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**Travelling in the Traces of Chatwin: Present-day Version - Critical Revision - Intertextual Dialogue.**

***Per la ruta 40. A través de la Patagònia de Chatwin by Enric Soler i Raspall and La Patagonia de Chatwin by Adrian Gimenez Hutton.***

**Abstract**

In this essay I will discuss the relationship between Bruce Chatwin's, Enric Soler i Raspall's and Adrian Gimenez Hutton's travel accounts of Patagonia. First I will apply Manfred Pfister's concept of intertextuality to the texts. I will illustrate that both Soler's and Gimenez' texts contain elements of "dialogic", "compilating" and "admiring" intertextuality to different extents. Furthermore I will argue that Soler's text supplements Chatwin's travel novel and simultaneously creates an alternative vision by integrating globalisation, touristic view and present indigenous culture into his text. In contrast I will state that Gimenez Hutton's text marks a counter-discourse to the European imagination of Patagonia, for it documents the local people's critical reception of Chatwin's book. In conclusion I will emphasise the performative power of Chatwin's text and I will argue that the intertextual space offers the opportunity for a dialogue between Europe and South America.

- I. Introduction
- II. Forms and functions of the intertextual references
- III.** Enric Soler i Raspall and the globalised traveller's gaze
- IV.** Adrian Gimenez Hutton and a counter-discourse to Euro-Centrism.
- V. Conclusions

*"És això, la Patagònia?"*  
*Enric Soler i Raspall*

I.

The literary imagination of the Patagonian space is characterised by the coexistence and interconnection of European and South American discourses as well as by a strong intertextual relationship between numerous single texts. Intertextuality has been a constitutive element of the discourse of Patagonia from Antonio Pigafetta's first European travel description until today. Thus, the discourse of Patagonia may be compared to a palimpsest, that is, to a parchment on which earlier layers have been overwritten by new inscriptions while their traces remain visible.<sup>1</sup>

La Patagonia como inscripción cultural está más cerca del palimpsesto, o del talmud, que de una acumulación cultural. El paisaje patagónico puede pensarse como hecho de innumerables comentarios,

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<sup>1</sup> See Genette (1993): 532.

lecturas que acotan progresivamente textos que les han precedido y que constituyen una red siempre abierta a nuevas contribuciones.<sup>2</sup>

Bruce Chatwin's travelogue *In Patagonia* (1977) marks a culmination of this process and a decisive point in the literary history of the region.<sup>3</sup> The text itself refers to the discursive construction of space through the enormous quantity of intertextual references and it also contains a (subjective and selective) summary of the (mainly European) discourses until that moment.<sup>4</sup> As a notorious companion to backpackers in Chile and Argentina, *In Patagonia* has drastically shaped the international vision of the region. However, Chatwin's text has also been much disputed: In Argentina and Chile, particularly among the portrayed people, the novel has provoked many controversies, as Chatwin has been accused of inventing stories and characters, employing them for his literary purposes.

Twenty years after the first publication of Chatwin's text, two writers followed Chatwin's travel route and published their own experiences; the Argentine lawyer and journalist Adrian Gimenez Hutton<sup>5</sup> and the Catalan writer and mountaineer Enric Soler i Raspall<sup>6</sup>. Soler's aim is to retrace Chatwin's inscriptions in the Patagonian space as close as possible - "seguir cadascuna de les petjades que Chatwin havia deixat impreses en el temps, en l'espai, en la sorra silent de la desèrtica Patagònia" (SiR 17) - and to update the text and create "una visió recent de l'estat de la Patagònia" (SiR 365). In turn, Gimenez claims to investigate the "truthfulness" in Chatwin's travel account, "buscar a los personajes y los lugares por dónde pasó, corroborar cuánto había de cierto en sus relatos, hacer la crónica de su crónica." (GH 11)

With the assistance of Manfred Pfister's theory of intertextuality in travel literature, I will explore the relationship between *In Patagonia* and the two subsequent texts. In particular, I will focus on the following questions: Are the new texts updated versions of the journey, revisions of Chatwin's view, playful dialogues, alternative or supplementary versions of Chatwin's text? To what extent do Europe and South America, the so called "centre" and "periphery", enter into dialogue?<sup>7</sup> Does the intertextual space offer the opportunity of re-

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<sup>2</sup> Livon-Grosman (2003): 189.

<sup>3</sup> Chatwin (2003), quoted as "CH, page ...".

<sup>4</sup> In particular, David C. Estes, Manfred Pfister and Jürgen Raithel have investigated forms and functions of the intertextual references of *In Patagonia*. See Estes (1991), Pfister (2003), Raithel (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Soler (1998), quoted as "SiR, page...".

<sup>6</sup> Gimenez Hutton (1999), quoted as "GH, page...".

<sup>7</sup> The use of the terms "centre" and "periphery" is controversial and ambivalent as this binary construction risks the perpetuation of the colonial discourse. However, I will interpret the terms according to post-colonial theory as neither static or unilateral, but as flexible concepts that depend on one another and continuously define themselves anew. See de Toro (1995).

negotiating this relationship? And what is the general vision of the famous trip to Patagonia resulting from the juxtaposition of the British, Argentine and Catalanian view?

