

The Malvinas/Falklands War in Transatlantic Narratives: Exploring Collective Memory and Negotiating Self/Other Identity

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Volume 26 Issue 1 (March 2024) Article 8**Andrea R. Bellot****"The Malvinas/Falklands War in Transatlantic Narratives:
Exploring Collective Memory and Negotiating Self/Other Identity"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol26/iss1/8>>Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 26.1 (2024)**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol26/iss1/>>

Abstract: In her article "The Malvinas/Falklands War in Transatlantic Narratives: Exploring Collective Memory and Negotiating Self/Other Identity", Andrea R. Bellot examines the remembrance of the Malvinas/Falklands War (1982) through cultural texts for children, presenting a comparative analysis of post-war narratives from both the United Kingdom and Argentina. Through a detailed exploration of "The Tin-Pot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman" by British author and illustrator Raymond Briggs (1984), and the Argentine TV cartoon show "La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba en las Islas Malvinas" (2012), broadcasted on Paka Paka, Bellot discusses how collective memory and national identity are crafted and contested in these representations. While both works aim to critique the absurdity of war, they diverge in their political undertones, engaging with themes of patriotism, collective memory, and political satire. Bellot's analysis employs a comparative literature framework to illuminate the role these narratives play in shaping remembrance and contributing to the ongoing construction of national identities and collective memories in the post-war era. Her findings underscore the significant influence of children's cultural texts in negotiating memory and identity, enriching our understanding of the complex dynamics between narrative, memory, and identity in the context of conflict.

The Malvinas/Falklands War in Transatlantic Narratives: Exploring Collective Memory and Negotiating Self/Other Identity

Introduction: The Malvinas/Falklands Dispute

The Malvinas/Falklands War (1982) was a brief military conflict between the United Kingdom and Argentina over the sovereignty of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, a bunch of islands in the South Atlantic that have been classified as British Overseas Territory (OT) since 1833, though Argentina has always alleged that the archipelago belongs to its national territory. Although it was a brief war of only 74 days, 2 April–14 June 1982, which resulted in relatively few casualties and losses given the size of the respective military forces involved (255 British, 649 Argentine and 3 civilian Islanders lost their lives), it figures prominently in the collective memory of each nation. For the UK, it was the last war over an overseas territory, and it allowed Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to retain power for almost a decade after the British victory. For Argentina, it was the only war fought and lost in the twentieth century. The Argentine defeat hastened the fall of the dictatorship, which had seized power in 1976, and motivated the return of democracy in 1983.

The war implied a major nationalist project since national honour was at stake. Patriotic sentiments were deeply rooted on both sides of the Atlantic, and the war affected national decisions and self-regard for years, even decades. As Jon Begley claims, the "war remains defined by British and Argentine self-image" (231). When the war broke out, both the UK and Argentina were undergoing severe social and economic crises. It has been argued by many historians that both nations made use of the conflict to mask internal troubles (Barnett; Cardoso; Regan; Guber; Canelo). This implies that the war could have been used to raise nationalist feelings and thus unite public opinion against a common outside enemy by creating an "us/them" dichotomy. This surge in patriotic and nationalist passion was provoked during wartime to gain broader support.¹ Those in power made use of this "us/them" dichotomy to divert the attention of the citizens of both sides who were discontented, unemployed, discriminated against, or repressed at home.

At present, nearly four decades after the end of the armed dispute, the Malvinas/Falkland Islands remain the source of a sovereignty conflict between the two countries.² Argentina has maintained a peaceful but constant claim based on the notion of territorial integrity. Klaus Dodds and Alan Hemmings assume that Argentina will not pose a military threat. Argentina will, however, "seek to remain a disruptive influence on the Falkland Islands and their relationships with South American neighbours" (Dodds and Hemmings 1432).³ The Malvinas is the most relevant geopolitical issue in Argentina, and the updated National constitution of 1994 reinforces the country's historic claims: "The Argentine Nation ratifies its legitimate and non-prescribing sovereignty over the Malvinas [...]" (First Temporary Provisions, 22).

In the post-war period, Britain has mainly focused on the islanders' wishes and vigorously proclaims its commitment to defend them against any aggression, as well as to grant self-determination. This commitment to defend the territory of the Falkland Islands and their inhabitants is shown by the continuous British military presence of a combined naval, air force and army deployment on the islands. Britain has always insisted on self-determination, which implies the power to decide should be given to the local inhabitants. A referendum was held on the islands in March 2013 asking the Falklanders if they wished to remain British. As expected, 99.8% voted "yes" (Milmo). The

¹According to Helen Parr, the Falklands War was strongly supported and popular in Britain (*Our Boys*). Crowds gathered at the ports to say farewell to the expeditionary forces and warmly welcomed their heroes who returned home. For many, the war represented the opportunity to show the world that Britain was still a major world power, able to project military force thousands of miles away, like the United States. Moreover, it provided a chance to overcome years of perceived decline and retreat, economically, politically, and militarily, marked by the economic crisis. It signalled sovereignty sharing in terms of its accession to the European Common Market, and the withdrawal of military forces "east of Suez" due to budget cuts, to the point that, by the end of the 1970s, it was believed that the role of Britain as a global military power was over.

² Krista Wiegand has included the Falklands/Malvinas dispute into those territorial disputes worldwide having lasted more than 175 years (*Enduring*).

³ By examining the Argentine satirical film *Fuckland*, directed by José Luis Marqués and filmed covertly in the Falklands, Benwell and Pinkerton argue that the film exposes the daily insecurities of South Atlantic: "bodies, homes and community of Falkland Islanders have been territorialised in the Argentine geopolitical imagination, and therefore subject to modes of violence" (1000).

government of Argentina gave no credibility to this referendum and assigns no legal value to it. This referendum was promoted by the government of David Cameron, who, in Dodds' mind, on the Falklands question, has been "the most robust Prime Minister since the late Margaret Thatcher" (166).

