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Marginality and Resistance in M. G. Sanchez's *Jonathan Gallardo*: A Postcolonial Reinterpretation of Gibraltar

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the novel *Jonathan Gallardo* (2015) by M. G. Sanchez, situated within the context of postcolonial studies and spatial theory.
The primary objective of this analysis is to demonstrate how marginality – understood in social, spatial, and psychological terms – assumes both epistemological and political functions within the text. The novel offers a perspective from the periphery, characterised as a privileged vantage point. Practices of resistance, forms of identity reappropriation, and processes of rewriting collective memory emerge from this peripheral standpoint. The methodology employed is interdisciplinary, integrating theoretical tools derived from sociology, postcolonial criticism, and geocriticism. A comprehensive examination of the concepts of "marginal man," post-imperial marginality, and "hauntology" is imperative, as these concepts are instrumental in elucidating the representation of the protagonist and the urban space of Gibraltar as locales characterised by historical, cultural, and symbolic tensions. The investigation demonstrates how Jonathan Gallardo stages a marginal subjectivity, capable of intercepting the voices of the colonial past and the prefigurations of an uneasy future. Gibraltar emerges as a liminal context, geographically peripheral and historically displaced, where marginality becomes a tool for critical awareness and a potential agent of transformation.
The findings support the assertion that the work functions as a postcolonial counter-narrative, through which Gibraltar asserts its entitlement to narrate itself from an autonomous perspective. Consequently, literature serves as a vehicle for symbolic resistance and a means of reconstituting collective identity from a post-imperial perspective.

Keywords: marginality; postcolonialism; Gibraltar; hybridity; urban space.

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Introduction

This paper presents a critical examination of the novel *Jonathan Gallardo* (2015) by M. G. Sanchez, drawing on postcolonial theory and spatial analysis to explore how the concept of marginality, particularly the resistance that can emerge from the periphery, underpins the narrative's foundation. The protagonist, Jonathan, embodies a condition of marginality shaped by social, spatial, psychological, and historical dimensions. This condition sheds light on the internal social and political tensions of Gibraltar, which is still marked by its colonial heritage. It also enables the examination of broader dynamics of exclusion, as well as the potential for counter-narratives.

Previous critical contributions have offered valuable insights into the oeuvre of Sanchez. For instance, Habermann's analysis highlights the hauntological elements in *Jonathan Gallardo*'s novel, while Adami, in turn, emphasises the novel's role in narrating the social and cultural history of Gibraltar. Despite representing some of the most compelling research on this subject, these studies do not fully articulate the interplay between marginality, space, and resistance that underpins the novel's structure. This paper builds upon those foundations by offering an interdisciplinary reading that integrates postcolonial criticism, sociological notions of marginality, and spatial theory.

The decision to focus the analysis on the aforementioned novel addresses the need to explore a peripheral literary production that remains excluded from canonical circuits, yet possesses significant critical potential. Sanchez's works are firmly embedded in the historical and cultural context of Gibraltar, thereby constituting the only extant literary corpus that can articulate and systematically illustrate the pertinence of postcolonial studies as applied to the Gibraltar case (Stotesbury 2014, 37). Gibraltar, a territory historically situated in a crucial location between Spain and the United Kingdom, emerges as a quintessential liminal space. Imperialism, a stringent border, and ongoing identity negotiations characterise this liminal space. Consequently, an emergent hybrid cultural subjectivity is revealed, which Sanchez seeks to define and develop through his literary

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pursuits. In an article published in *The New Statesman*, the author describes his literary practice as a form of resistance to the systematic misrepresentation of Gibraltar (Sanchez 2015). As a Gibraltarian born and raised in Gibraltar, who subsequently emigrated to England, Sanchez employs fiction to portray Gibraltar from an internal, 'lived' perspective, demonstrating how core concepts of postcolonial theory inform the evolutionary process of a territory that remains under British rule. In what could be perceived as a personal 'literary manifesto,' Sanchez affirms: "If we don't start writing about ourselves, we run the risk of being presented to the world solely through the prism of others' perceptions. Or, to paraphrase the words of the great Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe: 'If you don't write your own stories, others will write them for you'" (Ibid).