## II.

Literary studies distinguish between the narrow and wide definitions of intertextuality.<sup>8</sup> However, according to Manfred Pfister, I will employ a moderate concept of intertextuality that basically circumscribes conscious, intended and visibly marked references of a text to one or various pre-texts in the form of quotation, allusion or imitation but which does not exclude the assumptions of the broader notion of intertextuality.<sup>9</sup>

*La Patagonia de Chatwin* and *Per la ruta 40* naturally contain a very high level of intertextuality.<sup>10</sup> In his fundamental study of intertextuality, Gérard Genette does not offer any category that would accurately circumscribe the relationship between Soler/ Gimenez and Chatwin.<sup>11</sup> By comparison, Manfred Pfister's classification of intertextuality in travel literature seems to be more helpful.<sup>12</sup> First of all, Pfister illustrates that – contrary to the traditional (self-) definition of the genre as an authentic, independent, original and individual encounter with the foreign - intertextuality is actually a frequent element of travel literature. Pfister distinguishes between four basic categories of intertextuality in the travel account which may overlap and complement each other. All categories except "negated intertextuality" (*Negierte Intertextualität*) can be applied at least in part to both *La Patagonia de Chatwin* and *Per la ruta 40*:

The traveller moving from place to place consulting different sources of travel literature and completing his readings according to his own experiences is a typical example of Pfister's "compiling intertextuality" (*Kompilatorische Intertextualität*). Here, the new text

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<sup>8</sup> The global post-structuralist model that understands every text as a part of a universal intertext, and more specific structuralist or hermeneutic models which focus on conscious, intended and visibly marked relations between a text and different texts or groups of texts. See Pfister (1985): 25.

<sup>9</sup> Pfister proposes an in-between model because in actual fact both concepts do not exclude one another: According to Pfister, the phenomena of the narrow model are just succinct actualizations of the global intertextuality of the broader version. See *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> See Pfister's criteria for defining the degree of intertextuality, *ibid.*, pp. 25-30. The references to Chatwin are explicitly marked in the paratext (title, bibliography) and the inside communication systems of the texts; intertextual references are very dense since the pre-text serves as a continual foil for the experiences of the travellers and excerpts of Chatwin's travel account (in Spanish respectively Catalanian language) are continually inserted in the texts; the structure of the post-texts follows exactly that of *In Patagonia*; and the texts place emphasis on the intertextual relation themselves, that is, they are auto-reflexive.

<sup>11</sup> Both texts contain elements of a meta-textual commentary (the critical relation par excellence, see Genette (1993): 13)) as well as features of a classical admiring imitation or *homage* (see *ibid.*, p. 131) but they do not really fit in any of these classifications. Indeed, Genette understands the *homage* as a "hyper-textual" reference which transforms a pre-text without comment into a *pastiche*, parody, *persiflage* etc. (see *ibid.*, p. 115) Nonetheless, both Soler and Gimenez do comment openly on Chatwin's text.

<sup>12</sup> In the following see Pfister (1993).

supplements and updates the pre-text. This is particularly evident with Soler who talks about "Bruce Chatwin com a guia i la Patagònia sencera per investigar, per redescobrir, per actualitzar." (SiR 17) Chatwin's text represents the foil from which the perception of Soler's traveling Self is read. The narrator relates the perceived to *In Patagonia* in order to either affirm Chatwin's text or diverge from it. This observation is illustrated in expressions like "tal i com descriu Chatwin" (SiR 67) or "aquella apreciació [...] ja no era vàlida actualment." (SiR 19) Gimenez Hutton's text may be viewed as correcting rather than completing the pre-text. However, throughout the whole text, Chatwin's travel book is also referred to by the traveller-narrator as an object. For example, when the traveller reads extracts from it to local people or when the characters do so themselves: "Le di el libro y a medida que leía fue soltando risas" (GH 52), "Buscó el ejemplar y me mostró la foto tomada por Chatwin" (GH 52), "les leí el capítulo del libro donde Chatwin contaba [...]" (GH 81) etc.<sup>13</sup>

"Admiring intertextuality" (*Huldigende Intertextualität*) refers to a kind of religious worship: The journey is like a pilgrimage in which the traveller literally reads the foreign country through the filter of the classics. *In Patagonia* impresses Soler i Raspall to such an extent that he dedicates his book to Chatwin. He presents his precursor as an exemplary travel writer<sup>14</sup> and when his own traveller-narrator reaches the house of Chatwin's uncle Charley, he describes this event as a "moment solemne" (SiR 336). Gimenez Hutton's text appears to be far more critical but the Argentine writer also seems to be impressed at least by Chatwin's literary style: "Leí *En la Patagonia* en 1996 [...] y quedé impresionado con el estilo narrativo de Chatwin, por su forma de mezclar ficción y realidad, pequeñas anécdotas personales con grandes historias." (GH 11)

Additionally, both texts contain elements of "dialogic intertextuality" (*Dialogisierende Intertextualität*) which Pfister considers to be a characteristic element of post-modernist travel literature.<sup>15</sup> With Pfister, dialogic intertextuality may be described with the title "Travelling in the Traces of..."<sup>16</sup> - travelling in the traces of Bruce Chatwin, in this case. The author either aims to correct the pre-text and create a new, more adequate view of the foreign, or he consciously dwells on the differences with pleasure in order to stress the many different aspects of the foreign as found in the plurality of the discourse. *In Patagonia* itself may be considered a paradigm for the second alternative.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, *La Patagonia de Chatwin*

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<sup>13</sup> For Pfister, the widely spread theme of the traveller with a manual of travel accounts in his hand illustrates "compilative intertextuality" in travel literature in a very figurative way. See *ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> "Si de veritat vols escriure literatura de viatges, has de llegir aquest paio." (SiR 11)

<sup>15</sup> Pfister praises *In Patagonia* as a perfect example of this kind of post-modernist, playful dealing with intertextuality in travel literature. See Pfister (1993): 130.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> See Pfister (1993): 127.

seems particularly to belong to the first category, even though one can also feel in both Gimenez' and Soler's texts the pleasure of exploring names, characters and anecdotes.