McGuirk describes the consequences of the conflict as an "unfinished business of a war that still provokes reaction" (iii). This "unfinished" war has been and still is, extensively represented in media and culture in both nations.⁴ However, and as Begley claims, the cultural representation has been unequal: "the contemporary resonance of the Malvinas war in Argentina is [...] in stark contrast to the diminishing significance of the Falklands War within British culture" (237). This difference is due to sociohistorical factors particular to each nation. For Argentina, the war, as well as the insular territory, are highly symbolic elements in its national and cultural collective identity. In popular memory, the war is still associated with a dreadful military regime.⁵ During the post-war era, the collective grieving process surrounding the traumatic war experience has often intertwined with the lingering trauma inflicted by the previous military dictatorship, specifically in relation to the human rights abuses that instigated the conflict. This viewpoint has been supported by Argentine historians such as Guber (*iPor*) and Lorenz (*Unas*). Still, the nation views itself as incomplete without these islands, longing for a part of the territory that has supposedly been taken away—the Malvinas are usually referred to as "the little lost sisters." Subtle daily reminders of what can be considered banal nationalism include the construction of several monuments and memorial sites spread around the country, the inclusion of the islands in official maps and weather forecasts, media representation and the inclusion of Malvinas related contents at schools and in history books, as Carlos Escudé recognises ("Argentine"). British journalist and military historian Max Hastings refers to this passionate feeling the nation has for the islands with the following words: "Argentina's passion for those benighted islands is crazy" ("Triumph"). However, as an ethnographic study by Benwell and Dodds reveals, "Argentine territorial nationalism is not received uniformly" (441) since the emotional investments of Argentine citizens, young people in particular, offer a multiplicity of interpretations to the daily cultural reminders and patriotic interpellations promulgated by the state.

For Britain, in turn, the Falklands War, in many ways, has remained linked to Thatcherism and its political and ideological premises. During the 1970s and 1980s, Britain experienced a new kind of reshaped nationalism, a revival of the national values and traditions associated with the Empire. On 3 July 1982, at the Conservative Rally at Cheltenham, Margaret Thatcher gave a triumphant speech after the British victory.⁶ The entire speech is bound together by references to the collective "our country," "our people," "we fought," "our own people," "our own sovereign territory." Thatcher talks about the "spirit of the South Atlantic" or the "Falklands factor" to increase people's confidence and make them recover their faith in the nation. Britain, she claims, is still strong, courageous and resolute. The spirit of the Falklands became the umbrella term that defined the resistance of a united and powerful nation against the usurping enemy: "The spirit has stirred, and the nation has begun to assert itself [...]. We have stopped to be a nation in retreat" (Thatcher).⁷ The Prime Minister encourages the British to wake up from years and years of apathy, to bring out those qualities that reflect Britishness and reassert their collective pride: "We British are as we have always been: competent, courageous and resolute" (Thatcher). She constructs her whole speech based on the notion of working together for the development of the nation, what she called the "spirit of the Falklands"; a "revival of pride for the warrior heritage was only a brief flash of glory to succumb later into national decline," Hastings contends ("Triumph"). Both during and after the Falklands conflict, Thatcher presented herself as the heroic leader not only of the British armed forces but also of a moral

⁴ For a detailed analysis of the literary and cultural production on the two sides of the conflict, please see McGuirk; Begley; Williams; Monaghan; Souto; Vitullo.

⁵ Although Argentina had previously undergone other military regimes, this was considered to be by far the worst of dictatorships (Corradi 92), a *Dirty War* that violated human rights and which resulted in thirty thousand political activists "disappearing," according to CONADEP (Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas). Estimate given in *Nunca Más* (CONADEP).

⁶ This speech titled "Britain is no longer a nation in retreat" is considered to be "one of the most remarkable speeches in recent British politics, in which Thatcher gives her interpretation of the true meaning of the war" (Barnett 63).

⁷ The expression "in retreat" can also refer to the decolonisation period of the 1960s and 1970s, when the UK left most of its colonies around the world and stopped being a global power. British military forces were also withdrawn from international positions, especially in Asia, due to money shortage and the concentration of troops in designated positions assigned by NATO to its members (Kitchen 123–142). As a primary mission, the Royal Navy was given the task to counter the Soviet submarine force in the North Atlantic, which left little time and resources to imperial missions.

crusade by projecting images of herself, and the British people, in terms of a mythologised past, to restage the old rhetoric of war as a splendid spectacle, full of national pride and high romantic images. The Falklands War, as Tana Wollen observes, was used by Thatcher to (re) define "Britishness," one rooted in the values of Imperialism and Anglocentrism ("Shoulders"). Similarly, Robert Cross argues that the Falklands conflict enabled Thatcher to resurrect some of the worst values of the Old Britain—a racist, violent, xenophobic Britain (Steven Berkoff).

Aims and Theoretical Considerations

The main aim of the paper is to analyse how national collective memory is negotiated in cultural texts directed at children. To do so, I will discuss two narratives for children about the Malvinas/Falklands conflict, one from each side of the dispute, to explore the depiction of "Self" and "Other" in the stories in an attempt to explore how British and Argentine children's national identity, the most potent and durable influence of current collective cultural identities (Smith *National Identity*), is shaped in connection with a war episode and its consequences. The British example, *The Tin-Pot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman* is an illustrated storybook, and "La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba en las Islas Malvinas" is an animated TV show from Argentina.