Jonathan Gallardo is 'the marginal man'

Sanchez's *Jonathan Gallardo* (2015) is regarded as a *Bildungsroman* (Adami 2015, 233) as it tells the story of a young boy from Gibraltar who, from the earliest years of his life, must cope with a series of challenging experiences: "His name is Jonathan Gallardo and he is an orphan" (Sanchez 2015a, 1). With such an exordium, Sanchez introduces the protagonist of his novel – from which the eponymous title is derived – to the public by broadly stating both his social and psychological position. The novel traces the life of the unfortunate Jonathan, who spends his early adolescence at the Gibraltar Boys' orphanage, a place where he is a victim of bullying, further exacerbating his temperamentally inclined tendency to isolate himself from the group: "The way everyone laughs at him, […] Not a day goes by without Jonathan getting bullied at school or back at home. Usually, it is something to do with either possessions or personal space" (Ibid, 6). Jonathan lives with his bullies, the people who bully him at school are the same with whom he shares the dormitory and bathrooms of the orphanage. The young man feels disarmed and trapped: he has no space in the house where he can take refuge whenever the bullies decide to come after him. This prompts him to distance himself from the group, leading him to adopt a marginal existence.

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While this behaviour is regarded as excessive, it is also considered necessary to appease the harassment directed at him (Ibid, 7-8).

The death of his parents makes Jonathan believe he is left alone in the world. However, he discovers he still has an uncle named Alfredo in Gibraltar, albeit described as "a useless, good-for-nothing, disgusting puto gordo borracho" (Ibid, 8). Notwithstanding his familial relationship, Alfredo cannot provide adequate care for Jonathan. Indeed, Alfredo is a vagabond, living between one bench and another in Gibraltar, whose sole interest lies in the consumption of alcohol to the point of inebriation (Ibid, 12). Alfredo's personality and alcohol addiction have a deleterious effect on Gibraltar society, which regards him as "a bad man whose life is in freefall" (Ibid, 12). Consequently, he must be distanced. Although from a different perspective, Alfredo, like Jonathan, lives on the margin and is ultimately compelled to separate himself from the social environment of Gibraltar. What is surprising about Sanchez's narrative is that, despite everything, the protagonist chooses to meet that deadbeat uncle everyone talks about but no one knows: "Jonathan knows enough about life by this stage to realise that there is usually a reason why people turn to drink" (Ibid, 12). Despite Jonathan's young age, he repeatedly experiences the suffering that comes from feeling alone in the world, which prompts him to realise that there must be an important motivation behind Uncle Alfredo's dissolute behaviour that drives him to lead such an unhealthy life. At this point, it is inevitable to link up with the question of social marginalisation: Alfredo has no friends except people in the same condition as him. Society considers him a dangerous man to be kept away from, which is why he becomes so accustomed to his solitude that he has no interest in getting to know Jonathan, not even when the boy appears before his eyes in the flesh (Ibid, 13).

To better understand the dynamics at play within the text, a theoretical digression on the concept of marginality is essential. This conceptual framework offers valuable insights into how peripheral identities and spaces operate, both within the narrative and in broader socio-cultural contexts. Beginning with the concept of the 'marginal man,' introduced

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around 1930 by the American sociologist Robert Park, contemporary critics have concentrated their research on the social processes underlying phenomena such as marginalisation, exclusion, and the empowerment of liminal figures in the social context (Bankovskaya 2014, 94). In particular, Park defines a 'marginal man' as an individual with a hybrid cultural identity, mainly referring to immigrants who, upon arriving in the United States, find themselves caught between two worlds: that of their homeland and that of America (Wilson 2016, 260). Following this perspective, the notion of marginality has a spatial component, "since it embodies the 'spatial-social' interaction" (Bankovskaya 2014, 94). Therefore, analysing the phenomenon of social marginalisation—and thus the individual on the margin—requires examining human interactions within a given space, specifically in a cultural context. In this regard, drawing on the widely used conceptual dichotomy of centre and periphery, Wilson emphasises the inherently spatial and hierarchical nature of marginality. She observes:

> The marginalized are always aware of their location in relation to those at the centre… The place in the centre is where we are absent, voiceless, or invisible. […] The spatial view of marginality readily lends itself to conceiving of those 'on the margin' as those who are disenfranchised. When we think 'center/periphery,' we inevitably dichotomize such that there are those who are in or at the center (those holding power, presumably) and those who are not, thus relegating them to the periphery. […] The goal is to exclude, indeed, to further marginalize the marginalized (e.g. the homeless, the poor, and the young) (Wilson 2016, 261).

The spatial view of marginality positions the marginalised individual at the periphery, namely on the edge of a social and cultural context considered 'adequate,' presentable, and embodying the ideal of the centre. However, the marginalised know the centre, for it is precisely that social space into which they are not admitted. This framework is instrumental in reading Sanchez's depiction of Gibraltar, where Jonathan and Alfredo's exclusion from central social spaces reflects their broader alienation from the cultural and political 'centre.' In Wilson's terms, such individuals are "voiceless, or invisible" to the institutional structures that shape daily life (Wilson 2016, 261). We see this in Jonathan's character – an

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orphan with no familial network, who drifts through life with neither a clear social role nor the means to claim one. Although specific figures offer him support, his internalisation of marginality renders him unable to reinsert himself into what Wilson would call the 'centre' of Gibraltar's social fabric.

Bankovskaya's extension of the concept of marginality into post-imperial contexts is also crucial here: "'Marginal' is a universal social type. […] 'marginality' provides a new 'ideal type' for modern social reality analysis, and is made along space/time dimensions. The main objective of the research on marginality is to develop a conceptual framework of reference for the sociological analysis of marginality as a specific post-imperial social type, process, and social relationship" (Bankovskaya 2014, 95). The type of society and historical period to which Bankovskaya refers is that of the post-Soviet space and era, thus the national contexts that gained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In this sense, the so-called "post-soviet marginals," she argues, can be regarded "as exemplifying the universal modern social type of 'marginal'" (Ibid, 95). Compared to Sanchez's novel, what is more interesting about Bankovskaya's theory is the consideration of the subject on the margin as a particular social 'type' emerging in a renewed, but especially post-imperial national context, as in the case of Gibraltar.

The novel opens with Jonathan's birth in the 1970s and continues to the present day, tracing the final stages of British imperialism in the territory, as well as the first glimmers of awareness among the local people about the need to seek their own cultural identity. In the post-imperial society of Gibraltar, Jonathan and Alfredo are two men on the margins. In the first case, the young orphan already starts from a disadvantaged situation, since he has no family and is forced to rely only on himself. While it is true that the people he meets in the course of his life try to help him rise above his condition, it is equally valid that Jonathan is generally regarded with low esteem, as someone aimless and seemingly incapable of accepting help from others. On the other hand, Alfredo's shift from working at the Gibraltar shipyard to a life of alcoholism is triggered by his firing from the British after a theft

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(Sanchez 2015a, 8). Thus, Alfredo's social marginalisation is predominantly attributed to his actions; nevertheless, the hostility of the city's social environment remains a significant factor in his exclusion. It should not be forgotten that, even after colonialism, Gibraltar remains an overseas territory of the United Kingdom – a tendentially Anglophile one – in which the centre-periphery model is typically implemented. Sanchez shifts from describing the bourgeois neighbourhood around Main Street to the dynamics of environments for peripheral figures, such as Jonathan himself (Adami 2015, 233). Bankovskaya's theorisation of marginality proves helpful in analysing the social positioning of characters in Sanchez's novel. As she explains: "Marginality is usually defined as a lack of participation in social institutions (in economics, in political decision making, […]), as a deprivation and exclusion from the social structures" (Bankovskaya 2014, 98). It is, therefore, unlikely that figures like Jonathan or Alfredo could hold prestigious institutional roles in Gibraltar, much less voice their opinions on matters of public concern. As citizens on the margin, they are placed at a universal social distance that drives them to self-impose isolation in the peripheral space, as they are acutely aware of their inability to meet 'the expectations' of the social reality at the centre.