In critical theory, intertextuality is usually mentioned in the context of post-structuralist concepts such as deconstructivism, post-colonialism, feminist theory etc. Julia Kristeva has first developed the notion in her critical analysis of the bourgeois idea of a unified work of art and a unified self.<sup>18</sup> In particular, dialogic intertextuality opens a space for the re-negotiation of structures of power and dominance. In a similar way as Bakhtin's polyphonic novel subverts authorities and total ideologies,<sup>19</sup> a text composed of intertextual references and allusions resists the postulate of a single valid "truth". Instead, the intertext contains the possibility of a democratic and dialogic debate.

These theoretical considerations are also relevant to the study of the discursive construction of Patagonia: While writers perpetuate or question the dominant (Euro-American) discourse, their own texts are being inscribed into the history of the region and they transform this discourse.<sup>20</sup> Literature is the mnemonic art *par excellence*, as Renate Lachmann has pointed out: it bases the memory of a culture and simultaneously inscribes itself in this memory-space.<sup>21</sup> Patagonia's culture is continually negotiated and open to interpretation in the intertexts. In Soler's and Gimenez' literary imaginations of Patagonia, the dominant discourse of the British "master narrative" is present throughout the whole text but by intertwining the voices of *In Patagonia* with those of the narrator and the characters of its followers, the texts offer the opportunity for a critical dialogue within the intertextual space.

### III.

Pep Bernades' motto at the very beginning of the text demonstrates what travelling means to Enric Soler i Raspall: "L'important és viatjar sabent el que succeix en un país, aprendre del que es contempla i buscar interlocutors que t'expliquin la realitat." (SiR7) Soler wants to discover the social "reality" of Patagonia. Thus, he simultaneously checks and updates Chatwin's version, with the aim of "descobrir com havia canviat la Patagònia en els últims temps" (SiR 17). Soler's interest in the "real" Patagonia is something that Chatwin himself

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<sup>18</sup> See Kristeva (1987).

<sup>19</sup> See Bakhtin (1979).

<sup>20</sup> "Diachrony is transformed into synchrony, and in light of this transformation, *linear* history appears as abstraction. The only way a writer can participate in history is by transgressing this abstraction through a process of reading-writing; that is, through the practice of a signifying structure in relation or opposition to another structure." (Kristeva (1987): 36)

<sup>21</sup> See Lachmann (1990): 36.

would probably have rejected: According to the deconstructivist project, his polyphonic *collage* of different writings and anecdotes explicitly denies the existence of Patagonia as a "Ding an sich"<sup>22</sup>.

Soler is above all interested in the actual social, political and historical conditions of Patagonia. However, he considers Chatwin a model writer and follows the narrative structure of *In Patagonia*, including the sequence of chapters. Soler also outlines the majority of the myths and anecdotes about Patagonia that we find in Chatwin's text. Among others, these include the association of Patagonia with Prehistory (SiR 13, 20, 42, 43, 100), the colony of the Welsh (SiR 26-32, 43-74), the story of Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid (SiR 80-157), the worker's strike in Southern Patagonia (SiR 193-203) and the discussion about the etymologic origin of the region's name (SiR 246-250). In most cases, mentioning these stories has an affirmative effect with regard to Chatwin's text. "Corrections" mostly refer to details of different variants of a story but they do not explicitly aim to "correct" Chatwin's view.

However, whereas Soler's text may generally be seen as neutral or affirmative towards *In Patagonia*, there are two aspects in which it differs from the British's version: first, in its dealing with contemporary indigenous culture and second, in the discovery of a globalised tourist gaze.

Soler's text actually integrates the contemporary indigenous culture in a broader way than *In Patagonia* does. Chatwin focuses on the culture of the historical *yámanas* mainly as a trace in order to underline his own nomadic theory.<sup>23</sup> The difference between Chatwin's and Soler's text becomes particularly evident by comparing their commentaries on the Plaza de Armas in Punta Arenas. Chatwin's traveller visits the Chilean town in the winter of 1974/75, that is, only about a year after the military coup by General Augusto Pinochet. The centre of the *plaza* is dominated by a statue that represents the European discoverer Fernando Magellan with two nameless *indígenas*. At the time of the traveller's visit, the community of Punta Arenas is holding an opening ceremony for another statue, this time dedicated to the former Patagonian big landowner José Menéndez.<sup>24</sup> Chatwin's narrator focuses on this event and the actual political situation rather than on the suggested relation of power between immigrants

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<sup>22</sup> Pfister (2003): 367.

<sup>23</sup> Nomadic life and thought are central issues in Chatwin's works and key concepts to his aesthetic and philosophic thinking. See, among others, Chatwin's draft of an unpublished book about nomads (Chatwin (1996a) and the essays "The Nomadic Alternative" (Chatwin (1996b)) and "It's a nomad *nomad* world" (Chatwin (1996c)).

<sup>24</sup> In the beginning of the 20th century, the Braun Menéndez family owned the majority of the sheep farms in Southern Patagonia and dominated the region politically and economically. José Menéndez also was the initiator of the statue for Fernando Magellan.

and indigenous people, such as expressed in the Magellan memorial. His laconic commentary basically seems to criticise the political practice of the Allende government:

The bust [of José Menéndez] had once adorned the [Braun Menéndez] family's estancia at San Gregorio, but under the Allende regime the peons shoved it in an outhouse. Its reconsecration on the plaza symbolized the return of free enterprise, but the family were unlikely to get anything back. [...] Punta Arena was a Leftist town. These were the people who elected Salvador Allende their deputy. (CH 247f.)

