key element in providing for an experience of complex reading/viewing. We argue that Lola Arias' play does not gesture towards a borderless world but that, instead, it represents and reshapes borders and bordering processes in

powerful and significant ways, that is, acknowledging the political, territorial, ethical, and even representational, limits and boundaries that seem to demarcate and enforce a divide within and between societies and nations but also welcoming difference, subversion and hybridisation.

Keywords: Malvinas/Falklands War; *Minefield/Campo Minado;* Lola Arias; documentary theatre; challenging representational borders; fact/fiction; self/other; British and Argentinian war veterans

The Malvinas/Falklands War was a relatively brief military conflict between the United Kingdom and Argentina that began on 2 April 1982 with the Argentinian invasion and occupation of the remote Malvinas/Falkland Islands and ended 74 days later when the British armed forces reclaimed sovereignty and precipitated an Argentinian surrender on 14 June. This "small war," which took the lives of 649 Argentinian, 255 British troops and three civilians, represented a major blow not only to the lives of those who were directly affected by it—hundreds of veterans on both sides were injured and traumatized—but to the collective memory of the two countries involved. Patriotic sentiment was deeply rooted on both sides of the Atlantic and the war affected national decisions and self-regard for years and even decades. So much so that, as Jon Begley claims, the "war remains defined by British and Argentine self-image" (231). For the British, it was the last "colonial" war and one which allowed Margaret Thatcher to retain power for almost a decade after the British victory. For Argentina, it brought about massive protests against the ruling dictatorship, hastening its fall and the democratization of the country in 1983.[1]

The conflict was not just a territorial dispute; it became synonymous with a major nationalist campaign for both nations. Recalling how it was perceived by the rest of the world, Julian Barnes describes it as "a bizarre and brainless squabble between nostalgic imperialism and nostalgic fascism" (*The Guardian,* 2002), in clear allusion to how Thatcher and the Argentinian junta used the war to revive former national glory and mask the severe social and economic crises that had taken root in both countries.[2] The increasingly effective mobilization of public opinion against a common outside enemy and the emphasis on the us-them dichotomy served the purpose: it diverted the attention of those who were discontented, unemployed, discriminated against or repressed at home and strengthened their fragile support for the respective regimes.

Although almost forty years have passed since the Argentinian surrender to British forces, the territorial dispute remains unlikely to be resolved soon.[3] The fact that the war is still, as Bernard McGuirk claims, an "unfinished business" (2007, iii)—both in the diplomatic arena and in the minds of its protagonists—can be seen in the continuous struggle to try to understand the conflict and achieve a sense of closure. The Malvinas/Falklands War has been narrated, appropriated and historicized, both in Argentina and Britain, by academics, artists, writers, and war veterans.[4] As each side has their own version of what the war meant to them, reactions on both the Argentinian and the British side tend to endorse and perpetuate the dominant frameworks within which the war has been narrated, without being fully aware of the perceptions and experiences of the other side.[5] In fact, as John Foot stresses, commemoration has also been contested within national public memory as well: "The state and other public bodies have rarely been able to build durable and commonly agreed practices of commemoration" (1).[6]

However, while most of the literary and visual responses to the war, have been, as McGuirk claims, "politically tendentious" (217), the genre of drama has remained a

force for ethical discussion, genuinely reflecting the dilemmas faced when interpreting history. The stage itself has been visualized as a territory in dispute, in which, in McGuirk's words, "the most consistent interrogations of the events of 1982 have been enacted" (217). In *Of Borders and Thresholds* (1999), Michael Kobialka suggests that the stage can be construed as a "border" or a "borderland": "a locus of hope for a better land, a model for new consciousness, a place where an identity is formed, a site of resistance of compliance" that only acquires meaning when it is crossed (3). Despite inevitably bearing the marks of the author's beliefs and unspoken biases, the theatre has provided, as Robert Leach rightly notes, both a "natural forum for the airing of matters of public concern and for public debate" and "a battleground for competing identities and ideologies, which constantly conflict and destabilize one another" (2019: XXIV). It is not surprising then that theatrical performances on the Malvinas/Falklands War are fraught with moments in which the self and the other merge and rupture and with heated debates fuelled by different understandings of identity politics, particularly if veterans are invited to share their living memories.

The theatrical representations of the Malvinas/Falklands War have been crystallized in different versions of history, depending on the side from which the story has been told, and they have been usually used to buttress political positions in the present. The plays on the British side were released during the immediate aftermath of the conflict and were meant to demolish the Thatcher's construction of a "Falkland myth," mostly exploring the struggle of the working class under conservative supremacy. Among the most renowned works are *Falkland Sound/Voces de Malvinas* (Louise Paget, 1983), *Welcome Home* (Tony Marchant, 1983), *Arrivederci Millwall* (Nick Perry, 1985) and *Sink the Belgrano!* (Steven Berkoff, 1986).[7] On the Argentinian side, the war has been much more widely represented on the stage, probably because it was the only war fought and

lost by Argentina in the twentieth century and because it had a massive impact on popular culture and imagination.[8] The main performances being *Pericones* (Mauricio Kartun, 1987), *Malvinas un canto a la esperanza* (Buzzo and Zapata, 1992); *Bar Ada* (Jorge Leyes, 1997); *Museo Miguel Ángel Boezzio* (Federico León, 1998); *Continente viril* (Alejandro Acobino, 2004); *Las islas* (Alejandro Tantanian, 2011 based on the novel by Carlos Gamerro); *Asuntos pendientes* (Eduardo Pavlovsky, 2011).[9]

The focus of our discussion is *Minefield/Campo Minado* (2016), a Spanish-English bilingual play by Argentinian writer, theatre director, and performer Lola Arias which reunites six veterans of the Malvinas/Falklands War to collectively rebuild—and relive— their war experiences and subsequent traumatic memories. Arias takes the encounter imagined by Jorge Luis Borges in his poem "Juan López y John Ward" (1982) onto the stage, making it possible for three Argentinian soldiers—Gabriel Sagastume, Rubén Otero and Marcelo Vallejo—to meet their British counterparts—Lou Armour, David Jackson, and Sukrim Rai, the Nepalese-born Gurkha[10]—and chronologically recount their war experiences: from the moment they were recruited, through their military deployment on the islands, to their return home and resettlement into civilian life.[11] Although the war—and the encounter with war—are presented as disillusioning and futile from the very outset, Arias is not just interested in commemorating the past but rather in incorporating these memories into current institutional, social and cultural contexts: it is in the testimony of the veterans that, as Sarah Maltby notes, "the merging of past and present in the single unending narrative of the war becomes evident" (2016: 27).