When Jonathan leaves school, he gets a job with the Public Works Department of Gibraltar, assuming the role of a garbage collector. Miss Ida Alarcón, the administrator of the orphanage, mobilises the community to enhance Jonathan's prospects (Sanchez 2015a, 23). However, the work remains menial and does little to showcase the young man's qualities, as society persistently regards him as a hopeless orphan. It is, however, his employment as a garbage collector that enables Jonathan to transform his life, allowing him to leave the orphanage and move into a flat in the New Passage area: "All that matters now is that he has his own place. That he can fall asleep in his own bedroom" (Ibid, 43). After years spent in shared spaces and amidst intrusive children, Jonathan finally obtains the opportunity to claim a space that is distinctly his own. Moreover, he even succeeds in

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purchasing a used car, facilitated by his colleague and friend Pepe, who becomes his closest confidant.

> The next few weeks are like a dream come true for Jonathan. Seated behind the wheel of his [Peugeot] 204, he drives round and round the Rock like other young Gibraltarian drivers […] his whole being feels welded to the present moment, completely insulated from both his past and his future. He is also relaxed and content, convinced that life is good and wholesome and that nothing bad will ever happen to him because, […] the future doesn't actually exist (Ibid, 57-58).

For the first time, Jonathan is grateful to life for the sequence of events that made him a man like any other. For the first time, Jonathan is no longer a marginal figure, socially speaking. He maintains a residence, steady work, and interpersonal relationships, which suggest a degree of social inclusion and security. In line with Wilson's theoretical framework, "a corollary to the concept of marginality is the term threshold. When referring to a threshold, the focus may be that of a point of beginning or entering […], or the focus may instead be on a point of transition – that is, threshold as indicating the verge of a new experience" (Wilson 2016, 261-262). Jonathan experiences a moment of transition, as he passes from the instability of the adolescent period to the responsibilities of adulthood, finding himself at the beginning – or rather on the threshold – of a new life.

However, occupying a marginal position is simultaneously a cultural, structural, and psychological issue. Structural forces such as socio-economic inequality and political exclusion, as well as cultural norms that define who belongs and who is othered, can place individuals in a state of marginality. Yet marginality is not only imposed from the outside, but also internalised, experienced, and negotiated by individuals. This defines its psychological dimension. The psychological approach to marginality focuses on how individuals subjectively experience exclusion and displacement. As Bankovskaya explains, it attends to "the marginal's feelings, sentiments, consciousness, self-consciousness, memories, and perceptions" (Bankovskaya 2014, 95). In other words, this perspective emphasises how marginality becomes embedded in one's inner life. It highlights the cognitive dimension of marginality: feelings of inferiority, alienation, uncertainty, and

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internal conflict, all of which influence identity formation and interpersonal relations. In *Jonathan Gallardo*, the eponymous protagonist's attempt to rehabilitate himself from the condition of social outcast is suddenly undermined by a phenomenon as curious as it is disturbing, which marks his existence forever. Throughout the narrative, Jonathan begins to hear a buzzing in his ears in various parts of Gibraltar. This sound gradually becomes increasingly debilitating until it culminates in an overwhelming and unbearable noise. No doctor can find a remedy that soothes Jonathan's distress, which intensifies until the buzzing transforms into a kind of incessant, incomprehensible chattering. As time progresses, the situation takes a macabre turn, and Jonathan undergoes intense psychological strain. When he decides to revisit the places where the voices first emerged, these repeated 'sound experiences' offer no clarity; instead, they deepen his confusion and trigger existential doubt (Sanchez 2015a, 88-89). Overcome by anguish, anger, and frustration, Jonathan eventually isolates himself in his apartment. This time, he enacts a self-imposed marginality, not as a result of social rejection alone, but because he is mentally and emotionally exhausted from confronting the unknown.