In comparison, Soler shifts the reader's attention to the symbolic function of the Magellan statue:

A la Plaza de Armas, centre neuràlgic de la població, el monument que José Menéndez havia fet erigir per demostrar a tothom la supremacia del qui havia estat el cacic més ric, no tan sols de la Patagònia, sinó de tot Sud-amèrica, cridava l'atenció [...] Al bel mig, una gegantesca estàtua de granit i bronze inaugurada durant les festes del darrer centenari, mostrava un altívol Hernando de Magallanes, amb una peu repenjat sobre el pal d'una embarcació i una postura desafiant. [...] A l'est i oest del monument es destacaven les figures simbòliques de dos indis, ona i tehuelxe respectivament. (SiR 330)

The statue illustrates the performative nature of (post-)colonial memorial practice. Soler's text, however, is not limited to the pure description of the statue as he actually integrates the voice of the colonised. A woman explains to the traveller how the indigenous population has appropriated this original sign of colonial power in favour of their own culture:

- Però el poble s'ha venjat de Don José Menéndez - va dir-me una dona rodanxona d'ascendència clarament indígena, mentre s'apropava al peu de bronze desgastat de l'indi i s'hi abraçava devotament per petonejar-lo-. Les veus populars diuen que si fas un petó en aquest peu, en el futur tornaràs a Punta Arenas, perquè la sort i la salut t'hauran guiat de nou fins aquí... Ho entén? És a l'indi a qui ens encomanem i no pas a la família del cacic. Aquest és el mateix indígena que va ser assassinat pels que, com l'istirp dels Braun-Menéndez, van instituir el pagament de monedes d'or per aconseguir la seva extinció. Aquest monument és una vergonya per al nostre poble, però alhora aquest indi és el nostre símbol. (SiR 331)

In this respect, *Per la ruta 40* reflects a strategy of post-colonial cultural practice. Ashcroft et. al. use the term *appropriation* "to describe the ways in which post-colonial societies take over those aspects of the imperial culture - language, forms of writing, film, theatre, even modes of thought and argument such as rationalism, logic and analysis - that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities"<sup>25</sup>. By appropriating tools of the discursive system of the imperial culture, the dominated culture may be able to resist the cultural control of the former, and articulate its cultural difference. The indigenous community of Punta Arenas has appropriated the statue as a sign for colonial dominance and shifted it to its proper signifying cultural system. Now, the same signifier (the memorial) no longer refers to the signified of the imperial reference system (European colonial power), since it has a new meaning within the indigenous symbolic system (the statues of the *ona* and *tehuelche* now stand for the recuperation of the indigenous culture). The text also focuses on various other activities of the Patagonian people to recuperate *mapuche* and *tehuelche* culture (see SiR 144, 179, 188f.).

<sup>25</sup> Ashcroft et.al. (1998): 19.

In fact, Soler documents a few critical comments on Chatwin by the Patagonians although this is not the main purpose of his book. The son-in-law of missionary Thomas Bridges' granddaughter states, "Aquí a ningú no li va fer la més mínima gràcia el llibre de Chatwin. Ningú no se l'estima gaire, després d'escriure *In Patagonia*." (SiR 309). His comment may be considered a paradigm for the negative reception of Chatwin's book. In general, however, Soler perceives the Patagonians' opinion about Chatwin as ambivalent because they actually complain about the obvious intermixing between fact and fiction, Chatwin's ironic style and his indifference towards political and social issues; nonetheless, they welcome the positive consequences for the local tourist industry. In this respect, the opinion of the Catalan immigrant Pere Fortuny may be read as paradigmatic:

Malgrat l'escassa sensibilitat pels problemes socials dels habitants, amb una actitud allunyada respecte les seves vicissituds, que ens portaria a queixar-nos del colonialisme britànic, i no obstant el poc entusiasme per la bellesa de les muntanyes, el seu llibre ha despertat nostàlgies patagòniques en més d'un viatger. (SiR 228)

Nevertheless, the difference between Chatwin's and Soler's imagination of Patagonia presents itself as more chronological than ideological. Soler's Patagonia participates in the globalised market of the international tourist industry. Where Chatwin presents himself as an individual adventurer and independent "nomad" traveller, Soler can count on a well developed tourist infrastructure. The traveller stays in the typical "alberg[s] dels Backpackers" (SiR 344), and in Ushuaia he consults the local tourist information (see SiR 317). On an organised tour on the Beagle Channel, he discovers the Patagonian mass tourism (see SiR 304), and in addition to *In Patagonia*, he carries the Bible of all backpackers with him - Lonely Planet's travel guide (see SiR 335). He also takes part in guided tours to the Peninsula Valdés and the Torres del Paine National Park, and during the whole trip he meets numerous other travellers from Australia, Europe and the US (who quite often follow Chatwin's book as a travel guide as well (see SiR 311)).

Soler basically projects Patagonia as a traveller's destination, while Chatwin constructs the Patagonian space as a place of migration and exile in line with his nomadic philosophy.<sup>26</sup> Above all, Chatwin is interested in the characters of European and US American origin and he essentially cites European sources. Soler's text supplements *In Patagonia* but beyond that, it refers to a global tourist discourse that manifests itself in international travel guides, information booklets, photo-reports and travel magazines. This picture of Patagonia as a traveller's destination is related to traditional *motifs* of the discourse of Patagonia: The

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<sup>26</sup> See note 27.