The play, first staged at Brighton Festival on 28 May 2016, has earned rave reviews from critics and spectators alike: Paul Taylor describes it as "unforgettably potent", a "deeply affecting show" in which "past and present intersect with extraordinary

power and eloquence" (*Independent*), while Maddy Costa claims that Arias' representation of the Malvinas/Falklands War "brilliantly [illuminates] the points of connection without eliding any of the tensions" (*Exeunt*).[12] In its rewriting of the past—and through the intrusion of fiction into what is taken to be history—this play not only addresses the dual process of fiction being read/viewed as history and of history being read/viewed as fiction but also delves into the anxiety involved in the representation of war. This representational anxiety surfaces in relation to both the authenticity—the urge to recuperate/narrate the actual experience—and the ethics of appropriating the war for the purpose of representing it. In *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (2011), Kate McLoughlin argues that "the representation of war is inherently anxiogenic" precisely because "even if it resists representation, conflict demands it" (6). Those who genuinely attempt to portray war and its traumatic impact seem to share a similar representational dilemma: a mistrust in language as the adequate expression of the war's horrific essence yet a need to tell the truth, to set the record straight. Writing as remembering is particularly "anxiogenic" when dominant frameworks for interpretation fail to account for the specific nature of the events concerned and lead to inaccurate representations or even to misrepresentations, forcing individual testimonies to accommodate experiences somewhere between these dominant frameworks and cultural conditions.

Precisely because of its essential involvement in the retelling of historical events without moulding them to fix pre-existing narratives, Arias' play reflects on what it means to tell history "from below," that is to listen faithfully to the first-hand testimonies of those other than rulers or elite sectors of society.[13] The impression of realness, achieved through the interpretation and identification of what is meaningful and what is not in order to make the testimonies of the veterans more present in the minds of the readers/viewers,

is further enhanced by a web of verbal and non-verbal media that produces an atmosphere of closeness and trust between actors and audience. This not only requires the playwright to take a seemingly secondary role—Arias appears to act as an editor, a collector of memories, yet also expressly enabling and facilitating the emergence of a "living creature"[14]—but the readers/viewers to stretch their comfort zones and become active participants in a very different and provocative environment, undergoing what Erika Fischer-Lichte regards as "a reversal of roles" in the face of "a tremendous challenge and an extreme situation of liminality" (67).

The central assumption around which this reversal of roles evolves is that the play does not come alive or mean anything until readers/viewers engage it with specific assumptions about what it means to them. What this myriad of war memories strung together in momentous exchanges stands for cannot be separated from the reading/viewing process used by readers/viewers as they draw on personal and literary experiences to make meaning. In other words, the play is not just an object but an event that occurs in readers/viewers over time. In Andy Lavender's words, "the event is not just watched or received, but encountered" (97).

The liminality of the performative situation is given by the fact that the veterans/actors are both being themselves and representing themselves—they are retelling their traumatic memories and at the same time reinventing them in their interaction with their former enemies—and by the emotional response elicited from the audience as participants of this temporal-spatial-performative conjunction. The play would thus involve not only what Lavender calls "*mise en événement*," a term that emphasises the "here-and-nowness of the event" over the "the staging of the performance" (81), but also a "*mise en sensibilité*," with its "connotations of sensitivity, sympathy, feeling, emotion and affiliation" on the part of the audience (97).

Although in *Minefield/Campo Minado* veterans rely on their own memories to tell their war stories, there is always a constant struggle about the meaning of what really happened and about the meaning of memory itself.[15] The veterans speak with what Joan Scott calls "the authority of experience" (1991: 780), putting forward a particular claim to the truth as first-hand witnesses. In Horace Engdahl's words: "A witness is a person who speaks out and says, 'I was there, I saw it, I can tell people!' As an act of speech, testimony is inseparable from this kind of self-reference and from the accompanying claim to immediate credence" (2002: 3). The damage that the conflict has inflicted upon these men has turned the performance of these memories into a "minefield" of either time-burnished or unacknowledged recollections: "When you start to remember," says Lola Arias, "you never know what you will find, sometimes something explodes that you didn't even know was there" (Arias in Gardner, 2016).[16]

Because of the anxiety about the adequacy of the theatrical form to represent the conflict and its traumatic impact, the physical and temporal distance of the Malvinas/Falklands War from the immediacy of the veterans' lives, the particularities of memory and the intrusion of dominant narratives, the "truth" is not attained in its entirety but in fragments in the play. By merging the veterans' own testimonies, together with photos, videos, songs, old diaries, magazine and newspaper cuttings, Arias fuses private and public memories, suggesting that individual histories could challenge the dominant narratives that tend to overwrite the veterans' experiences and memories.

Arias' exploration of identities from each side of the dispute and her blending of temporal, spatial and aesthetic elements—including live music (there is a Beatles tribute band on the stage), an overhead projector casting archive footage and still photographs, low-tech sound effects, props and even Thatcher/Galtieri masks—might not only suggest an effort to challenge, reframe and deconstruct fixed categorizations around the conflict

but also a gesture towards the crossing of representational borders. Based on Kobialka's idea that "the materiality of borders is produced, fragmented, and multiplied in theatre history/historiography, practice, and theory" (1999: 19), this paper asks in what ways, and using what visual, expressive and sensory strategies, Arias is able to establish a representational framework for approaching and reconsidering the Malvinas/Falklands War. Our theoretical point of departure is the "heterogenous" notion of "borders"— initially developed by Subaltern and Chicano theorists to discuss issues related to the US-Mexico border and later extended to explore broader themes— as a metaphor for any situation where "borders," "borderlands" or the "crossing of borders" are involved. Our contention is that "borders" separate and define both theoretically and in real world settings, but also provide sites in which exchange and dialogue can happen and be facilitated. As Brian Massumi notes: "the individual is defined more by the boundaries it crosses than the limits it observes" (1993: 27). We therefore suggest that *Minefield/Campo Minado* is defined by the concept of borders and border crossings and by the exploration of the ways in which these boundaries are reflected, enacted and negotiated throughout the play.

Since it does not seem to be possible to impose just one true perspective towards the conflict, diversity emerges as a key element in providing for an experience of complex reading/viewing. We will therefore explore the articulation of several borders as devices for verbalizing, preserving and negotiating the continuities and discontinuities between "fact" and "fiction" and between the "self" and the "other" in an attempt to assess to what extent *Minefield/Campo Minado* constructively manages the anxiety involved in the representation of the Malvinas/Falklands War.

Crossing Borders (1): Fact and Fiction

Minefield/Campo Minado overtly thematizes the traditional distinction between the factual and the fictional, problematizing their consideration as separate categories. The play has often been described within the genre of "testimonial or documentary theatre" in the sense that, as Carol Martin notes, it "interrogate(s) specific events, systems of belief, and political affiliations precisely through the creation of [its] own versions of events, beliefs, and politics by exploiting technology that enables replication" (2006: 9).[17] Technology plays an essential role, "as the initial generating component" in "certifying" the authenticity and factual accuracy of both the text and the body performance (Martin 2006: 8). Yet, the specific characteristics of documentary theatre have been the subject of debate in the play, as fictional registers seem to be in tension with documentary conventions to destabilize the authority of the documentary and its associated notions of authenticity and ethics.