This narrative turn underscores the psychological dimension of marginality, a core element in many literary representations of peripheral figures (Bankovskaya 2014, 95). Jonathan, perceived by Gibraltar society as a derelict, paradoxically chooses to retreat from the world. His withdrawal illustrates that marginality operates not only as a socially imposed condition but also as a deeply internalised psychological state, one rooted in fear, confusion, and an acute sense of disconnection from both the self and the surrounding world.

Past, present, and future: a narrative from the margin that resists time

In Sanchez's novel, Jonathan Gallardo undergoes supernatural experiences, as the initially cryptic noises he hears gradually transform into discernible echoes of the past. His encounters with the past occur at four specific sites in Gibraltar. However, rather than

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witnessing these events visually, he experiences them solely through sound, positioning him not as a spectator but as a listener to the city's residual memories. "What if he went back to one of the four places again? What would happen then? Would they be speaking about something else? Would other voices have taken their place? Or would he go there and encounter no voices at all? The number of questions racing through his head catches him off guard" (Sanchez 2015a, 86). Despite his fear of losing his sanity, the protagonist gradually adapts to his unusual abilities and embarks on an enlightening exploration of Gibraltar's past, becoming a frequent visitor to libraries and an avid, almost professional, reader (Habermann 2020, 7). "Though uneducated, he is sensitive, empathetic and alive to the history of the place to such an extent that he can 'tune in', as it were, to pick up the echoes of suffering in bygone times" (Ibid, 7). The narrative turning point occurs when Jonathan stumbles upon some newspaper articles dating back to the previous century, the reading of which allows him to understand how the events and misdeeds he experiences are a (sound) re-proposition of historical facts that happened in those same places in Gibraltar where Jonathan is accustomed to experiencing them:

> 'So a crime really took place in College Lane,' Jonathan thinks, leaving the library in the company of other patrons. 'I'm not just plucking things out of thin air!' The thought relaxes him, energises him, makes him feel he is back in control of his life again. […] Now he knows for certain that he is only hearing voices from the past. […] The voices increase in quantity, but Jonathan is no longer discomfited by them. On the contrary, he now approaches every new 'voice episode' with great curiosity, analysing it from different angles pondering its significance (Sanchez 2015a, 114).

Jonathan consistently engages in daily interactions with Gibraltar's colonial heritage, which reemerges after centuries of obscurity. However, prior to uncovering the 'real' truth of the situation, he compels himself to seek a solution that is as empirical as possible. He visits a psychiatric hospital, where medical professionals prescribe him antidepressants and anxiolytic medication, measures that suggest an endeavor to address the mental health issues characteristic of individuals residing in a colonial context, who strive to reconcile their instability (Adami 2015, 234).