It is important to point out the reason for adopting both texts in this article. Firstly, I am aware that it is difficult to provide a comparative analysis of both as regards their form: each text is based on the author's political viewpoints and aimed at an audience of children. Both texts interpellate the audience to situations of power, violence, and ethics. Both texts distance themselves from the political framework of the governments in the UK and in Argentina during the conflict. Both governments use the war to promote patriotic feelings at home and divert people's growing unrest about national crises. It is true that the form of each text is different, nevertheless Briggs' story with cartoons is successful at pointing out that each nation in the conflict has entered the war because of the absolute power of two dictators: the Iron Woman and the Tin Pot General. The cartoon show, on the other hand, takes place after the fall of the Argentine dictatorship and attempts to bring children up to date with their national history and with collective memory. From a historical point of view, therefore, each text is a rewriting of the Falklands/Malvinas war. I would add that although both texts (cartoon and story) are presented to children through cartoon illustrations, an adult might be needed to explain the actual situation. Indeed, such is the case with much of so-called children's literature (*Alice in Wonderland*, etc).

Even if the two narratives differ considerably, I consider that these have been two powerful representations of the Malvinas/Falklands War for young audiences, and they are worth discussing together. As will be shown in the analysis below, the main differences have to do with the time when the two texts were produced—one right after the war, the other 30 years after the end of the conflict, the intention—one is to satirise political leaders and denounce the nasty consequences of the war, while the other is more educational in the sense that it tries to explain the war as a historical fact while reaffirming sovereignty. I am aware that a direct comparison cannot be established due to the aforementioned differences between these two cultural products, still, they are worth paying attention to as post-war cultural manifestations. Moreover, there have been scarce fictionalised narratives for young audiences in the post-war period, especially in the UK.

The figure of the Other still plays a key role in maintaining group solidarity, social coherence and unity. The rival Other needs to be portrayed negatively and to be projected as a threat to the Self. Collectively, this deliberate polarization of "us" versus "them" proves to be an effective mechanism to foster a national bond. Dominant discourses create the Enemy by attaching derogative features that simultaneously work in favour of the construction of self/national identity; that is to say, the Other is created, shaped and transformed in and by discursive practices. As Stuart Hall contends, "precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discourse formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (4).

The binary polarization between Self/Other leaves no space for other interpretations or otherness. Sami Schalk suggests that identities should move beyond the self/other binary. Each Self has something in common with the Other, and at this point, the Self becomes an "other-self". The Other-self, defined by Schalk, is to be understood as "an other individual with whom the self identifies and connects with or as the self-behaving as other to fill or expand the void of identity between the self and other" (209). Schalk points out that there is space for this Other-Self, one "which allows for a fluid, contextualized understanding of the self in a spectrum of relatedness to others in any given moment" (197). The struggle to understand, humanize and include the Other within the Self seems to

require not only a challenging move beyond selfhood to focus on the negotiation of difference, but also a neglect of dominant narratives. As Homi Bhabha notes, it is "these 'in between' spaces" that "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood" and "that initiate new signs of identity" (2).

In post-modern and post-colonial theory, identity is perceived as being fragmentary, unstable, "relational and incomplete, in process" (Grossberg 89). Because Self and Other mirror each other constantly, self-identity is shaped by the gaze of the Other and through this interaction with the Other; as explained by Hall, "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference [...] it is only through the relation to the Other [...] that identity can be constructed" (4-5).⁸ As Nicola King argues, "the very word 'identity' suggests the dialectic between identification, modelling oneself *on* the other, and the establishment of the self as distinct, individual different *from* the other" (31). [italics in the original].

Concerning memory and identity, Misztal argues that collective identities imply notions of group bounding and homogeneity, involving a feeling of solidarity to the group as well as a felt difference to outsiders, the classical us/them dichotomy which is a common characteristic of all social groups (*Theories*). Memory and identity are interlinked; in fact, and as Gillis maintains, they "depend upon each other since not only is identity rooted in memory but also what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity" (3). Nationalisms see nations as communities of memory and use memory as a political instrument for group identity and cohesion. Many social groups look back into the past with the intention of glorifying specific aspects of it. Thus, they use memory to foster pride in their traditions and to demand recognition of suffering. Similarly, Noakes contends that certain aspects of the past will be emphasized over others, leading to a romanticized vision of history, which is often the case with the retelling of the Falklands/Malvinas war from each side of the dispute (*War*).

During the nineteenth century, when the so-called "public" schools were embracing the idea of Britain being the home of a superior race, national education slowly opened up to the "underprivileged." The 1870 Education Act met with serious opposition as many from the upper classes believed that the working classes would become rebellious and demand more rights. G.A. Henty, who became Britain's most popular author of "boys' literature" at the end of the nineteenth century, wrote about young boys leaving England, becoming heroes in the Empire and helping in the British expansion of territory. Henty's ideas became contagious among young boys and his philosophy of leaving England to become more English caught on through his work. British imperial propaganda was introduced into history textbooks, popular newspapers and juvenile literature, both in schools and in outside school activities. The founding of organisations such as Sunday School, and the movements introduced by Baden Powell and his sister, Agnes Smyth Baden-Powell from 1910 onwards, (the Boy Scouts, Brownies and Girl Guides) emphasized the importance of an ethics based on Christian faith, athleticism, adventure and also chauvinism. The fear that general literacy might become dangerous for the British elite and the status quo, was eventually diminished and helped by promoting a Britishness, based on individualism, self-help and patriotism. Juvenile and children's literature were seeped with imperialism, aggressive individualism and racism. Gender roles were kept apart, nevertheless. Male and masculine worlds were inhabited with white heroes, whereas female worlds were totally separate and very feminine. Present day books such as *The Comely Girls Annual* and *The Manly Boys Annual* are parodies of the *Girl's Own* and *Boy's Own* annuals dating from the late 1880s.