Several scholars have acknowledged that the play is difficult to categorize. Because of its focus on post-war memories and the idea that "life feeds theatre and theatre has concrete effects on the lives of the performers," Jordana Blejmar has termed *Minefield/Campo Minado* "an autofiction of the post-war" (2017: 105-7). In a similar vein, Haydon labels the play as "next-step verbatim theatre" as it "cut out the middle persons of writer and actor, and instead just used the actual people as the performers" (2016). Emphasising the idea that the play grows and transforms itself from the opening scene as a living organism, Cecilia Sosa regards it as a "high-risk, organic 'living creature'" and a "theatrical machine" (she uses Arias' own words) meant "for the transmission of trauma" from past to present (2017: 181-2). Clare Finburgh and Geoffrey Maguire, on the other hand, coincide in their approach to the factual and fictional forms in the play as means for destabilizing dominant narratives. While Finburgh claims that

the play is a "spectacle" of "violence without violence" (2017: 165) aimed at "disarticula[ting] the spectacles of power, heroism and virtuosity that are often weaponized by leaders and by the dominant media" (2017: 163), Maguire stresses the importance of the interaction between technology, reflexivity, storytelling and the performer-audience connection to challenge dominant perspectives towards the conflict (2019: 1-3). In an interview on a previous play, *Mi vida después* (*My Life After*), Arias acknowledges that the conventions of Argentinian repertory theatre "don't work anymore" (Kan 2014: 63) and that the form "has to be put into question" to "create an experience that is political in and of itself" (Ibid.). In that sense, the playwright's deliberate decision to break established artistic forms seems to be "political" and raises more questions about the untidy boundaries between fact and fiction than it resolves. The specific historical register Arias invokes, both documentary and fictional, exists both in dialogue and in tension, conveying her work's politics.

The fact that the veterans are non-professional actors who perform themselves confers credibility to their testimonies: the situations and the conflicts developed throughout the play, as indicated on the title page of the published script, are "based on the stories of six Argentine and British veterans of the Falklands war." Moreover, as the re-enactment of the auditions to Marcelo Vallejos and David Jackson reveal, the veterans exude their character from themselves, from their current social circumstances. The audience gets to know their real names, current professions and ethnic origin. They also speak their native languages and are translated either to Spanish or English via "supertitles:" open captioning projected above the proscenium.

Standing centre stage with a notebook in his hands, Marcelo reads: "February 26th, 2016. I'm there with the enemy, swapping stories" (1). When Gabriel asks him about his current job, Marcelo says "I do odd jobs, painting, gardening. And I do a lot of sports […]

Running, swimming cycling. I'm an Iron Man" (Arias 2). These are facts that can only be learnt from the narration of a first-hand witness, as is the process of military recruitment that the veterans remember on stage. While shots of their responses and photos of them as young soldiers are projected on the backdrop (Arias 5-12), the audience learns that while in Argentina military service was compulsory until 1997, the two British soldiers and Sukrim, the Nepalese Ghurkha, joined the army voluntarily. The veterans are asked to "return" to the islands through their memories; they have also returned there "physically" on several occasions to honour and remember their experiences, probably because, as David Jackson claims, "the Falkland Islands is a living museum of the war" (Arias 40). Yet, the war has not only left indelible memory traces in the territory. As Blejmar notes, "on many levels the ex-combatants never actually left the islands, or rather, the islands—and what happened there—never left *them*" (2017: 107).[18]

While Arias' theatre draws on documentary authenticity, the play progresses towards a more heterogeneous form, as the veterans invoke a subjective voice and convey ambiguous, multivalent meanings. The accounts of their war experiences are not only a site of struggle over meaning—the meaning that originates in the conflict itself—but also the arena in which meaning itself becomes multi-layered and complex. In that sense, the ex-combatants find themselves, as Edith Wyschogrod suggests, "in a Catch-22" situation, that is to say, "obligated by [their] vow to restore the past in its actuality," and recognizing their "impossibility of doing so" (1998: XII). Among the war memories that have never left Lou Armour is that of the Argentinian soldier who died in his arms. This memory is re-enacted twice throughout the play: the first time in a direct, almost mechanical way (Arias 41) and the second time, in a much more emotional and "unguarded" manner, by a younger Lou, who retells the story on a documentary entitled *The Falklands War: the Untold Story* that is projected on the backdrop (Arias 60).

By repeating Lou's testimony, the play delves into the idea of theatrical performance as something that grows and changes in unpredictable ways, becoming larger than the performers themselves and extending beyond the limits of their ability to conceptualise or interpret it. Yet, while Lou's memories might have been altered with time, the impressions that those facts have evoked in him remain. The play approaches memory with Lou narrating his past self from the perspective of his present self:

> Look. That's emotional Lou, age twenty-seven. And this is me now, fifty-nine, performing as myself in front of you. I could tell you the story of the dead Argentinian officer again, and it wouldn't necessarily make me cry. Sometimes when I tell it, it can feel a little raw. But I just control myself and tell it like a story (Arias 61).

While traumatic memories are "pre-narrative," in the sense that they are muddled and without order, being able "to tell the story" out loud equates mastering the unspeakable. This also reveals that Lou's testimony is part of the storytelling by which his subjectivity is constructed, and that, in Arias' words, "we are all writing the novels of our lives, and we are all making up things and adding details that never happened" (Bither, 2019). In their particularity and complexity, testimonies in *Minefield/Campo Minado* are thus presented as "stories". As Paul John Eakin claims, they are not only "fictions of a special, memory-based kind' but also 'fictions about what is itself in turn a fiction, the self" (2001: 290).

If the endorsement of truth in the retelling of the veterans' war memories allows for the inclusion of their own perspective and imagination as mediators between the seen and the unseen, the aid of technology, film, props, and music further problematizes the interplay between fact and fiction, shaping and moulding the staging of their war experiences into something new. A significant example of how *Minefield/Campo Minado* uses audio-visual technology in theatrical performance is the masked parody of Margaret Thatcher and Leopoldo Galtieri (Arias 18-19). David Jackson and Gabriel Sagastume

dress up as the two leaders, wearing cartoonish masks to impersonate their faces. While the disguised characters are projected on separate screens on each side of the stage, David and Gabriel mime the original recordings of their most popular war speeches, which are replayed over loudspeakers. Arias incorporation of video, framing and costumes on the stage destabilizes presence and subjectivity. The play thus explores the potential of technology to disrupt, frame, and multiply the performing bodies of David and Gabriel, exposing the gap between the two veterans and the national narratives embodied by Thatcher and Galtieri and producing a multiplicity of meanings: the grotesque caricatures are both repellent and amusing and foreground the issue of authenticity precisely by interweaving and creating tension between the veterans/characters themselves and the costumes/masks they are wearing and by stressing the disparity between the leaders' world views and those of the veterans/characters and of the audience.

