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Second Origin"*

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# "Typescript of the Second Origin". Counterculture and Politics in the 1970s'.

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Science fiction has traditionally addressed social matters by creating either eutopian or dystopian worlds that stand as an alternative to reality. Bensoussan (74) claims that the utopian novel can be regarded as an antecedent or a variant of science fiction; for instance, *Robinson Crusoe* poses an illustrated civilization and *Gulliver's Travels* satirizes the contemporary society. Other 20th-century novels tell a new genesis that turns into a dystopia: Aldous Huxley's *1984*, William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* or Robert Merle's *Malevil*. Pedrolo's alternative world similarly provides a drastic solution to social and political problems faced by human civilization. Utopia is certainly an ambivalent notion in the novel, since the whole humanity must succumb to found a better world. Therefore, violence, which must be the basis of a new human society, is ambivalent because it lays bare both the evil and redemptive possibilities of suffering.

To some extent, *Typescript of the Second Origin* is closer to the literary model of "critical utopia" (Rogan 310) arising at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and becoming fully consolidated throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Critical utopias postulate a better society while also emphasizing its disadvantages; they stress the tension between the original and the utopian worlds, as well as discussing social concerns at the time, such as environmental degradation, extreme poverty in the Third World, racial and gender inequality and class struggle. Utopia becomes ultimately a dream, rather than a blueprint. As Rogan argues (313), critical utopia does not provide an answer to the great evils of civilization; it just gives different possible options. On the other hand, Fredric Jameson, in *Archaeologies of the Future*, explains that utopia is a collective expression of a crave for what we cannot achieve, a fantasy or an unfulfilable wish. However, to define *Typescript of the Second Origin* as a utopian novel seems problematic, since the story is focused on the first years after the alien attack. In consequence, strictly speaking, it is a post-apocalyptic narrative. It could be considered a utopian narrative if the author had extensively explained how the protagonists and their lineage build a new world based on ideal countercultural values that are only suggested — women's and sexual liberation, return to nature, anti-racism, egalitarianism.

The American counterculture of the 1960s, mostly developed in Catalonia and Spain in the 1970s, furthers political and social changes through culture; it follows an ideal aspiration, rather than a structured policy agenda. Science fiction and fantasy were among the literary preferences of the American counterculture. For instance, Hassler-Forest explains that *The Lord of the Rings* became very famous on university campuses and other alternative communities because of its denial of technology and modernization, as well as its environmentalist, communitarian and anticapitalist views: "(...) the text's metaphorical demonization of industrial labor and technological innovation connected to American counterculture's rejection of the Western world's burgeoning materialism and consumerism" (Hassler-Forest 29)<sup>1</sup>. Pedrolo's version of utopia in *Typescript of the Second Origin* is clearly radical and reveals an absolute distrust in humankind, since it poses its total

disintegration, except for two young and innocent, good-natured and fair-minded characters, the parents of the new world. It is also a feminist utopia, for it is a woman, Alba, who gives birth to a new human civilization. *Typescript of the Second Origin* was published in 1974, when the counterculture had started to decline all over the world. In Spain, the political process known as Transition to democracy was about to take place —Franco died in 1975— and it soon dashed the hope of radical transformation, which bitterly disappointed the most combative social groups —in particular the extreme left. Pedrolo suggests a simple and brutal solution to these thwarted expectations: only a sea change could put an end to authoritarianism, exploitation and inequality. Jameson (84) holds that it is necessary to imagine some sort of gratification to face pessimism and what is impossible. Thus, the gratification provided by Pedrolo is a fantasy, a tale of a new beginning for the corrupted and unfair world.

This article analyses *Typescript of the Second Origin* in the light of countercultural ideas that fight the main social and political events of the 1960s and 1970s: Francoist dictatorship, bourgeois society and consumerism. I argue that, unlike the peaceful countercultural revolution, at a time when it was fairly discredited for its depoliticization and commodification, Pedrolo tells a story in which only violent destruction can redeem humankind. In this regard, the novel would be closer to revolutionary groups that used to legitimate violence to contest power. I explore how the story of Alba and Dídac reproduces some of the values conventionally attached to the counterculture: the search of a “genuine” life —natural, primitive, pre-technological—; a self-managed social organization —as a result of the dissolution of the political system—; universal solidarity —Mar is the first member of a new mixed human race—, sexual liberation and love —sex between teenagers, sensuality and eroticism permeating the whole story. The young protagonists live like a hippie family in the wild: they are isolated, half-naked, free, and self-sufficient. However, their new life is not easy: far from living in a paradise, they must survive in a totally devastated world, hiding in a cave —at least, initially— because they are frightened by the return of their enemies; also, they must scavenge for food and tools buried under the ruins of the city. First, I explain the concept of counterculture with a special focus on Catalonia and Spain, although it is a complex phenomenon that would need a more in-depth discussion that cannot be held in this article. Next, I examine how *Typescript of the Second Origin* echoes the counterculture in some aspects —the need for a radical social change, the revalorization of nature, women’s and sexual liberation. My main argument is that, while the counterculture encourages a cultural transformation of society, instead the novel conveys an ambiguous message about violence: on the one hand, it implies destruction, suffering and trauma; on the other, it can save humankind by fostering a new beginning. Above all, the story suggests a melancholy feeling for an alternative society and a craving for political change.