Patagonian landscape is seen as an "empty" space and Patagonia evokes in the traveller the notion of untouched nature, solitude and wilderness ("el feréstec no-res" (SiR 31)).<sup>27</sup>

Vaig saber que ja era a la Patagònia, quan vaig veure el que era la Patagònia. [...] Poca estona després de deixar enrere Viedma, el paisatge va experimentar la darrera de les metamorfosis, que li donaria un aspecte tediosament monòton durant molts i molts quilòmetres, ben bé fins a arribar a l'Estret de Magallanes; i fins a tocar els boscos laterals de la serralda dels Andes, vers l'oest: aquesta era la Patagònia. [...] Podies fer tres-cents seixanta graus de volta sobre els teus peus sense deixar de contemplar en cap moment un infinit paisatge erm, que semblava inacabable, inabastable. El vent bufava glops de soledat. (SiR 22f.)<sup>28</sup>

Soler's traveller's gaze affirms the myth of Patagonia by idealising its space as a place of harmony in expressions such as "Si de veritat existeix l'eternitat, deu ser això" (SiR 218) and "o bé l'estimes i hi tornes, o bé l'odies i no véns mai més; però el que és segur és que no et quedaràs indiferent." (SiR 226).<sup>29</sup>

As already mentioned, most of Soler's characters benefit from tourism and welcome the economic development.<sup>30</sup> The Patagonians are conscious of the journalistic and touristic interest in their region. There are, however, some characters who do not appreciate the effect of this high level of attention - for example, the children of one of Chatwin's characters who hide every time they see "Chatwin pilgrims" approach their homes because "estan farts de tantes visites" (SiR 96). In sections such as these, the touristic view of Patagonia may be understood as a sequel to the colonial gaze which has stylised the Patagonian Other as an exotic object. Simultaneously, it outlines the performative power of Chatwin's travel novel. In analogy to a commentary on Werner Herzog's work, one could state: Wherever Chatwin travels with his notebook, people will never be the same again.<sup>31</sup>

The economic and social condition of Patagonia in a globalised world is not only reflected by the well developed tourist infrastructure but also in other aspects of the text. The ambiguous consequences of global interconnection, observed in the Argentine village of Colán-Conhué near Esquel, may serve as a paradigm. Soler confronts the character of an old Patagonian shepherd with the disillusioned youth of the village in an antithetic manner and thus illustrates the re-definition of notions such as "centre" and "periphery". The shepherd connects to the

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<sup>27</sup> Compare the central *motifs* in Livon-Grosman's study of the construction of Patagonia from the 16th to the

19<sup>th</sup> century: "desierto, tierra de nadie, inconmensurable, poblada por gigantes". (Livon-Grosman (2003): 34.)

<sup>28</sup>The construction of Patagonia as an empty space (a classic element of colonial rhetoric) begins with Pigafetta's account of Magellan's "discovery" voyage (1519-22). See Pigafetta (1978).

<sup>29</sup> For the literary construction of Patagonia as the wilderness and a place for contemplation see in particular Hudson (1893).

<sup>30</sup> "Afortunadament, el turisme anava venint." (SiR 39)

<sup>31</sup> "Allà on Herzog porta les càmeres, els nadius no tornen a ser els mateixos." (SiR 266)

global communication society by his transistor radio while the younger people of the village appear to have lost their local identity and future:

Perquè vegis com el món modern afecta les tradicions autòctones t'explicaré una anècdota: hi ha un vell pastor que viu a les muntanyes. [...] L'any passat es va comprar una ràdio... doncs bé, l'última vegada que el vaig veure, [...] estava assabentat absolutament de tot: política, futbol, economia, successos... No ha sortit mai de la regió, ni sap llegir i, menys encara, escriure. Però està al cas de tot el que passa al món... L'altre dia volia que li ensenyés en el nostre atlas escolar de Sud-amèrica on era Bòsnia-Hercegovina. (SiR 126f.)

Here, the global media and communication system subverts the traditional geopolitical definition of "centre" and "periphery". As Alfonso de Toro points out: "In the Post-Colonial state, race and geography have a secondary place, but technology, science, and particularly communication, have a major place."<sup>32</sup> In contrast, the young people in Colán-Conhué leave school - the location of knowledge production - at the age of thirteen or fourteen to become a mother or work in agriculture. At the same time, traditional models of identification like the life as a *gaucho*, are questioned by the economic realities of the region:

[S]er gautxo avui dia era una tradició que semblava estar tristament condemnada a desaparèixer. Amb el tancament i abandó de moltes *estancias*, darrerament els gautxos estaven mancat de feina. [...]

- La desesperació ocasiona violència - vaig dir.
- Sí i també el desarrelament. Sabies que la paraula gautxo prové del quítxia i vol dir "orfe"?
- No, no ho sabia.
- Doncs és això el que queda ara dels qui havien habitat aquestes terres abans que nosaltres: un grupat d'orfes, condemnats a l'oblit! (SiR 127)

The loss of identity and the sensation of uprooting ("desarrelament") constitute a visible contrast in comparison to the positive effects of a global knowledge-based society. Soler's etymologic interpretation of the term *gaucho* constructs a symbolic connection between the contemporary situation and the colonial past: The group of indigenous and *mestizo* Patagonians is described as cultural orphans ("orfe"); they are simultaneously cut off from traditional identification models and excluded from the dominant culture and international economy.

In contrast to Chatwin, no longer do the Argentine Patagonians appear exclusively as a heterogeneous group of European immigrants; some of them disassociate themselves from new immigrants in a nationalist, or better: regionalist way as "authentic" Patagonians:

- Jo sóc una NIC - va dir-me amb orgull la mestra. NIC volia dir "Nacida i Criada", i era el mot que contraposava els habitants autòctons, de segona generació, amb els forans nouvinguts, instal·lats més recentment. (SiR 256)

In the context of globalisation new inter-American migration movements have left their traces in the Patagonian space. The text does not only reflect the reciprocal relationship of migration between Europe and the Americas but also mirrors the relationship between "centre" and

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<sup>32</sup> De Toro (1995): 11.