Certain stage properties or props, like the poncho Marcelo wore on guard duty and that he has kept all these years (Arias 23), Sukrim Rai's "kukri," the legendary Gurkha knife (Arias 31), the signs with the veterans' names on them that were used to greet them when they arrived in Buenos Aires (Arias 4) and the model of Moody Brook, the Royal Marines' quarters that were blown up during the war (Arias 34), among others, have significantly contributed to the evocation of spaces, times and situations and to the blending or folding of temporal and spatial settings and character configurations. The authenticity of these items brought from the battlefield has not only allowed readers/viewers to build up a closer bond with the veterans and with their stories but provided Arias with more freedom to explore the ways in which the conflict is remembered and re-imagined.

The ethics involved in the representation of past traumas are complex, sometimes navigating the ambiguous road between not infringing individual privacy and making use

of aspects of the veterans' lives to explore issues of dramatic interest. Lou Armour's unease when asked to keep a diary to report his thoughts and feelings about revisiting the past reflects his urge to know, but also the need to deny: "During rehearsals some questions brought back memories of something in my past that I never told anybody about. I began to have sleepless nights, flashbacks" (Arias 53). Arias engages with the veterans' complex and uneasy negotiation with the past as a form of experience that tests the limits of representation. Testifying to something that men saw with their own eyes is, as Cathy Caruth notes, "a ceaseless struggle" (61) because the traumatic nature of the events often stands in the way of description altogether. Gabriel claims that

> the veterans have many different ways of remembering the war: we get together, and year after year we tell each other the same stories, hoping someone will tell us the missing piece. We travel to the Malvinas to look for the positions where we fought. We take thousands of photos, we put them all together and swap them, as if they were sticker for an album (Arias 3).

The anxiety about the possibility, if not the actual appropriateness, of reproducing war in its entirety leads the veterans to either accept the difficultiaccompanes of representing it or else turn to their fellow veterans—or to the dominant national narratives—to show them the way through the process of remembering. Any attempt to fit the pieces of the puzzle together requires a collaborative effort and multiple actors. The supportive environment on stage, within which veterans can develop a sense of safety, facilitates narration—and healing. As seen in the previous quote, everybody collaborates in the retelling of the stories. As Sosa notes, "not only would the former enemies help each other to manipulate pictures, outfits, war toys and cameras, but they would also borrow each other's bodies to enact remembrances" (Sosa 185).

However, sometimes the anxiety to express in words the reality of war in all its traumatic complexity is so overwhelming that it is perceived as an absence that cannot be easily filled by language or conscious thought. Referring to the notable omission from the

play of any reference to the torture inflicted on Argentinian soldiers by their own higher-ranking officers, Gabriel says:

> During the rehearsals, we practiced a scene that didn't make it into the play, in which we acted out a trial by *estaqueamiento*.[19] We didn't like doing this scene because nobody wanted to say whether he'd been tortured or not, or to play the role of the victim. There are things that happened in the war that remain buried on the islands (Arias 40).

Rather than a refusal to perform the victim's role, an attitude which might be examined in the context of gender performance and the underlying masculine anxieties at the heart of the soldiers' projected hypermasculine selves,[20] the quote above might be illustrative of the absence at the heart of a traumatic memory. "The things that remain buried on the islands" reveal the atemporal quality of the wounds that the ex-combatants find themselves coping with at their return, and the universally unspeakable nature of trauma.

In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra argues that when specific historical losses get generalized into notions of absence, they cannot be adequately addressed: "When loss is converted into […] absence, one faces the impasse of endless melancholy, impossible mourning, and interminable aporia in which any process of working through the past and its historical losses is foreclosed" (46). In the narration of traumatic moments, like the *estaqueos* mentioned by Gabriel, there seems to be a conflation of absence and loss that both confuses the distinction between past and present and leads to the enactment of an impasse of impossible mourning. It is not surprising that, as Gabriel's prevailing memory of absence suggests, he and his fellow-veterans remain haunted in a way that coincides with LaCapra's understanding of what happens when "loss gets conflated with absence and conceived as constitutive of existence" itself (49). Yet silence does not always necessarily mean absence. The veterans' refusal to speak about or perform the *estaqueos* can also be read as a deliberate decision not to engage certain taboo topics, such as the atrocities committed during the war, as this would entail exploring the

participants' political views more explicitly, something that Arias seems to avoid. In any case, those "buried" memories are located on a communicative boundary that seems to swallow the signifiers of the factual and the fictional until only just the silence remains.

Crossing Borders (2): The Self and the Other

Among the insights into what borders and the crossing of borders mean in the relationship between the self and the other is the question of authorship, and of what being an author signifies. Arias advocates a collaborative concept of textual production that shifts the focus away from questions of authorial intention and stable meaning into an ethics of border-crossing empathy and action: "What interests me," notes Arias, "is theater as a place for social experiment and for the creation of a new community […] a kind of family by choice that becomes a 'we'" (Kan 61).

The casting, creative development and rehearsals were workshop-based and extremely long, though quite flexible, and often painful and emotionally demanding. During the three months of rehearsal—as said before, the actual war lasted only 74 days—the actors were granted the possibility of revising and rewriting the material further and of working closely together, getting to know one another across cultural, ethnic, and national borders and to rethink their preconceptions and misunderstandings.

Arias asked the veterans to keep diaries recording their thoughts and feelings about their war experiences and organized separate meetings in which the two groups of men were required to dig in their pasts and retell the most painful memories: "the process sounds a little like mining, only it's memory rather than ore or gems that is being extracted," claims Arias, and adds, "but it's just as precious, perhaps even more so" (Arias in Gardner, 2016). The three parts involved (the director and the British and Argentinian

veterans) faced the challenging task of having to negotiate what to include and what to leave out from the script:

> I create text from what they tell me and then I give it back to them and they decide whether it will or won't go in, and they can always change their minds at any point, even once we are performing it. They have the power. In the end the authorship of all my pieces is a shared responsibility, because all of us are involved in the process (Arias in Gardner, 2016).

However, it seems that, despite the many benefits, introducing collaborative practices was not always an easy task. When David Jackson complains about a song he composed not having been included in the playscripts—"I still think ['Soldier, Soldier'] should have been in the play" (Arias 3)—he is actually implying that, in spite of the sharing rules, they experienced times when tension between the relational and the competitive led to difficulty. Other moments of tension in the negotiation of the script involved the veterans' urge to honour the dead and their regiments. This is especially evident in David Jackson's concerns about their duty, as first-hand witnesses, to prioritize precise and verifiable historical facts, particularly of war events, regiments, and numbers of war dead:

> During the process of rehearsals I had concerns about: Why am I saying 'I' instead of 'we'? Where are the stories of the Royal Navy, The Welsh Guards, the Scots Guards, who fought with us? Why are not talking about the Battles: Goose Green, Tumbledown, San Carlos? Do I have the right to stand here and talk for all those who went to war? Where are the British dead in this play? (Arias 42).