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In *Jonathan Gallardo*, Sanchez transforms time into another world, a parallel space, in which to conceive of the past as an intrinsic – and potentially accessible – part of the present (Habermann 2020, 7-8). The narrative becomes complicated when, like the past, the future increasingly presses upon the present moment (Ibid, 10). At a certain point, in addition to reliving past experiences, Jonathan finds himself immersed in a future dimension, that is, he begins to have premonitions about the future of friends and strangers. For instance, Jonathan senses an explosion, which ultimately results in death, and this event occurs a few days later; or, the moment when he is conversing with a colleague and suddenly foresees his own death, which is caused by pancreatic cancer. For Habermann, Sanchez's work thus prompts a confrontation with a dissolution of temporal boundaries: "When Jonathan begins to have his premonitory visions of the future, he realises that just as the past has shaped, and continues to shape the present, future disasters are already emerging under his very eyes, making him feel responsible, if powerless. Refusing to be compartmentalised in a parallel space, relegated to the past, colonial violence bleeds into the present and determines the future" (Ibid, 10-11). Gibraltar's past resurfaces, reminding Jonathan of old crimes and acts of violence committed during colonialism. This highlights how deeply Gibraltar's colonial past continues to impact the present, and especially the future, which Jonathan already perceives as uncertain. He feels as responsible as incapable of bearing the weight of such a discovery, which is why he marginalises himself, ceases to have contact with the outside world, and cuts off relations with his loved ones, including Pippa Lancaster, a potential romantic interest. The present life of Jonathan is no longer of consequence, as the restlessness of the past and the enigmatic nature of the future dominate his psychological state. Also interesting is the medical assessment of Dr Acton, who diagnoses Jonathan with dysthymic disorder, that is to say, a chronic depression, treatable with a quiet lifestyle, healthy relaxation, and the help of medication. It is probably no coincidence that the doctor is a former British serviceman who remained in the colony after finishing his term. One could speculate that Dr Acton represents the British Empire, and that the sedatives he

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prescribes to Jonathan for his alleged depression symbolise the United Kingdom's attempts to appease the local population's desire to confront and rediscover the nefarious legacy of British colonialism in the territory (Adami 2015, 234).

Habermann also finds it interesting to read Sanchez's novel in light of the philosophical concept of 'hauntology,' coined by Jacques Derrida in response to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Habermann 2020, 16). Specifically, in *Specters of Marx* (2006), Derrida draws inspiration from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, evoking the ghost of the old Hamlet, who returns insistently to denounce the crimes and injustices of the past, urging his son to punitive action (Ibid, 17). "Accordingly, Derrida describes hauntology as a 'logic of haunting [...]. After the 'end of history', as Derrida states, 'the spirit comes by coming back, it figures both a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again'" (Ibid, 17). Thus, the so-called 'hauntology' is the science of what returns, which insists on injustices and unresolved problems that refuse to remain relegated to the past. In addition, the spectres through which it manifests itself are meant to facilitate an encounter with the past, in the hope that it will shape our understanding of the present and the future. Consequently, for Habermann, "Sanchez creates a specifically Gibraltarian hauntology: Jonathan Gallardo is haunted by the victims of colonial violence. […] Colonialism provides the context, […] for the atrocities that echo in Jonathan's ears. Unable to cope or to take action, he is ultimately overwhelmed by the tragic visions that crowd in upon him" (Ibid, 17-18).

Habermann's Derridean reading of the novel proves particularly insightful. The disembodied voices that haunt Jonathan evoke Gibraltar's colonial past, a past that demands recognition to be critically processed and ultimately transcended. Following Derrida's formulation, this spectral return is not a gesture of nostalgia but a disruptive intervention that unsettles the present and compels a reimagining of the future. The past, rather than remaining confined to historical silence, insists on being acknowledged. Moreover, the fact that Jonathan, a marginal, socially invisible figure, is the one haunted by

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these ghosts is far from incidental. On the contrary, it suggests that Sanchez engages with Gibraltar's colonial legacy not through dominant or institutional discourses, but by foregrounding the perspectives of those who have been historically silenced or subjugated. Jonathan thus emerges as a conduit for a counter-history that arises from below, privileging the voices of the oppressed and positioning the marginalised subject not as a passive victim of history, but as a potential agent of historical rearticulation. This perspective is further reinforced by the revelation that Jonathan's Uncle Alfredo shares the same spectral sensitivity, suggesting that this haunted relationship with the past is not an isolated experience, but rather an intergenerational burden: "Is this why you drink so much? […] 'So that you don't have to experience all these omens or premonitions or whatever they are?' My uncle nodded: 'It's the Gallardo family curse, kiddo. We have this thing where, […] we frequently end up time travelling backwards and forwards in our heads" (Sanchez 2015a, 275). Driven by an intrinsic need to comprehend the intricacies of its past, Jonathan engages in meticulous research and study. Nevertheless, it is not the past itself that unsettles him, but rather the uncertainty surrounding the future. As a marginal figure, Jonathan fears being left alone to bear the weight of this unresolved legacy, with the possibility that history might repeat itself. His anxiety reveals the profound tension between memory and responsibility, suggesting that acknowledging the past is merely the initial step in a more daunting process: shaping a future that is no longer constrained by it.