Was children's literature any different from juvenile literature? Emer O'Sullivan notes that the biggest change lies in the commercial globalization of children's cultures and reading material ("Children"). Books, comics, videos, films, and also toys depicting heroic figures are being mass-produced all over the world. It seems that the cultural and didactic elements of the literature have been reduced. And yet, O'Sullivan's study of children's literature, "addresses intercultural phenomena, such as contact and transfer between literatures and the representation of images of self and others in the literature of a given language" (190). Thus, she gives as an example how certain expressions must be "translated" according to political correctness, or simply not translated at all. Moreover, seventy to ninety per cent of children's literature is European or American in origin and is exported to other parts of the world. The crossing of boundaries and frontiers only work in that direction. The import of children's literature from other (and otherised) countries is still very scarce. O'Sullivan's article was published in 2011, and yet the massive influx of children's stories through visual media has increased to such an extent that Japanese *Dragonball* and other anime films and comics have taken over. Although such cartoon stories have worried the general public as regards the violence they

⁸ As Stuart Hall explains, this idea of the construction of self-identity by and through the interaction with the Other is also acknowledged by many scholars, such as Derrida (1981), Laclau (1990) and Butler (1993), among other contemporary thinkers ("Introduction").

portray, it is now possible to read and view children's literature from all over the world, certainly enough to give children an idea of cultural awareness.

Overview of the Texts

Raymond Briggs (London, 1934), a critically acclaimed illustrator, cartoonist and graphic novelist, is considered by many as "one of the most innovative and popular author-illustrators" (Smith, *Raymond Briggs*). Briggs has written and illustrated several books for children, such as the highly popular trip books *Father Christmas* (1973) and *The Snowman* (1978). His best-selling books "have a tremendous emotional impact on readers, and make them think about history, politics, family life and childhood" (*Raymond Briggs*). Briggs is the recipient of several prizes, such as two Kate Greenaway medals (in 1966 and 1973), among others, and he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to British literature. Several of his books have been translated into many languages and adapted into films, plays and TV cartoons.⁹

The Tin-Pot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman is a storybook about the Falklands War written and illustrated by Briggs, published in 1984, two years after the end of the armed conflict. The book combines large colourful illustrations with simpler pencil sketches, and the text is reduced to a few powerful sentences. It is an atypical children's book, in the sense that even if the design and aesthetics of the book suggest it is addressed to children—standard hardcover size, large colourful drawings, scarce text—the grotesque drawings denoting sexual innuendo and violence are certainly not appropriate for small children but rather appreciated by the adult reading them out loud. Briggs' story "works" for children and also for adults, as it can be read as a satire.

Williams categorizes *The Tin-Pot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman* within those counter-mythic British texts about the war since it offers a "world-weary and pessimistic employment" (231), in sharp opposition to texts following official myths, which tend to portray romantic and idealized settings with epic accounts about heroism and patriotic values, together with over-simplified plots and motives. In a similar vein, Begley reads Briggs' text as counter-mythic, anti-military and pacifist: "[it] critiqued the war from an internationalist-pacifist position, indicting the political regimes of both countries from their narcissistic attachment to displays of militaristic nationalism" (233). This is made clear by the two epigraphs that open the book and clearly show Briggs' ideological standpoint and his total rejection of nationalism and patriotism. The first one is a quotation by Albert Einstein (1879–1955): "Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind"; the second epigraph is by Samuel Johnson (1709–1784): "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

"La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba" [Zamba's Amazing Excursion] is an animated television series produced by the Argentine production company "El Perro en la Luna" [The Dog on the Moon] and aired on Paka Paka¹⁰, Argentina's national, child-friendly TV channel, which came under the management of the Ministry of Education in 2010. The animated cartoon is based on the adventures and discoveries of an 8-year-old boy nicknamed "Zamba," who lives in Northern Argentina. Thanks to his time-travelling ability, Zamba suddenly finds himself in any moment of the past, where he meets important historical characters of the country and relives key national moments with the protagonists. The primary objective of this animated cartoon is to teach children about the major historical events of the nation. Due to its educational value and the dynamic and entertaining way of teaching history, the series was nominated for the 2014 Emmy Kids awards in the international category.¹¹

"La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba en las Islas Malvinas" [Zamba's Amazing Excursion on the Falkland Islands] first aired on 2 April 2012, a symbolic date for the country. El "Día del Veterano y de los Caídos en la Guerra de Malvinas" [Day of the Veterans and Fallen of the Falklands War] is a national holiday that celebrates the anniversary of the beginning of the war when the Argentine troops invaded and seized control of the islands; the annual Remembrance Day to honour those who died in battle and the celebration of the veterans' heroism. Commemorating the past wars of a society is one way of securing a commonly shared memory that would enhance group cohesion, since, and as Misztal contends, national identity rests on an awareness of continuity with a suitable past (52–53). Collective memory plays a solidifying role in societies (Halbwachs 26); therefore, as Edy puts it, "our collective

⁹ For more information on Briggs' life and artistic accomplishments, please visit <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/raymond-briggs>. It is interesting to note that the *Tin-Pot General* was translated into Spanish in 1985 by the prestigious Spanish novelist and journalist Rosa Montero, and published by "Debate", Madrid. Therefore, it must have been available to Argentinian readers.

¹⁰ Pakapaka means "child's play" in Quechua, the aboriginal language of aboriginal tribes Quechuas of South America.

¹¹ "Zamba, nominado a los Premios Emmy Kids." *Página 12*. 09/10/14.

memory binds us together, because our past is an important ingredient in our future, and because our social remembrance is a critical element in our social identity" (83).

During Néstor Kirchner's presidency (2003–2007), a new law was passed that was aimed at educating and teaching the history, culture and ethics of Argentina to young generations, and the Zamba episodes became part of this interpellation process. Although the idea was hailed by many, there were also objections to the Zamba cartoons because of their anachronistic nature and equation to nationalist propaganda rather than being educational material (Tobeña). As Pedro Vázquez-Miraz writes, the Zamba stories represented the political division of the subsequent government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner ("Zamba").¹² The way history is taught to children is crucial in developing national identity, ideology and opinions on Self/Other. In Louis Althusser's terms, schools are Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) that interpellate to disseminate ideology. The case of Zamba is especially important here, first, because it was produced by the state and screened on national television, and second, because the show was mass-produced and distributed in classrooms throughout the country, becoming an educational tool to teach the country's history to primary school students.