In the play, the events that would normally be regarded as historically significant are often downgraded by means of narrating techniques and indirect allusions. The purpose is to subtly guide the reader/viewer towards alternative meanings which are vital to the critical perspective espoused by Arias: "To have a critical vision of history also implies being open to putting established narratives into question" (Kan 2014: 63). In fact, what Maltby rightly terms "obligated remembrance" (2016: 126),[21] that is the perpetuation of a one-dimensional sense of history, understood in terms of the exaltation of nationalism, gratitude, and the worship of the fallen, is repeatedly contested, and destabilized

throughout the play, as some of scenes already discussed, for instance the veterans' impersonations of Thatcher and Leopoldo Galtieri, seem to suggest.

The other aspect in which physical, political and psychological borders between the self and the other become fluid is in the negotiation of conflicting versions of the war. The veterans reproduce the myths and legends fabricated on both the British and Argentinian sides on stage, shouting accusations at each other about the wrongdoings of each other's forces. In this particular scene they present antagonizing views around issues such as the right to sovereignty or the circumstances surrounding the sinking of the Belgrano: "In 1592, the islands were discovered by John Davis" Lou claims. "In 1520, […] Ferdinand Magellan, working for the Spanish Crown, discovered the islands", Gabriel replies. "We were told your government was killing its own people," Lou insists. "You sank the Belgrano outside the exclusion zone," Rubén protests. Finally, they extend an ironic invitation to the audience: "If you want to know more, you can check the Spanish and English versions on Wikipedia […] You will read two very different stories" (Arias 63). It is not clear to what extent the veterans involved in this exchange are acting—some of the arguments they make seem genuinely heartfelt—yet, the direct appeal to the reader/viewer to check the Wikipedia page makes it plain that both British and Argentinian authorities acted appallingly in the management and retelling of the conflict, and it implicitly denounces the necessity for other storytelling frames so that the personal and emotional experiences of the veterans can be represented.

The involvement of the reader/viewer does not end in the previous scene; it can be discussed as part of the self-other dialectics throughout the play. Almost at the end of the play, while playing a loud, punk war song, the performers defiantly and relentlessly ask the audience: "Have you ever been to war? Have you ever killed anybody? Have you watched men die? Have you? Have you? Have you?" (Arias 64). The spectators find

themselves in the awkward predicament of being defiantly asked—the veterans' tone sounds more like a rebuke than a question—to respond to the traumatic experiences recreated on the stage. The historically significant events/emotional experiences conveyed and sieved by the author, can be resisted, engaged with or reformulated by readers/viewers, as meaning-making, empowered agents. This depends on the foundational knowledge they bring to the play. Group affiliations, social preconceptions and political convictions will condition and shape their interpretations. Yet the underlying historical elements in the play create a common language between audience and actors before the performance beings: As Blejmar clearly notes "this final song reminds the audience members that they are not just passive spectators of memories that belong to others but also an integral part of that history" as "a society that encouraged [the war]supported it, and later abandoned and forgot those who fought in it" (2017: 118-119). In that sense, the reader/viewer can decide what in the play is "prescriptive" for themselves and what is merely descriptive of the past or relevant to others. The play offers the audience various opportunities for change—in the sense that it encourages them to rethink their positioning in the conflict and the ideologies that undergird it— but it cannot, and does not, withdraw the responsibility to decide which of these calls is right for them.

Another important issue that needs to be considered within the self-other dynamics is the play's orientation towards maintaining the friend-enemy binary, in order that what is one's own may be safeguarded and that the other may be preserved and respected. While the play's ethical formulation addresses issues of border crossing, diversity and hybridity, the core of its argument is that respect for the enemy can only be achieved through an ethical lens that maintains a border that refuses the subjugation of the enemy-other by the self. It is an ethics that urges a formulation of particularity and otherness that is articulated "through" and not "against" multiplicity and diversity. As

Finburgh rightly notes, the play does not mean to "replace the spectacle of opposing enemies with untroubled spectacles of harmony" (2017: 169). On the contrary, when Ruben Otero, a survivor of the ARA General Belgrano and now the drummer and singer in the Get Back trio, a Beatles tribute band, is asked if they all "dress up as the Beatles to play," he funnily replies: "No, I wear a T-shirt saying 'The Malvinas are Argentine'" (3). Otero also claims that during the rehearsals in London "we turned our hotel room into a trench" and "laid out an Argentine flag, with the Islands on it, a Malvinas mate, the picture of our fellow soldiers and when we went to Buckingham Palace, we sang the Malvinas March to the Queen" (53). The veteran's humorous memories are also accompanied by the moving account of the sinking of the Belgrano by British forces, in which 323 of the 1093 Argentinian crew members died. Yet, while Otero is recounting the anguish he went through as he was being rescued, the light switches to Lou Armour, who says, "We were relieved to hear that the General Belgrano had been hit because she was a well-armed threat. We didn't care if it was turning away, because she could have turned back and attacked us" (Arias 27).

While in civilian life this would be regarded as murder, killing the enemy is understood as a military necessity in war; those who take the lives of enemy soldiers in battle are given the highest decorations. As Jesse Glenn Gray writes: "The basic aim of a nation at war in establishing an image of the enemy is to distinguish as sharply as possible the act of killing from the act of murder by making the former into one deserving of all honor and praise" (1999: 131-132). Therefore, the veterans' interpretation of the enemy is conditioned by their moral duty to hate them: "I had to hate to be able to shoot" says Marcelo Vallejos, when asked about his pervasive anger against anything English (56). The popular army tune David and Lou sing together on stage: "we're on a summer holiday

and about to kill a spick of two" (Arias 21) represents the hatred, racism and dehumanization of the other.

The so-called "evil" of the enemy is artificially stereotyped by propaganda that imposes no limits on the use of brutal language and images. Marcelo Vallejo recounts how headlines from the Argentinian press described the Gurkhas as "mercenary killers" and "savages." Soldiers would also hear rumors that "with their knives they cut off [the enemy's] heads, arms, legs and left the bodies ripped to pieces on the battlefield… They even cut off Argentine soldiers' ears and then they ate them" (Arias 31). Marcelo also explains that for years after the war he had wanted to kill a Gurkha personally: "And now I've got one here, face to face" (31) and "I'd buy him a beer" (33). Despite the deeply engrained stereotype, the true nature of the enemy becomes a contested matter as the play develops.

By approaching the enemy, the image of the "mercenary" and the "savage" is demolished, as the veterans realize that the enemy was like them, merely human. As James Hall observes: "One imagines all sorts of monstrous things about an unseen enemy […]. I for one welcomed any evidence that our opponents were fathers and husbands and brothers just as we were" (1916: 111-112). It was unbearable to know that they were not just killing the enemy, that they were killing men who had wives and children, who had lives and mothers who worried about them. Recalling the memory of an Argentinian soldier who was shot in the face, Lou claims, "I remember when I was searching him, I came across a photograph of his family. […] Sometimes when I'm on the internet, I come across a picture of a dead Argentine soldier sprawled across the rocks, who's been shot in the face. And I think: Is that my guy? Because he keeps popping into my head" (Arias 42). At the sight of the dead body of the Argentinian soldier, Lou feels the shrinking of personal borders and boundaries. His life becomes frailer, suspect, ephemeral.