"periphery" within the South American continent. In 1997, in the run-up to the Argentine *crisis*, Argentina represents the centre of South American immigration. Argentina is the destination for Chilean farm hands as well as for labour immigrants from throughout the whole continent. The historical and political differences between Chatwin's and Soler's Patagonia become especially evident through their study of the population structure of Buenos Aires. Whereas Chatwin mentions the phone book of the Capital to refer to the essential influence of European culture (CH 11), twenty years later Soler finds a different situation:

Ara una immensa part de la població de Buenos Aires estava formada per immigrants clandestins que provenien il.legalment del Perú, Bolívia, Paraguai o l'Equador i que s'amuntegaven sota els ponts de les autopistes, o en camps rasos de l'extraradi, en condicions ben precàries. (SiR 19)

In analogy to Chatwin, Soler understands the Patagonian space as a location of migration and exile. However, Soler's text is characterised by its awareness of the recently developed environment in which the political, cultural, social and economic globalisation is rooted.

#### IV.

Adrian Gimenez Hutton has already travelled several times across Patagonia before he begins to follow the traces of Chatwin in Patagonia in 1997 (see GH 11). His main purpose is to investigate the truthfulness of *In Patagonia* and to "correct" corresponding "errors". To this end, the author has talked to more than fifty people, some of which are characters in Chatwin's book, or who are friends and families of those who have already died.

Mi propósito ha sido transmitir de la manera más objetiva y fiel posible cada una de esas opiniones y relatos sin partir de preconcepción alguno. El trabajo se completa con una investigación sobre las leyendas e historias que Chatwin relata en el libro, confrontándolas con las fuentes que utilizó el autor u otras [...]. (GH 13).

Exactly like Soler, Gimenez faithfully follows the structure of Chatwin's *In Patagonia*, and the reader will also find the same myths and stories about Patagonia. However, Gimenez' narrative style quite often resembles a scientific discourse: The author calls and balances different sources to verify Chatwin's approach, and his bibliography contains more than 100 references.<sup>33</sup> These narrative strategies suggest an objective and rational approach to *In Patagonia*. So while in Chatwin's text the *collage* of the most different sources and anecdotes basically serves to deconstruct a total vision of the space and to emphasise the fact that, as Pfister has pointed out, every story is only a part and a subjective version of the Patagonian experience - a *rhizome* in the post-modernist diction of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari -, Gimenez Hutton strives for an authentic representation of Patagonia again.<sup>34</sup> As a paradox,

<sup>33</sup> By comparison: about 25 references in Chatwin and Soler each.

<sup>34</sup> Pfister (2003): 363.

like Chatwin, Gimenez bases his “objective” view on the polyphony of the text: "Las respuestas fueron de lo más variadas, desde gente que estaba muy enojada con Chatwin o le había desagradado el libro, a admiradores y fans, pasando por los diferentes y los que no recordaban ni al autor ni a los episodios relatados." (GH 13) However, critical commentaries on Chatwin's text predominate in *La Patagonia de Chatwin*. Positive reactions mainly refer to the economic progress due to the flourishing "Chatwin tourism".

Gimenez' claim to authenticity is paradoxical in different ways. On the one hand, the text exposes the literary construction of Chatwin's travel account and is quite convincing in doing so: For example, when Chatwin's traveller opens the Buenos Aires telephone directory "at random" (CH 10), Gimenez is certainly right in presuming "que lo de Chatwin fue elección y no azar" (GH 21). Chatwin aims to show that all the names in the book are of European origin and tell "a story of exile, disillusion and anxiety" (CH 10). Clearly, this perception is a subjective interpretation, too, for Gimenez states that "la Argentina es eso, un país de inmigrantes. No de exiliados. Pero Chatwin era un amante del exilio, y donde no encontraba exiliados, los inventaba." (GH 21) Indeed, in the majority of the cases, Chatwin interprets the signs of his journey in line with his nomadic theory.

On the other hand, scholars of literary studies agree that traditionally, travel literature has implicated the illusion of the authentic. However, the author always uses diverse narrative strategies when redacting the final text, for example the conscious arrangement and association of his experiences.<sup>35</sup> Elisabeth Korte states that the narrative strategies of travel literature in no way differ from the techniques of other writings of prose.<sup>36</sup> Ottmar Ette observes in the indissoluble mix between fictional and non-fictional readings of travelogues a tension he calls "frictional literature" (*friktionale Literatur*)<sup>37</sup> and Sabine Boomers goes as far as calling the differentiation between fact and fiction in the modernist and post-modernist travel account quite simply irrelevant.<sup>38</sup>

These considerations concern Chatwin as well as Gimenez Hutton. After all, the Argentine writer also projects his text with a certain intention and his travel experiences underlay the general contingency of individual experience. Whereas Gimenez claims to "correct" Chatwin's deviations of "reality" as completely as possible, it is actually one of his own characters who expresses the arguments from literary theory in her own words: "Me hace

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<sup>35</sup> The author gives meaning and symbolism to the told experiences by giving the text a particular structure. He is free to omit or alter memories, and he has the ability to creatively shape the text through the discoveries of incidences and figures.

<sup>36</sup> See Korte (1996): 14.

<sup>37</sup> See Ette (2001): 43-49.

<sup>38</sup> See Boomers (2004): 95.

gracia la forma en que está escrito, es una especie de una novela, no es real, no hay por qué ofenderse." (GH52)

Victorina Crivello and Stella Benvenuti state that "exigir 'fidelidad' de la imagen respecto a lo que se denomina real es empobrecer la literalidad de la obra".<sup>39</sup> The author's claim for authenticity "empequeñece a *La Patagonia de Chatwin*, un texto que tiene valores puntuales por sí."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Gimenez Hutton does not sufficiently take into consideration the specific characteristics of travel literature - the continual oscillation between fact and fiction -, but his objections are instructive with regard to the study of the discursive construction of Patagonia in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. By entering into an intertextual dialogue with Chatwin, Gimenez Hutton subjects *In Patagonia* to a critical examination and actively modulates the discourse of Patagonia himself.