Furthermore, the year 2012, when this cartoon episode was first released, was particularly symbolic. Not only did it commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the war, but it coincided with a period of increased political tension. Three main events helped to renew the already-existing friction between the British and Argentine governments: the oil exploration activities by British companies in the offshore waters of the islands, the visit of Prince William¹³ to the islands in February 2012 and the fact that the Argentine government presented its claim to the South Atlantic archipelago at the United Nations Decolonization Committee in New York in June 2012. Argentina puts its case to the C-24 members of the United Nations and Decolonization each year.¹⁴ What made 2012 especially remarkable was the attendance of the Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Klaus Dodds notes that "the self-styled 'Presidenta Malvinera' [...] has not missed an opportunity either to demand that the United Kingdom negotiate over sovereignty of the Islands and/or accuse the United Kingdom of militarizing the South Atlantic region" (168). Will Pavia, *Times* correspondent to the United Nations, describes this incident as a "diplomatic offensive" and classifies CFK's visit as a "stunt", adding that "Argentina rejects the possibility of self-determination" and has done nothing else but "ramping up the pressure" ("Kirchner"). Political tension escalated even further with the publication of a communiqué, in the *Times* and the *Guardian* titled "Let us bring colonialism to an end by complying with United Nations resolutions" signed by the Argentine President on 14 June 2012. In it, the Argentine President begs the citizens and governments of the world to put an end to what she considers an instance of colonialism and to respect the resolutions of the UN. Publishing a communiqué with this message was undoubtedly interpreted as an act of provocation to the British pro-Falklands establishment.

A second episode related to the Malvinas conflict, "La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba en el Museo Malvinas" [Zamba's Amazing Excursion in the Falklands Museum], aired in 2014, right after the opening of the "Museo Malvinas" [Falklands Museum]¹⁵ in the same year. Some examples will also be taken from this second show, though the focus of the analysis remains on the original cartoon.

¹² A strong social and ideological polarization began to emerge in Argentina between those who supported "kirchnerismo" and its political, economic and cultural policies, and those who oppose them. This phenomenon is known as "la grieta" [the crack], a term that is used to refer to this binary division of Argentine society between "Kirchnerists" and "anti-Kirchnerists." The crack has been the cause of a generalized political and cultural confrontation with open manifestations of aggressiveness, bigotry and radicalism, with one party completely delegitimizing the other. This social classification partly derives from the traditional division of the Argentine population into Peronists and anti-Peronists (Sosa; Korstanje; Vázquez-Miraz; Rodríguez and Touzon).

¹³ The dispatch of the Duke of Cambridge as a RAF pilot for a tour of duty in the Falklands, as Klaus Dodds rightly notes, "raised Argentine hackles" (166). Even if it was a routine posting, Argentina understood it as a provocation. Other members of the British Royal Family had previously visited the FI, including Prince Andrew who fought in the 1982 conflict.

¹⁴ During the Kirchner-Fernández administration (2003–2015), there was a notable increase to promote regional and global discussions about Argentina's sovereignty demands over the Malvinas, which stretched from the United Nations to the Organization of American States. Argentina has frequently invoked the UN resolution 2065 (1965) which calls the UK and Argentina to negotiate the future of the FI (Dodds).

¹⁵ Museo Malvinas e Islas del Atlántico Sur. For more information on this museum, please visit <https://museomalvinas.cultura.gob.ar/>. The Museum's webpage offers a virtual conference titled "Literatura para las nuevas generaciones" [Literature for the new generations] featuring Zamba in the presentation poster:

La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba, the entire series, was very well received by kids in Argentina reaching high levels of popularity during the first years the show was released (Linare and Cuesta). As Pedro Vázquez-Miraz explains, TV cartoons and animated shows are representations of social life, and, as such, they work as archetypal models for ways of doing and being ("Zamba"). They can be used as teaching and learning tools at school or home, and they also serve as political and ideological propaganda. Verónica Tobeña points out that stereotypes are widely used by the cultural industry aimed at children because their use allows an effective message since stereotypical characters are quickly identified and recognized, and, in this sense, "Zamba" proves to be no exception as he is designed to represent a 'typical' schoolboy of his age, arriving late to school, getting bored in lessons, being lazy about doing homework, easily getting distracted ("Televisión").

The British and the Argentine: Depicting Self and Other

The analysis of the two core texts, Briggs' book and the TV show *Zamba*, reveals intriguing depictions of the British and Argentine figures, reflecting the complex interplay between self and other in the context of national identity. In Briggs' book, the two main characters are, as the title indicates, the "Tin-Pot Foreign General" and the "Old Iron Woman," two grotesque caricatures of the Argentine dictator, General Leopoldo Galtieri, and the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, respectively, the political leaders responsible for the war. The representation of Thatcher as an Old Iron Woman is an obvious reference to the Prime Minister's nickname of "Iron Lady."¹⁶ The two rulers are portrayed as robotic metallic giants with sharp teeth and fierce, beady eyes competing to assert their thirst for power and domination. Some of the facial features of Thatcher and Galtieri are maintained in the caricaturist illustrations. Jules Smith argues that Briggs savagely depicts the two main protagonists in "highly sexualized Ralph Steadman-like images," which in turn are juxtaposed with "black and white sketches of soldiers being shot, burned alive and buried" (*Raymond Briggs*). Both monsters are portrayed as being moved by primary drives of violence, thirst for ambition and animalistic sexual urges. The sexual innuendo is particularly assigned to the Old Woman, which can be regarded, from a gender perspective, as a reinforcement of patriarchal roles in which the female performs as a sexual object to satisfy masculine desire. The illustrations show her nearly naked, wearing practically no clothes but a garter belt, stockings, and high-heeled shoes, in highly sensual postures: spread legs and bombs being shot from her opulent gun breasts. Williams observes that "she looks like a metallic whore, and the implications of that resemblance are surely intentional" (232). Galtieri, as the Tin-Pot Foreign General—the word "foreign" in the name immediately places him as the Other—is also revealed in a similarly sexual pose, with his legs broad open and a sea of blood covering the genital area. The macho portrayal is completed by his moustachio and a clinching missile cigar between his teeth. When the battle finishes, the triumphant Old Iron Woman appears to be pregnant: "'I WON!' sang the Old Iron Woman. 'REJOICE!'" (Briggs 34). In Briggs' book, the caricatures of General Leopoldo Galtieri and Margaret Thatcher, depicted as grotesque metallic giants with fierce attributes, serve to emphasize the competition for power and dominance between the two political leaders responsible for the Falklands War. The sexualised illustrations of Thatcher as the Old Iron Woman not only make reference her nickname of the "Iron Lady" but also perpetuate patriarchal roles, where the female figure is portrayed as a sexual object to satisfy masculine desires. Galtieri, on the other hand, is portrayed as the Tin-Pot Foreign General, immediately positioning him as the Other, further highlighting the us/them dichotomy. These caricatures underscore the perception of the other as a threatening force, reinforcing nationalistic sentiments and group cohesion.