The play offers other instances in which veterans are required to change their mindsets and review their misperceptions. The struggle to understand, humanize and include the enemy within the self seems to demand not only a move beyond selfhood to focus on the negotiation of difference, but the progressive abandonment of dominant narratives. As Homi Bhabha observes, it is "these 'in between spaces'" that "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood" and "that initiate new signs of identity" (2004: 2). Following up on Lou's traumatic memory of the Argentinian soldier who died in his arms, previously discussed here, David Jackson and Marcelo Vallejo engage in a "mock" therapy session taking place in Buenos Aires. David, a psychologist in real life, portrays an Argentinian therapist, and Marcelo, who faced problems with drugs and had to be treated in a military hospital after the war, plays Lou Armour, who is also suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Being asked by Marcelo why he became a psychologist "currently [working] Afghan, Iraq and Malvinas veterans" (Arias 57), David Jackson reveals he has also suffered from PTSD since his discharge in 1995: "I also had anxiety, depression, social isolation. I used to wander round the streets till three in the morning…" (Arias 57). This is a bold, intimate exchange in which the protagonists either transgress or subvert national and psychological boundaries (such as victims-perpetrators, allies-enemies, and even actors-spectators) and enter liminal zones and border-crossings in which one testimony seems to lose itself in another.

The image that the veterans have with respect to their enemy-other contributes to the inclusion of certain aspects of that perception in their self-definition: "by not being Others we define ourselves" (Barkan 1994: 180). In fact, the conscious transformation of the enemy into a human being deserving of compassion and respect helps these men find their own selves; their capacity for tolerance and understanding grows as they gain greater emotional awareness of the other. So much so that some are able to leave their hatred

behind and radically change their attitudes towards the enemy, treating them as human beings worthy of concern. At the end of the session, David says: "I charge fifty pounds for civilians. I charge twenty points for veterans and their families. For you, Marcelo, it's free" (58). The real enemy is war, not the Argentinians or the British. War is the absolute evil, with a will of its own, from which nothing good could result.

In an interview with Dominic Cavendish for *The Telegraph*, Arias acknowledges that, as an Argentinian and a woman, it was a challenge to get these six men to trust her and trust each other because they were on opposing sides of the conflict and none of them were familiar with acting before recruitment: "the tension will always be there. This isn't about reconciliation but about being able to live with disagreement. So far, we've been able to do something together—and that's much more than our countries have managed" (Cavendish, 2016). Even if contesting versions of the conflict persist, the recognition of the enemies as human beings is an essential first step towards their humanization and, hopefully, towards limiting violence within societies and between nations. By recognising the humanity of the enemy, the veterans are reminded of their own humanity; being compassionate of the enemy is part of their resistance to being overwhelmed by the dehumanisation of war.

A final liminal zone that both propitiates and prevents the encounter between the self and the other in the play is language. As the veterans speak their native languages throughout the show, the stage acts as a linguistically shared space in which language is used as a metaphor, in a variety of ways, to try to make sense of the self-other binary. The language of the victorious is crossed with the language of the defeated and this explores and pushes at the boundaries of communication, particularly those associated with violence and power. At certain points language is looked as if it were a challenger, an opponent, for instance when Gabriel asks Ruben why he sings in English (3) or as a source

of deception, as when Rubén and the other Argentinian veterans go to Buckingham Palace to sing the Malvinas March to the Queen (53), or as a reminder of traumatic guilt, when the dying Argentinian soldiers speaks to Lou in his own language: "I wish now that he'd never spoken English" (60). Marcelo's sense of patriotism causes him to feel resentful against the language of the victorious British. For many years, the hatred was so overpowering that English was a barrier Marcelo was not willing to cross: "I couldn't listen to English music, I couldn't see films in English. If my son spoke to me in English because he was taught at school, I'd chase him out of the house" (56-57).

Yet, the coexistence of the two languages on the stage is not meant to prevent communication but rather to contribute to a greater sense of recognition of the other and to the possible emergence of an arena for negotiation: The "two languages both protect the two teams and set them apart. If the veterans struggled to understand each other, Arias managed to transform that concern into the material basis of a creative encounter" (Sosa 180). In a kind of prologue to the play, Marcelo Vallejo claims: "I'm there with the enemy, swapping stories. I don't understand much, but I get what they're saying from their expressions, their looks […] The Brits don't speak Spanish, we Argentines don't speak English. But somehow we understood each other" (Arias 1). Arias takes a step towards bridging the distance between the two cultures providing opportunities for shared experiences and a common physical space in which Argentinian and British veterans have an equal sense of entitlement and belonging.

However, the presence of the Gurkha, Sukrim Rai, "a pervasive foreigner even within the British team" (Sosa 2017: 187), destabilizes the linguistic binary, sharpening his fellow comrades' self-awareness and thereby drawing their attention to the patterns of outright discrimination and exclusion to which colonial troops were submitted until the twenty-first century. When Sukrim came back from the Falklands, "people were

celebrating on both sides of the road. But nobody hugged [him]. Because there was no Gurkha family in the UK" (they were not allowed to reside there) (Arias 50). Moreover, not being a British citizen like the other two veterans, Sukrim arrived in Buenos Aires a week later as the process of getting a visa for him was more complicated than for the others. Obtaining his British citizenship was not an easy matter either: "although the Gurkhas fought for Great Britain for over 200 years, they were not allowed to live in the UK. Only in 2006 did [Sukrim Rai] get British citizenship" (58).

Sukrim reinforces this sense of otherness at the end of the play, as surrounded by the other veterans, he opens a notebook, and reads a poem in Nepalese. The poem is not provided with either Spanish or English translation, so neither audience nor veterans are able to decipher the message. This final poem has produced several different interpretations, although there is substantial consensus that communication is deliberately restricted or aimed at thwarting dialogue. In Lorena Verzero's view, "The presence of the Nepalese soldier breaks the binarism and demonstrates the impossibility of full intelligibility" (2017: 40). Sosa argues that "the poem also exposes us to the reminder that there will always be something that cannot be translated" (188). Geoffrey Maguire interprets this as a "final act of linguistic and formal rupture," as a further assertion of "the subjective construction [of] personal memories" (2019: 13). Perhaps, being somehow removed from the prevailing discourses and dominant narratives, Sukrim Rai represents the ultimate crossing into unfamiliar ground in which reader/viewer/veterans experience disconcerting liminality. In this process, old interpretations and hegemonic boundaries get dismantled, so that new ones can take shape. In her play, Arias offers her protagonists/audience a glimpse beyond Sukrim's liminality, and the promise of renewed acceptance and an inventiveness that allows for these individual experiences to survive

in ways in which do not so much rise above the memory of the war itself but rework it into some kind of relationship with the future.