## The Counterculture and Radical Politics of the 1960s and 1970s

Youth subcultures of the 1960s — frequently confused with other terms such as counterculture, underground or radical left— bolster the interest in thought-experiments or utopias, which suggests a link between science fiction and counterculture. Utopian fiction is, arguably, the socio-political genre of science fiction (Rogan 315)<sup>2</sup>. Science fiction writers of the time often instilled a socio-political meaning in their stories, whether countercultural, libertarian or progressive utopia. Hebdige (200-201) holds that counterculture describes a melting pot of young middle-class cultures of the 1960s —hippies, flower children, yippies— reaching their peak in 1967-1970. Hence, it was distinguished from other subcultures —mods, punks— for its higher political and ideological profile. Unlike the dominant culture, counterculture encourages several changes, such as alternative institutions —underground press, communes, cooperatives—; the realignment between work, home, family, school and leisure, as well as the extension of the adolescence period. However, Herrera (273) argues that the concept, introduced by Theodore Roszack in *The Making of a Counterculture* (1968), is inaccurate and should be substituted by “anti-establishment cultures”. Herrera’s contention is that cultural formations include a dominant culture, marginal cultures, subcultures and countercultures. The dominant culture determines the cultural practices that articulate the main social processes, whereas “marginal cultures” describes the minority groups that the dominant culture does not recognize. Subcultures are consciously adopted by minority groups; however, despite being subaltern, they do not question the central values of the dominant culture in which they are subsumed. Finally, counterculture becomes an alternative cultural practice (Herrera 275).<sup>3</sup>

Despite these accurate definitions, the common meaning associated with counterculture is anti-establishment or resistance culture. Furthermore, counterculture refers to a specific historical period of great political upheaval throughout the 1960s which extends in Spain to Franco’s death in 1975. Counterculture leaders were those youngsters born in a consumerist society after the Second World War. Thanks to several factors such as the economic growth and the welfare state, the crisis of patriarchal authority, the birth of the so-called teenage market, the creation of a youth culture by the media and the decline of moral standards, they became promoters of social and cultural change, thus challenging the conformism, skepticism and depoliticization of the postwar years (Freixas 43). In this regard, it comes as no surprise that, although Pedroló’s novel was not addressed to young adult readers, it “has become a classic of Catalan youth literature” (Ballús) because protest and change are conventionally associated with youth.<sup>4</sup> The novel tells the birth of a new society, founded by a couple of teenagers, which is grounded in more egalitarian and fair values, closer to countercultural ideas.

Most young people in Western societies taking part in anti-establishment groups belonged to the middle class and had university degrees.

Their 'elitist' social origin was often denounced by the detractors of counterculture, who accused them of being trivial revolutionaries. The traditional leftist parties were among these detractors. They were suspicious of counterculture young people, describing them as narcissistic, individualistic and petit bourgeois (Puig 12). However, the so-called New Left could be defined as the political expression of counterculture. New Leftists moved away from the traditional leftist parties, which were more focused on labor matters and conventional political struggle. On the contrary, the New Left's social activism, within the context of contemporary postindustrial and mediatic society, dealt with diversity, identity and the alienating effects of technocracy (Amat 35). There were also revolutionary or extreme left groups that advocated a radical transformation of society.

In Spain, there were manifold revolutionary small groups during the 1970s, which, despite their fragmentation, shared some assumptions such as the political representation of the working class, the rejection of a bourgeois democracy and anti-imperialism (Cucó 79). The strong generational component of the counterculture and the New Left means that Pedrolo had no relation with it because (he was fifty-two in 1970), although his age does not mean he did not agree with its principles: anti-capitalism, women's and sexual liberation, revalorization of nature, anti-establishment, environmental consciousness, anti-religious morals and so on. He had been a member of the anarchist union CNT during the Spanish Civil War and backed the Catalan pro-independence movement along his life. He showed his political commitment against dictatorship in many novels and articles. Pedrolo believed in the revolutionary power of literature: he explored many ways of resistance, civic engagement, solidarity and collective liberation against all kinds of sexual, economic and political oppression. In *Typescript of the Second Origin*, he suggests a fundamental, abrupt shift: the whole destruction of humankind as a requirement for regeneration.