In *Zamba*, both Thatcher and Galtieri are portrayed as overseers in a factory, manufacturing soldiers by transforming civilians into combatants on a production belt. The mechanics of war make each citizen into a uniformed soldier ready for war; a visual image that offers an acute critique of the process of indoctrination into a nationalistic mindset. The soldiers of both sides become Lego-like puppets, losing all their individual identities to obey and serve their leaders. The tensions between the literal message that war is the wrong path of action, on one hand, and the video game aesthetic employed in the programme that makes the exchange of fire between the enemy factions look like victory is possible in principle if only "we" had more weapons (and/or "lives," to use gaming terminology). It could easily be argued that this tension undermines to some extent the literal message of peace. The Argentinian General is depicted as an absolute, negative and unbending

<https://museomalvinas.cultura.gob.ar/literatura-para-las-nuevas-generaciones/>. This talk aims at discussing Malvinas literature for young audiences.

¹⁶ "The Soviets had dubbed her the 'Iron Lady' — a tag she relished — for the tough line she took against them in speeches shortly after becoming Conservative leader in 1975" (Margaret Thatcher Foundation).

representation of the dictator: "Tirano y dictador, había armado todo para distraer al pueblo, que estaba destruyendo al país de a poco" [A tyrant and dictator that was destroying the country, piece by piece, concocted the whole thing to distract the population] (17:20). The portrayal of both Thatcher and Galtieri as overseers in a factory, transforming civilians into soldiers on a production belt, critically examines the indoctrination process into a nationalistic mindset. The transformation of individuals into uniformed soldiers, losing their individual identities, emphasizes the dehumanization that occurs during war. The tension between the explicit message of peace and the video game aesthetic employed in the show, presenting war as potentially winnable, reflects the complexities of conveying a clear anti-war message. While the program explicitly opposes war, the visual elements somewhat undermine this message, presenting the enemy factions' exchange of fire as potentially victorious if more resources were available.

This trend is also evident in the contrasting portrayal of a British soldier, highlighting a dual perspective on the combatant's character. When he is shown fighting, thirsty for war, he is fierce and laughs in an evil, grotesque manner to the cry of "Al ataque, fuerzas imperiales" [Imperial forces, to the attack] (10:28). However, he also tries to bring peace between the two boys, though he naturally endorses the British position and helps a local boy to stick in British "Union Jacks" around the island by replacing the Argentine ones stuck in the ground by Zamba; he then speaks pleasantly, following rules of manners taught to children, such as being polite and using the magic word, "please."

The linguistic choices in Zamba contribute to the construction of the Other. When the nation of the British/Other is mentioned collectively, instead of British, Great Britain or the UK, they are defined as "English" and the country of reference is England.¹⁷ The following conversation between Zamba and his teacher takes place right at the beginning of the episode when the class is visiting the museum: "¿Por qué fue la Guerra, Señor? Porque las Malvinas son argentinas, pero hace mucho fueron ocupadas por *Inglaterra*. En 1982, Argentina quiso recuperarlas por la fuerza y eso desencadenó una guerra entre los dos países" [Why did the war happen, miss? Because the Falklands are Argentinian, but they were occupied by *England* a long time ago. In 1982, Argentina wanted to recover them by force and that triggered a war between the two countries] (01:39; emphasis added).

The Other is also portrayed as a pirate. There are two scenes in which the British/English are shown in an attempt to take over the islands from the Spaniards, which were the first colonizers, and a later scene from the year 1833, when the first British colony was established on the Islands. Note, however, that the flag is the Union Jack, not the English flag. While these images are being shown, a song is being played along which reinforces these depictions. In the song, the British/English are portrayed as colonizers, arrogant, dominating and illegal occupiers of land: "Hay una colonia en medio del mar que *Inglaterra* ocupa de forma ilegal" [There is a colony in the middle of the sea that England occupies illegally]; "Gente prepotente la tierra ocupó" [Arrogant people who occupied the land] (02:56). This depiction of the English as pirates during the colonization of the islands by the Spaniards and later as colonizers reinforces their image as arrogant, dominating, and illegal occupiers of land. These portrayals serve to reinforce the us/them dichotomy, emphasizing the English/British as the Other in contrast to Argentina. Simultaneously, they play a crucial role as historical reminders in shaping the collective memory of Argentina.