Conclusions

A notable feature of *Minefield/Campo Minado* is that it shows that borders are real, and that the performance of borders by this group of veterans who live within and between them is fraught with dilemmas, mainly surrounding the untidy boundaries between fact and fiction, but also about how the self and the other relate. Our main aim has been to show that Lola Arias' play brings readers/viewers face to face with borders and borderlines but also with their transgression. This paper has centred on the idea of "crossing borders", a paradigm that is critical to discourses on war and its representation. We have argued that the concept of "borders," in the context of the theatrical representation of the Malvinas/Falklands War, refers to the creation and negotiation of difference. Yet we have insisted that, despite presenting two very distinct views of what happened on the Malvinas/Falklands, the play encompasses dialogue and openness among the Argentinian and British veterans on the stage.

Because the memories of these veterans prove to be a central thematic concern in the play, we have focused on the difficulty to categorize documentary theatre as either fictional or factual. The performance of the veterans' memories on stage is not fixed but a changing matter in their process of remembering and self-discovery. Moreover, remembering the past inevitably involves an interplay between the past and the present, and its significance is more truly understood as a revelation of the present situation of the veterans than as the uncovering of the past, or of its relationship to issues of remembrance. This paper has hopefully demonstrated that the play simultaneously draws on the

dominant national narratives and creatively revises them and uses the specific powers of fiction—through the use of technology, costumes, film, props and music—to become a means for remembrance, but also for the reflection on today's relationship with the traumatic past of the Malvinas/Falklands War, on the processes of memory and on the writing of history.

The interplay between the self and the other has also enlivened and enriched debates in connection with authorship, with the dynamic involvement of the reader/viewer and with the friend-enemy binary, while also potentially facilitating a re-examination of the narratives governing the interpretation of the other across linguistic and cultural borders, challenging the often fraught relationship between the victorious and the defeated. Diversity, bolstered by the author across a range of medial boundaries, is a valuable asset throughout the two sides of the conflict, to expand the exchange of ideas and understanding between these men based on their shared values. Moreover, the presence of the Gurkha Sukrim Rai in the play not only encourages an active engagement with diversity across geographical borders but destabilizes the binaries of constitutive categories of identity, such as that of friend-enemy, victor-vanquished, among others. Although reconciliation does not seem to be the primary concern of the play, we have concluded that the opening up and undoing of borders—in specific post-war contexts—to less contentious and more collaborative societies and nations, working together within and across borders.

[1] For a more detailed account of the historical background to the conflict see Andrea Bellot's "The Malvinas/Falklands War (1982): Pacific Solutions for an Atlantic Conflict" (2013).

[2] See Anthony Barnett's *Iron Britannia. Why Parliament Waged its Falklands War* (1982); Oscar Raúl Cardoso's *Falklands: The Secret Plot* (1983); Geoffrey Regan's *Historia de la Incompetencia Militar* (1987); Rosana Guber's *¿Por qué Malvinas? De la Causa Nacional a la Guerra Absurda* (2001); and Paula Canelo's "La Política contra la Economía: los Elencos Militares frente al Plan Económico de Martínez de Hoz durante el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (1976-1981)" (2004), among others, for more information on the historical circumstances and structural causes that led to the war between the two countries.

[3] Several obstacles make judicial resolution increasingly difficult: Britain's military and economic hold over the islands is far superior than it was in 1982, which makes Argentina's claim to the territory impossible to be pursued in practice. Unlike Argentina, Britain wants the "sovereignty" issue out of the negotiations and insists on Falklanders' right to self-determination, a tactic which will obviously be favorable to them because of the Anglo-Saxon origin of most of the Falklanders. See Marko Milanovic's "Why the Falklands Dispute Will (Probably) Never Go to Court?" (2010).

[4] Within this process of reconstructing the "reality" of what really happened, there have been interesting responses both from the British and the Argentinian side: Among the films and plays are *Tumbledown* (Richard Eyre, 1988); *The Falklands Play* (Ian Curteis, 1987); *Los Chicos de la Guerra* (Bebe Kamin, 1984); *Fuckland* (José Luis Márques, 2000); *Iluminados por el Fuego* (Tristán Bauer, 2005. *Swansong* (Richard Francis, 1986); *A Soldier's Song* (Ken Lukowiak, 1999); *The Tin-Pot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman* (Raymond Briggs, 1984); the poem *Juan López y John Ward* (Jorge Luis Borges, 1982); *Los Pichiciegos* (Rodolfo Fogwill, 1982); *Las Islas* (Carlos Gamerro, 1998) are among the most representative literary responses. For examples of the various theatrical performances of the war both on the British and the Argentinian side, see pages 7 and 8.

[5] In *Fighting Fictions* (1999), Kevin Foster refers to these dominant narratives as "fictions" and discusses a series of discursive strategies used by the British government and the media to instill the belief that the campaign to retake the islands was a moral and political crusade and that the war was fought in the name of the public good (156). In a similar vein, in "The Invention of Argentina" (2003), Nicolas Shumway terms these dominant narratives "guiding fictions", arguing that although they "cannot be proven, […] they are necessary to give individuals a sense of nation, peoplehood, collective identity, and national purpose" (Xi). In her analysis of the British case, Sarah Maltby refers to "the different and at time conflicting imaginings" through which the islands "have been continually imagined and historicized in and through media discourse; as a site of commemoration and memorialization; as a site of contested political ownership; and as a site of UK nationalist politics" (1).

[6] While most Argentinians have actively condemned their recent history of state violence and no longer support the prospect of the island's annexation by force, the debate over the vindication of the sovereignty of the Malvinas/Falkland is still ongoing at a political level, with Peronists pursuing a diplomatic campaign to bring the islands back under the Argentinian flag, and right-wing administrations adopting a much more lenient attitude. In the British case, conservatives have built a myth around Margaret Thatcher's military enterprise, drawing from the old rhetoric of war as adventure and on Britain's imperial past. Liberal and labour supporters, on the other hand, have seen the conflict as the prime minister's narcissistic attempt to secure her political future and rehabilitate an economic programme that was otherwise inert.