The City as a Key Player: Gibraltar's Role in *Jonathan Gallardo*

Although until the 20th century critical theory focused more on the study of time, diminishing conceptions about space, it was only at the close of the century that Western intellectuals turned to the so-called 'spatial theory': "What is now called the spatial turn" (Shi, Zhu 2018, 224). In recent years, interdisciplinary research has devoted growing attention to the concepts of space, place, and cultural geography – a relatively recent field of study focusing on cultural phenomena attributed to specific places and the 'functioning'

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of human beings in space. Consequently, space is acquiring an increasingly significant role in modern society, particularly in conjunction with the development of contemporary cities. Henri Lefebvre advances the concept of 'urban space' to define "the place where people walk around, find themselves standing before and inside piles of objects" (Lefebvre 2003, 130). Initially defined by its physical elements (streets, buildings, infrastructures), urban space gradually came to be understood as a socially produced phenomenon, shaped by human interactions and the institutions that support them. Edward Soja furthers this idea by describing the city as "a historical-social spatial phenomenon" (Shi, Zhu 2018, 225). He proposes two intriguing perspectives on the study of urban space. The first perspective is centered on its material aspects, that is, urbanism in a practical sense. The second one is more introspective, dealing with "thoughts about space" (Ibid, 225); in essence, it emphasises the cognitive processes involved in the conceptualisation and representation of urban space by individuals, addressing how they perceive and interpret the city, whether in reality or through the imagination. According to Soja, literary representation is among the most compelling ways to explore urban space. He affirms: "Literary texts not only reveal the writer's reflections on urban space, but show the character's experience in urban space. Therefore, the textual representations offer unique way to know the city" (Ibid, 228). The relationship between space and literature marks a significant turning point in modern literary theory, as space emerges as a compelling approach to literary analysis. Similarly, from an artistic perspective, literary texts appear to be the most effective in representing urban space (Ibid, 227-228). These texts are meticulously crafted by authors who maintain a profound connection to the depicted urban environment, wherein fictional characters navigate and simulate authentic urban experiences. Consequently, it can be posited that textual representation is the most efficacious means of achieving recognition for an urban space, both geographically and socially.

Within this framework, *Jonathan Gallardo* by Sanchez offers a compelling case. The author utilises literature to introduce Gibraltar to the world, disseminating historical news

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and general information about the territory and its people. He rejects the notion of Gibraltar as a passive British colony 'addicted' to imperial power. For Sanchez, the fact that Gibraltar survived centuries of British imperialism is synonymous with endurance, a quality that has characterised the entire history of the Rock, including its population. In this regard, it is possible to claim that *Jonathan Gallardo*'s real strength is the opportunity to examine the multifaceted condition of Gibraltar, presumably the novel's key player (Adami 2015, 235). Despite being a work centred on Jonathan's biography, the focus is mainly on the spatiotemporal movement of the protagonist in the city of Gibraltar. This allows the author to deal with the numerous issues concerning the territory, such as the Hispanic-British dispute, Franco's border, colonialism, the constant presence of the British, and the subsequent Anglophile attitude of the local population. Moreover, the novel's narrative dynamics enable Sanchez to delve into the social dimensions of Gibraltar, particularly: "the sense of displacement that takes its toll on the population, and the blurred identity of a colony that seems not to be able to find its place in history, […] but also the many forms of discrimination, racism and prejudice against the Gibraltarians themselves, often depicted as a crowd of ignorant, illiterate and 'inferior' subjects" (Ibid, 235). In other words, Jonathan's fractured identity and perpetual sense of marginalisation reflect the territory's enigmatic geopolitical status, rendering the protagonist's challenges representative of Gibraltar's overarching postcolonial circumstances. In this manner, Sanchez serves to amplify the voice of a territory that is often marginalised. Gibraltar, due to its geographic periphery and political ostracisation, emerges as an emblem of marginality itself. Consequently, it enters the literary discourse not merely as a setting but also as a literary subject. In this regard, Gibraltarian writer Humbert Hernandez asserts with confidence that no one has yet explored aspects of Gibraltar's civil and social history with the same depth as Sanchez in *Jonathan Gallardo* (Hernandez 2020). Hernandez underscores the importance of emotional engagement and the capacity for identification, particularly among Gibraltarians.