The Falkland Islands/Las Malvinas and their Inhabitants

In *Fighting Fictions*, Kevin Foster categorizes the dominant narratives about the Malvinas/Falklands war as "fictions" that are appropriated by the British government and the media to instill the belief that the campaign to retake the islands has been a moral and political crusade and that the war was fought in the name of the public good (156). Similarly, Nicolas Shumway characterizes these dominant narratives as "guiding fictions", claiming that although they "cannot be proven, [...] they are necessary to give individuals a sense of nation, peoplehood, collective identity, and national purpose" (XI). In Sarah Maltby's analysis of the way the Malvinas/Falkland Islands have been represented, imagined and narrated in Britain, she refers to "the different and at times conflicting imaginings" through which

¹⁷ The demonym English is frequently used to refer to the British people as a whole, since England is, and has been, the most powerful nation in Great Britain, able to colonize the other nations in the Kingdom. Krishan Kumar argues that "the English were an imperial nation in a double sense" as they created a double Empire: a land Empire—Great Britain/United Kingdom was formed by the expansion of England, and the Overseas Empire (35). It could be argued that the pure/original colonialist nation is the English one, so, in this sense, the use of English rather than British in Zamba has a derogative connotation. However, it is also true that the use of 'English' rather than "British" is widely used in Argentina in diverse contexts. For instance, the "British invasions of the River Plate" (1806/1807) are called "Invasiones Inglesas" in Argentina.

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).

The idealisation of Falklanders reveals deep fantasies about the British and their national self-image. As previously mentioned, the refurbished Thatcherite nationalism was linked by continuous collective references to "us," our people, our nation, but excluding those "enemies within," who thought, and even dared to say, that "we could never be what we were," those that were seen as militant strikers, unrest promoters, welfare and benefits scroungers. The ideal past was ethnically English and white, before the arrival of immigration and the complexities of modern life. This notion overlooks the fact that "Englishness" is a complex construct, not to mention the complexities of the national identity issues in the UK (Bromley). These social, economic and moral values represented by the sense of duty, self-sacrifice and obedience to hierarchical structures had been the foundation of the empire, of resistance against Nazism, and proved its validity again in the struggle against Argentine aggression.

The Falklands, both the landscape and the community, have been usually depicted close to this ideal of Britishness and compared to a well-known cultural reference, such as the series *The Archers*, a story located in a fictitious rural England, broadcast by BBC Four since the 1950s.¹⁸ Mainstream British media would portray the Falkland Islands in a similar setting, contributing to the creating of the happy colony myth, with its inhabitants speaking with an obvious British accent, having tea behind polished wooden fences in a country setting as if they were the village of Ambridge in the series that would have been suddenly and violently occupied by a hostile, violent and above all, culturally alien and enemy force.

Constant emphasis was placed on highlighting the authenticity of the British character of the Falklanders, resulting in *The Times'* publication titled "We Are All Falklanders Now" (Frenchman). This portrayal elevated the Islanders to a privileged status, serving as role models to be admired, emulated, and defended. The media conveyed a message that encouraged readers not only to stand in defence of the Falklanders but also, perhaps more importantly, to aspire to be like them. Additionally, the media was keen on depicting the Islanders as innocent, defenceless, and vulnerable victims of aggression, evoking a sense of duty to come to their rescue from their perceived "desperate plight," as asserted by the Prime Minister (Femenia). However, alongside these portrayals, the Falklands society was often described as tough and resilient to the extreme weather condition and isolation (See *The Falklands Government: "Our People"*), and brave in the face of Argentine pressure or bullying. This duality in portrayal showcased the Islanders' strength and ability to endure adversity, further cementing their image in both the national and international narratives.

The ideal of the countryside and country folk are powerful cultural items across Britain. A return to rusticity and rural life embodies a recuperation of the true Britishness and a sort of condemnation of modernity. As Martin Wiener puts it, the countryside is "available for use as an integrating cultural symbol" (78). This was made possible due to the general ignorance of the reality of the Islands, as they "exist in a timeless vacuum" (Frenchman), a blank sheet on which to build the desired appropriate image: an image that contributes to the unity and symbol of national regeneration. As put by Jon Begley, the "myths of (national) restoration were facilitated by the blankness of the islands themselves" (231–240), which means that this blankness came out of both the scarce population, resources and landscape and from the ignorance of the public and developed further in literary works. After retaking the Islands in 1982, the United Kingdom committed to staying there, for the sake of deterrence, keeping a garrison of about 1,000 troops and building the Mount Pleasant RAF base. After the initial greetings and grateful speeches, life was not running perfectly between the military and the local population. For some time immediately after the war, Stanley continued to look like under occupation, just now by their own forces (Witherow). The military used to call the Islanders Bennys, a village-idiot character in the soap opera *Crossroads* (MacFarquhar). Life was tough, and people were described now as "subordinate" or pastoral, a "people time forgot" amid doubts about the extent of the planned development (*Times*, 6 September 1982).

The textual analysis of both Briggs' book and the TV show "Zamba en las Islas Malvinas" offers insights into the representations of the Falklands Islands and its inhabitants from both sides of the Atlantic. In Briggs' book, the islands are illustrated in a state of ruin and chaos as a consequence of the war: dead animals scattered everywhere, people's graves in the background, destroyed houses and a few islanders quartered by combatants in an effort to avoid the minefields. The text reads: "So