[7] Because of the use of tape-recorded material for documenting real-life stories, Louise Paget's verbatim play, *Falkland Sound/ Voces de Malvinas* (1983), can be compared with the play that will be studied here. Verbatim theatre, a manifestation of documentary theatre, has been widely popular in the UK since the mid-1970s. The term "verbatim", which literary means "word-by-word," was coined by Derek Paget in 1987 (See Derek Paget's "Verbatim Theatre: Oral History and Documentary Techniques," 1987). *Falkland Sound/Voces de Malvinas* is divided into two parts, the first part is built up with letters from Lieutenant David Tinker, a Falkland naval officer who was killed in action, while the second part is a panel discussion conducted by five ordinary people caught up in the war, ranging from an English schoolteacher in Stanley to an Anglo-Argentine businessman and a disillusioned London war correspondent. The use of vernacular language is an essential element in verbatim theatre, as the actor on stage needs to sound as authentic as possible. Verbatim plays tend to neglect conventional forms, the performances are free in style and innovative in terms of structure. In 2002, on the twentieth anniversary of the war, Jennifer Lunn directed a new version of *Falkland Sound.*

[8] As Jordana Blejmar clearly states, the war has become an active part of the "public discourse" in Argentina, independently of the government's ideology or their foreign affairs strategies. Children sing the Malvinas anthem at school; there is a museum—*Museo Malvinas e Islas del Atlántico Sur*—devoted to the remembrance of the fallen soldiers; the motto "Las Malvinas son argentinas" is usually scribbled on street graffiti and there is even a football stadium in Mendoza called Malvinas Argentinas (Blejmar 106). It should be noted that after a period of about twenty years, coinciding with what Alan Rouquié has defined as a process of "desmalvinización" (See Cangiano's

"Desmalvinización. La derrota argentina por otros medios," 2012), the governments of Néstor and Cristina Kirchner successfully managed to bring the territorial dispute to the international level with several countries in Latin America declaring their diplomatic support of Argentina's sovereignty claim over the islands (See Piccone's "De la desmalvinización a la regionalización del reclamo argentino por la soberanía sobre las Islas Malvinas," 2014).

[9] Of all the Argentinian plays listed above, Federico León's *Museo Miguel Ángel Boezzio* (1998) is probably the one that shares more similarities with the play studied here because it critically articulates theatre, testimony, self-memorialization (Boezzio performs his own life) to build a particular representation of the war that seeks to generate bonds of attachment and intimacy with the audience to create a sense of shared experience.

[10] Gabriel Sagastume witnessed the death of his comrades on a landmine planted by the same Argentinians. They were trying to steal food from the kelpers' cabins on the outskirts of Mount Longdon. After the war, he studied law and became a district attorney. He wrote a book about his post-war trips to the islands and his artistic exchanges with the islanders. Rubén Otero survived the sinking of the ARA General Belgrano and is now a member of Beatles tribute band. After losing his job, Marcelo Vallejo suffered from depressive episodes that led him into alcohol dependence and a suicide attempt. He learned to swim as an adult and is now a triathlon champion. After being taken prisoner and sent back to England, sergeant Lou Armour decided to return to the islands to join up with the Task Force. One of the memories that still evokes distress is when an Argentinian soldier died in his arms. After the war, he studied sociology and history of art and is now a special-needs teacher. David Jackson was a radio operator for the Royal Marines and worked in intelligence during the war. When he got back, he discovered his wife had cheated on him and got divorced. He is now a psychologist assisting returning war veterans. Sukrim Rai Gurkha was a Nepalese Ghurka. After the war he served throughout the world and worked as a security guard in Iraq. He has recently acquired British citizenship.

[11] Jorge Luis Borges's "Juan López and John Ward" is a prose-poem reflecting the writer's opinion on the Malvinas/Falklands War and opposing countless patriotic accounts on both sides of the Atlantic during and after the war. Although Juan López and John Ward could have been friends, they kill each other in this fight over land, and lie buried in the snow and the corruption of their governments. The poem ends with an ironic line: "El hecho que refiero pasó en un tiempo que no podemos entender" [The deed I refer to happened in a time that we cannot understand].

[12] Although there are 6 veterans/actors on stage, the original production includes a crew of 23 people. The play was first commissioned by the LIFT Festival and was co-produced by Brighton Festival, the Royal Court Theatre and Universidad Nacional de San Martin, among others. We had the chance to see the show on 17 July 2019, at Teatre Lliure Montjuïc, Sala Fabià Puigserver (with a capacity of about 700 spectators) during one of Barcelona's biggest theatre, dance and music events, the Grec Festival.

[13] Arias' previous productions were also testimonial and documentary in nature, for instance, *El arte de hacer dinero* (2013); *El año en que nací* (2012); *Melancolía y Manifestaciones* (2012); *Los posnucleares* (2011); *That enemy within* (2010); *Mi nombre cuando yo ya no exista* (2009), *Mi vida después* (2016), among others. She frequently invites real people to share their experiences, by real we mean first-hand witnesses/victims rather than actors, who stand on opposing sides of a conflict. Many of the performers have been victims of the so-called Dirty War which was followed by the cruel Argentine military regime of 1976-82.

[14] In a lecture given on June 6, 2016 at King's College (London) Arias describes her play as a "living creature," and adds: "It is not a play that is written, that is published and that is done. It is a project that is growing, that is changing over the years, because people change their minds and they want to say something different, and also because their lives change. It is not only fiction creating reality, but it is also reality interacting with fiction in many unexpected ways" ("Memory is a Minefield," the STR Edward Gordon Craig Lecture).

[15] After its premiere in London in June 2016 as part of the LIFT festival, *Minefield/Campo Minado* has been repeatedly presented at festivals (Steirischer Herbst, Graz; Festival d'Avignon; Theater Spektakel, Zurich; We are here, Dublin; Spielart Festival, Munich; Alkantara Festival, Lisbon; Radicals Festival, Barcelona: Under the Radar, NY) and art spaces worldwide (Red Cat LA, Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago). The success of the play led to a documentary film titled *Theatre of War/Teatro de Guerra*, which was released two years after the premiere, in 2018. The film was also directed by Lola Arias with the same performers, and it resembles a backstage to the play. Lola Arias' texts were translated into more than seven languages.

[16] The title not only refers to memory as a mine of unexploded bombs. On a more literal level, it refers to the approximately 30,000 landmines that were scattered across the islands. Although most of them were cleared after the end of the war, about a hundred minefields remained and were fenced off. In 2009, demining operations were resumed.

[17] Arias is not alone in her attempt to producing documentary theatre to address the complexities war. To name but a few major playwrights, directors and practitioners that have preceded her in taking the war drama onto the stage, please see the work of Peter Cheeseman, Richard Norton-Taylor, Nicolas Kent, George Packer, Joan Maud Littlewood, Teya Sepinuck (with her experimental Theatre of Witness), Max Stafford-Clark, and Robin Soans, among others.

[18] Curiously, The Beatles' song that the performers sing on stage is entitled "Get Back," clearly alluding to the trope of the return. The name of the band led by Rubén Otero is also the Get Back Trio (Arias 51).

[19] Soldiers who had stolen food to eat had their hands and feet tied to the frozen ground by their superiors (Arias 40).

[20] Gabriel's mentioning of his comrades' refusal to play the victim role, might remind the reader/viewer of Lou Armour's embarrassment when he spotted himself in the photo of the surrender of the British troops in Port Stanley published by *Gente* in April 1982 (Arias 17).

[21] Ricoeur's notion of "obligated memory" stresses the moral necessity to uphold continued remembering precisely because of the debt incurred by the actions of those in the past—to whom we owe a large part of our identity—in order to exercise justice, to give back, or transmit, whatever it is we have received. As Ricoeur himself states: "It is justice which extracts from traumatizing remembrances their exemplary value, turns memory into a project, and it is this project of justice that gives the form of the future and of imperativeness to the duty of memory" (2004 :88).

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