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In the novel's finale, Sanchez invites the reading public to break free from stereotypes, in the hope that the advancing world is headed for real change. The author aims to persuade and captivate readers worldwide that the actual narrative of a colonised territory is not the one imposed by the oppressors, but rather the one that emerges from the colonised people, who have survived and possess the capacity to rewrite their history. For Sanchez, portraying Gibraltar's urban space involves a thorough analysis, continually adopting new and potentially more comprehensive perspectives to offer the audience a complete understanding of the territory's ever-evolving history. In this regard, fields of research such as postcolonial literature promote open-mindedness by incorporating works in the literary canon from authors like Sanchez. These works not only foster an understanding of 'the Other,' but also prompt a critical re-examination of dominant historical narratives shaped by colonial ideology. Sanchez's narrative aligns with this theoretical perspective, offering a counter-narrative through which Gibraltar and its people reclaim spatial and long-suppressed historical subjectivity, actively participating in the construction and transmission of collective memory.

Conclusion

This paper sought to explore *Jonathan Gallardo* from a multidisciplinary perspective. The analysis demonstrated how Sanchez's novel contributes to creating a counter-narrative that challenges dominant and colonial representations, offering a genuinely Gibraltarian voice instead. The fact that marginality can be resistant implies that cultural memory persists.

The figure of the protagonist embodies a marginal subjectivity across multiple dimensions: social, psychological, spatial, and historical. The initial condition of exclusion serves as a point of departure for a more comprehensive reflection on marginality as a privileged positioning. Jonathan, positioned at a distance from the centre of power, develops a sensitivity that enables him to perceive and restore the memories of Gibraltar's colonial history that have been effaced. Jonathan's journey signifies an endeavour to

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reintegrate himself into the social fabric of his community. However, the psychological dimension of marginality reveals the complexities associated with marginal identity as an internalised condition that proves challenging to overcome. A fundamental aspect of the novel under examination is the incursion of the past into the present. From this vantage point, marginality is configured as a privileged access to the memorial dimension; it is those who inhabit the margins who possess the opportunity to hear what the centre has sought to forget. The analysis of Gibraltar's urban landscape is equally crucial. Through the protagonist's movements within the city, Sanchez restores an alternative map of the territory, highlighting the historical, cultural, and political tensions that permeate it. Gibraltar transcends being merely the backdrop of the narrative; it also emerges as a protagonist and narrative subject, through which literature serves as an instrument of resistance, knowledge, and the reworking of identity.

Ultimately, each section of the analysis contributes to supporting the thesis that *Jonathan Gallardo* functions as a postcolonial counter-narrative. Marginality, interpreted in a comprehensive and nuanced manner, serves as a vehicle for symbolic resistance, cultural memory, and the possibility of reinterpreting history from the viewpoint of the subalterns. Therefore, through literature, Sanchez not only asserts Gibraltar's right to narrate its own story but also establishes a framework for critical reflection on the colonial past and its enduring legacies, thereby facilitating a postcolonial reinterpretation of Gibraltar's identity.

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Bio-bibliographical note

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