¹⁸ *The Archers. 70 Years*. BBC 4: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qpgr>

the poor shepherds on the sad little island went on counting their sheep and eating them. They had mutton for breakfast, mutton for dinner and mutton for tea" (Briggs 36–37).¹⁹ The islanders, and the dead or injured soldiers, are the real victims of the cruel and nonsensical war that Briggs represents. The portrayal of the territory of the Falklands and its inhabitants in Briggs' book disrupts the stereotypical idealized image that the British government and mass media sought to convey during and after the war. The illustrations present a stark contrast to the heroic British victory often associated with the conflict. Instead, they depict the islands in a state of ruin and chaos, with dead animals, destroyed houses, and suffering islanders, emphasizing the human cost of the senseless war. By highlighting the real victims and their plight, the author challenges the dominant narrative and offers a more nuanced perspective on the impact of the conflict. "Zamba en las Islas Malvinas" begins when Zamba's class visits a museum with a display of an Argentine airplane from the war. Zamba climbs onto the plane and magically travels back in time to the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, straight into the fighting of the war. The first contact that Zamba has with the Other is when he meets a "kelper" boy. "Kelper" is an informal way to refer to the residents of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands. The nickname derives from "kelp," which is a large brown type of seaweed that grows around these islands. Even if this nickname is still used widely in Argentina, the Falklanders dislike being called that way and they consider the term pejorative, as shown in a letter titled "Second Class Citizens, The Argentine View of the Falkland Islanders," published in the *Falkland Islands Association Newsletter*: "The idea of Falkland Islanders as second-class citizens is now firmly established in Argentina. They are imagined as ignorant elderly serfs of the Falkland Islands Company. The word Kelper is now part of Argentine Spanish too – as a term of contempt." ("Second Class Citizens" 10–11). Likewise, when analysing the Argentine cultural representation of the war, Mira and Pedrosa note that the Falklanders have often been neglected in the corpus as if they were absent or irrelevant to the conflict or the future of the archipelago, frequently referred to by the derogatory term "Kelpers" (*Revisiting*). The two kids, Zamba and the local boy, argue about the ownership of the islands until this boy ends up crying. Then a British soldier appears to endorse the British position. Both the boy and the soldier are blonde and with blue eyes, and they speak Spanish with a strong English accent.

Strong claims are made regarding the colonial nature of the islands in dispute and the imperial invaders: "No hay más 'colonia,' la moda ya pasó" [There are no more colonies, it is no longer trendy] (04:11); "La Patria al fin respondió al invasor imperial" [The motherland finally responded to the imperial invaders] (09:11); "Los ingleses no quieren devolvernos las islas, hay países que creen que son los dueños del mundo" [The English do not want to give us back the islands; there are countries that believe they are the owners of the world] (04:52). This idea of the appropriation and subsequent colonization of foreign territory is reinforced in the second show, "Museo Malvinas": "No se puede ir por el mundo invadiendo lugares, ¿Por qué no se quedan en su país, como el resto del mundo? Porque hay países poderosos que someten a otros" [You cannot go around the world invading places. Why don't they stay in their country, like the rest of the world? That is because there are powerful countries that subjugate others] (19:29). Although there is a strong claim for the sovereignty of the islands, emphasis is repeatedly placed on the futility of war as a means to resolve territorial disputes: "La guerra nunca es un buen camino. Las Islas Malvinas hay que liberar, fueron argentinas lo son y serán. Es una injusticia que hay que reparar. Pero con la guerra siempre sale mal" [War is never a good path. The Falkland Islands must be freed; they were Argentinian, and they will remain so. This is unjust and must be put right. But with war things always go wrong] (02:56). Rather than violence and the use of force, the cartoon reiterates a resort to dialogue: "Nunca vamos a olvidar que las Malvinas son argentinas. Vamos a insistir junto a toda Latinoamérica para que nos devuelvan las islas, en paz y con dialogo" [We will never forget that the Falklands are Argentinian. We are going to insist with all of Latin America so that they return the islands to us, in peace and through dialogue] (17:45). Towards the end of Zamba's stay on his visit to the islands, he is joined by more Argentinian boys, and they end up playing football with other local children, a final image that carries a message of peace and reconciliation. By advocating for peaceful resolution and insisting on the Argentine claim to the Falklands through dialogue, the show promotes a counter-narrative to the militaristic imagery often associated with the war.

¹⁹ The daily diet of the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands was heavily based on mutton. While this is no longer the case, since a lot of food is now imported and available to purchase in the stores and restaurants around Stanley, the Falklanders continue to face food challenges, as explained in the recent article from the BBC entitled "A food revolution in the Falklands": <http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20200820-a-food-revolution-in-the-falklands>

Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the two core texts provides valuable insights into the representation of self and other in the context of national identity. The caricatures in Briggs' book and the characterizations in Zamba emphasize the competition for power, nationalistic sentiments, and dehumanization that often accompany conflicts between nations. The linguistic choices and visual representations contribute to the formation of collective memory and the construction of the other, reinforcing the nationalistic narrative. By critically examining these portrayals, we gain a deeper understanding of how memory and identity intertwine in shaping our perceptions of self and other in the aftermath of war and conflicts.

All in all, this paper has discussed two post-Malvinas/Falklands War cultural representations seemingly for childhood audiences to explore how the war is remembered and how national collective memory is worked through the depiction of Self/Other. Raymond Briggs' standpoint is that of international pacifism, suggesting that the political regimes of both countries, Argentina and the UK, were narcissistic and inward-looking, and that they used the war to display their military nationalism and patriotism. The two leaders are depicted as monsters—“tin-pot” creatures in opposition to the real flesh and bones human beings represented by the combatants and the islanders—whose selfish, greedy and reckless deeds led to a nasty and useless confrontation that brought death, greater misery and destruction for the local population. The storybook challenges national myths and deconstructs grand narratives, offering a satirical counter-mythology of events, one which focuses on the bitter consequences of the armed conflict: dead and injured soldiers, as well as impoverished islanders. Whilst Zamba denounces the Argentine dictator's pernicious legacy, it adopts a patriotic standpoint by denouncing the colonial appropriation while asserting Argentine sovereignty rights. It offers, at the same time, a pejorative portrayal of the “English” Others—depicted as pirates, invaders, colonizers, imperialistic—and referred to with harsh language as an arrogant and dominating people who illegally seized territory outside the boundaries of their homeland. The final message tries to convey reconciliation and pacifism, expressed in the repeated emphasis placed on the idea that war is not the right path to take, that war never brings solutions, and that the resolution of the conflict should be attained through peaceful negotiations.

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