So what are the essential "corrections" Gimenez carries out in *La Patagonia de Chatwin*? I would like to divide the "corrections" into three categories: First, the "corrections" of the "hard facts" by observation and investigation, second, Gimenez' study of Chatwin's and other source materials, and third, the documentation of the reception of *In Patagonia* by the Patagonians themselves.

The first kind of "corrections" basically refers to details concerning the names, the nationality, the political attitude, the family relationships and single anecdotes in the life of the characters of *In Patagonia*. These details may not seem essential at first sight, but they fulfil a certain ideological function in both Chatwin's and Gimenez' text and, therefore in the discursive construction of Patagonia as well. As an example, let's have a look at the changing of nationalities: Chatwin ascribes to his characters "Mrs. Davies" the Italian nationality and to "Robbie Ross" the Scottish nationality, while according to Gimenez the "real" persons are Argentine citizens (GH 55/ 108). Chatwin sees Patagonia above all as a place of exile and migration and therefore he aims to stress that the Patagonians hold on to their European origins. Chatwin's creative modification of the life stories of the people is not only subject to the embroidery of the literary plot but most importantly to his philosophic purpose, the deconstruction of total concepts and ideologies - for example, national identity - in the sense of a postmodernist "war on totality".<sup>41</sup> In a different section, Chatwin portrays the son of English immigrants

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<sup>39</sup> Crivello/ Benvenuti (2000): 272.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> See Pfister (2003): 360.

who prided himself on his English. His favourite expression was "Gimme another horse piss!" And his daughter, who did not speak English, would bring a beer and he'd say "Aah! Horse piss!" and drain the bottle. (CH 66)

Here, Chatwin reveals the fragility of the concept of national identity by exposing the characters' ridiculous attempts to conserve their former European language. In turn, Gimenez focuses on the origin of the anecdote:

Según me contó Clery, [...] no era la forma habitual con que su padre le pedía que le dieran una cerveza. Ocorre que un día Milton tomó una cerveza que no estaba bien fría y le dijo a su hija que parecía pis de yegua. De allí Chatwin armó su anécdota. (GH 61)

"Chatwin siempre busca lo sensacional, lo violento, lo inusual, lo depravado. [...] Siempre encuentra aquellos personajes curiosos, extraños, y muestra sus costumbres, no las verdaderas costumbres de la tierra." (GH 168) Chatwin's imagination of such ex-centric characters and curious occurrences has remained part of the discourse of Patagonia until today and promotes the idea of Patagonia as being a collection of oddities, or, a "Kuriositätenkabinett"<sup>42</sup>. By "correcting" details of Chatwin's text and emphasising the literary construction of various stories, Gimenez Hutton juxtaposes his own subjective view of Patagonia as an element of a counter-discourse to this exotic interpretation of Patagonia.

Frequently, Gimenez refers to the fact that Chatwin has cited other authors incorrectly or that he has not named the original sources, for example in the case of the story of John Daniel Evans and his horse Malacara (GH 61f.) and with regard to the worker's strike and following massacre of 1922 (GH 132-142): "De todas las historias que cuenta Chatwin en su libro, la de las huelgas de la Patagonia es la que más se aleja de su fuente, que en este caso fue exclusivamente la obra de Bayer" (GH 142). Chatwin actually quotes Osvaldo Bayer's historiographic work *La Patagonia rebelde* in his bibliography but he has apparently changed Bayer's version. Besides *In Patagonia*, he polemises against the historian in *The Sunday Times*.<sup>43</sup> Gimenez has documented his own conversation with Bayer and one of Bayer's articles on more than ten pages (GH 132-142). In this section, the counter-discourse culminates by calling into question Chatwin's version of the trip and opposing a South American view to the European interpretation of the Patagonian space. Bayer accuses Chatwin of colonial behaviour and arrogance calling him "[e]l prototipo de europeo al pisar

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 373. Examples of this kind of eccentric representation of Patagonia are several myths and legends like the myth of the giant *tehuelches*, the existence of unicorns, cannibals and extinct saurians, the appearance of odd European emigrants and US American *outlaws*, the French "king" of Patagonia Orélie-Antoine etc. The construction of Patagonia as an ex-centric place is also visible in contemporary Argentine cinematographic productions, for example in Alejandro Agresti's "El viento se llevó lo que" (Argentina, 1998) and Carlos Sorin's "Historias mínimas" (Argentina, 2002).

<sup>43</sup> See CH 175-189 and Chatwin (1996d).

tierra colonial." (GH 132) One can feel the bitterness and anger about Chatwin's representation of Patagonia in Bayer's words:

Le propuse que ya que había utilizado las investigaciones de desconocidos y pobres autores regionales patagónicos que donara, por lo menos, un diez por ciento de sus suculentísimos derechos de autor cobrados en todo el mundo a las bibliotecas públicas de las pequeñas ciudades de la Patagonia, región que, como se ve, sufre hasta las más sofisticadas explotaciones de sus recursos. (GH 134)

The Argentine historian also accuses Chatwin of stealing Patagonian "intellectual property" and interprets Chatwin's attitude and the success of *In Patagonia* as a chronologic continuation of European colonialism. He basically presents the personal disagreement between him and Chatwin as a conflict between former coloniser and colonised:

El hombre del primer mundo hizo notar que no tiene mucho tiempo. [...] No hay que ser prejuiciosos por aquello de *time is money*, pero en general estos intelectuales del tercer mundo son lenguaraces que quieren decir todo a su huésped, descubrirse, desnudarse ante el Sir, que nunca ha dejado de ser su Sir... (GH 133)

Simultaneously, he criticises the dominance of the European and North American "centre" within the international communication and mass media: "Soy consciente de que acabo de cometer un pecado mortal más en mi vida. Hablar de las falsedades de un triunfador del Primer Mundo. No me lo perdonarán ni los lectores de best-séllers ni los suplementos culturales de los medios." (GH 135) However, by giving Bayer a platform to express his opinion, Gimenez Hutton undermines this relationship of dominance within the intertextual dialogue.

Bayer's voice also serves as an example for the many criticisms and complaints about Chatwin that Gimenez mentions, and which form the third kind of "corrections": the reception of *In Patagonia* by the Patagonians themselves. The complaints are extensive: Gimenez' characters accuse Chatwin of lying, inventing things and being ironic (GH 51, 53, 81, 88, 111, 132), they call him impolite, arrogant, stingy and full of prejudices (GH 81, 152, 176). Some of them have even thought about taking legal action against the British writer. The Patagonian characters are quite conscious about the performative power of *In Patagonia*. Daphne Hobbs, another character in Gimenez' text, summarises the general complaints about Chatwin in her declaration towards a BBC camera team:

I don't want to sound offensive, but briefly my belief is that the whole idea you guys have is to make money. [...] You think you have an interesting character in Bruce Chatwin [...] but he was a liar and untrust worthy. [...] He knew nothing, really, about Patagonia, except bits here and there - some quite inaccurate, which he wrote up for effect. I ask you how, in the name of ethical honesty can you prostitute your talents and abilities in making this so-called 'documentary'? (GH 188)

This primarily negative assessment of *In Patagonia* contrasts itself with the high regard for Chatwin's works within European and North American literary circles. On this note, Daphne Hobbs further argues: "Tanto los británicos como los americanos opinan que Chatwin era un excelente escritor, pero mi opinión sobre él como escritor no es buena" (GH 180). However,

literary critics have confirmed Chatwin's "political incorrectness" and reproached him regarding his ignorance towards the Other.<sup>44</sup> As Sabine Boomers points out, Chatwin invents the Others first of all for himself.<sup>45</sup> As a consequence of the intertextual dialogue, the difference between the political and the literary esteem for *In Patagonia* incidentally puts into question Euro-American universalism and points out the problematic relationship between ethics and aesthetics in (post-)modernist travel literature.

V.

To conclude:

By applying Pfister's categories of intertextuality, we can state that the relationship between Soler and Chatwin may generally be described with the term "compiling intertextuality" and that Gimenez' text could be characterised by an antagonistic "dialogical intertextuality".

The difference between Chatwin and Soler is a chronological rather than an ideological one as Soler does not explicitly aim to question Chatwin's view. The Catalonian writer presents us an updated supplement of Chatwin's journey. However, Soler projects an alternative view of the Patagonian space by positioning Patagonia within the context of globalisation and international tourist industry, while also documenting present indigenous cultural practices.

In comparison, Gimenez Hutton's tone is more critical: His objective is to "correct" Chatwin's travel account. *La Patagonia de Chatwin* marks a counter-discourse to the version of the British writer by documenting the critical reception of *In Patagonia* by numerous Patagonians themselves. The ideological difference between Chatwin and Gimenez is manifested both in the writers' aesthetical and political attitude: While Chatwin aims to deconstruct totalising conceptions of "reality" and "truth", Gimenez Hutton's aims to produce an authentic representation of the Patagonian space.

Soler and Gimenez read the Patagonian space with Chatwin's text as a foil. The meaning of both texts is essentially constituted within the intertextual space. However, the pre-text also receives additional codifications, since Soler situates *In Patagonia* in a chronological context and refers to the indigenous culture, while Gimenez focuses on the literary construction of Chatwin's text. On a meta-level, the juxtaposition of the three texts calls up the general theme

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<sup>44</sup> "Chatwin's elegant omnipresence through his slight but distinctive output is clearly vulnerable to the charge of avoidance of the more immediate dynamics of cultural encounter, explanation and opinion, his stylistic virtuosity a refusal to engage with the actualities of human and political contact." (Taylor (1999): 210) Like many other critics, Salman Rushdie criticises Chatwin's naïve and ignorant attitude (see Rushdie (1992): 238). Ignatieff reproaches Chatwin in an interview: "Wer wollte, könnte Ihnen vorwerfen, dass Ihre Liaison mit der Dritten Welt gerade soweit ging, dass Sie ein Buch darüber schreiben konnten, dass Sie sich jedoch nie wirklich eingelassen haben." (Ignatieff (2000): 30)

<sup>45</sup> Boomers (2004): 240.

of the construction and contingency of travel experience and calls for the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in travel literature.

Finally, the study of *La Patagonia de Chatwin* and *Per la ruta 40* illustrates the performative power of the literary construction of the Patagonian space. Chatwin's text has shaped the discourse of Patagonia in a remarkable way and, as a part of this discourse, it has also changed the reality of the region. This influence is particularly visible in the development of the local tourist industry. The dialogue between Soler i Raspall, Gimenez Hutton and Chatwin constitutes an intertextual space in which the cultural memory of Patagonia is continually forth- and re-written. Within this virtual space, formerly rigid boundaries between "centre" and "periphery" become flexible as a dialogical exchange in a field of global references has replaced these traditionally stable categories: Gimenez Hutton opposes a Latin American view to the European perception of Patagonia, and within the global discourse of Patagonia, the Catalanian text rather appears to occupy a place at the "periphery" in comparison to Gimenez' (geographically and linguistically) more "central" text. So finally, the intertext does not only offer the opportunity of a critical revision and present-day version of *In Patagonia*, but it also constitutes a space for dialogue between Europe and South America, or, between travellers and "travelees".

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