Although the counterculture originates in the United States, it quickly spread globally, thus becoming an international movement, especially keen on opposing the Vietnam War.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the disappointment following the end of the war in 1975 provoked the demise of counterculture (Amat 38). There were also widespread social protests breaking out against totalitarianism and capitalism which championed a fairer and freer society: The May 1968 events in France, the Prague Spring, the 1968 Chicago riots during the Democratic National Convention, the Battle of People's Park in Los Angeles, the constitution of the far-left Baader-Meinhof Gang in Germany or the Italian 'Hot Autumn' of 1969. Barcelona was the focus of counterculture in Catalonia and Spain.<sup>6</sup> Genís Cano (7-8) explains that the specific Catalan word for counterculture was 'rotllo'(scene); *enrotllat* was, thus, synonymous with countercultural or underground people<sup>7</sup>. As in other countries, the 'rotllo' was distinctive for its heterogeneity. Malvido (84), one of its leaders, described it as a mixture of "leftist, hippies, dropouts and frustrated".<sup>8</sup> Catalan young people were obviously influenced by other international protest movements in

both expressive —fashion, music, new habits— and militant fronts —political radicalism, student struggle— (Maymí 177). Anti-Francoism was another common goal, maybe the most relevant, of those who craved for a major social transformation. Roughly speaking, the counterculture shapes a youth identity firmly opposed to mainstream conservative adult life and dictatorship. The corpses spread around the post-apocalyptic Barcelona in *Typescript of the Second Origin* could well be a metaphor for the passive elder generation or even totalitarianism. Young people hoped for a more creative and intense life to evade the control of dictatorship and consumerism (Caño 36). Therefore, those bodies “without visible blood neither wounds” (352) seem the victims of an alienating capitalist or repressive society which zombifies citizens.<sup>9</sup>

Pau Riba, another Catalan countercultural leader, claims that being anti-establishment was the essential characteristic of the ‘rotllo’ (Riba 15). Being anti-establishment did not necessarily mean a political commitment to anti-capitalism or women and gays’ rights; sometimes it just described a dropout, somebody who took drugs to escape or live in the margins of mainstream society. Malvido and Riba epitomized the main two trends in countercultural Barcelona: whilst the former embodies the social activist, the latter —the grandson of Carles Riba, one of the most outstanding Catalan intellectuals— breaks with his family tradition —Catholicism, Catalan nationalism— and founds a commune outside the city (Ribas 127).

As mentioned before, some authors argue that aim of the hippie revolution, counterculture or underground was just to shock the middle-class. The discredit of hippies, dropouts, underground artists or social activists was strengthened by the media stereotype of the ‘rebel’, which turned counterculture into an inoffensive and trendy fashion. Herrera (280) explains that hegemonic culture usually cancels resistance by debunking alternative cultures or rendering them invisible, incorporating the subcultures to its own cultural system and banalizing and thus neutralizing counterculture. In Catalonia and Spain, the political disenchantment caused by the failure of counterculture at the beginning of the 1970s became more severe during the Spanish Transition to democracy, as the most deeply engaged social activists felt that their yearning for a true change was betrayed by the political, administrative, judicial and economical ruling elites (Vidal-Beneyto). Many scholars have insisted that the new democracy meant a continuation of Francoism, forcing citizens to forget the past —the so-called ‘pact of oblivion’— and emphasizing the need for facing the future together. In fact, the new political system respected the dictatorship; it did not break away from the previous rule and was led by Francoist politicians (Alzaya 28). Vidal-Beneyto calls the Transition a reform or ‘self-transformation’ of Francoism, which occurred thanks to the wide consensus of all the main political parties, including those active in Catalonia.

In consequence, many people felt the counterculture soon became a failed attempt to radically change society: “1975 was the end of utopia, the verification of disenchantment and the coming of craving” (Vilarós “Los

monos del desencanto español” 221). Ribas (551) defines the new political system in terms of a “fake democracy” that besieged and marginalized the radical left and the libertarian groups. Furthermore, consumerism, monetary values, individualism, cultural subsidies and body objectification became a new hidden political agenda to demobilize the citizenship. Disenchantment, a feeling linked to the Transition, described those political sectors supporting a true revolution. Thus, the utopian euphoria of anti-Francoism was followed by fraud and deceit (Picornell 105).<sup>10</sup> This disappointment was bigger in Catalonia among the unions, political parties and cultural platforms, for the new democracy did not imply either a rejection of capitalism like in other parts of Spain or independence (González 40).

Racionero (10-11) holds that, although counterculture refers to a specific movement, it belongs to a wider subversive trend of anti-authoritarianism, sexual liberation, anti-capitalism and political decentralization throughout history. The hippie movement would be for him the last example of a sustained tradition of heterodox thinking as opposed to Judaeo-Christian religion and rationalism. In this regard, Pedroló’s novel, as well as utopian science fiction in general, could be understood as being part of this dissidence trend. It symbolically stands as proof of a new start for humankind grounded in the abolition of the establishment, life in harmony with nature and universal solidarity. The novel’s message about violence is certainly ambiguous: although the new humankind is born from general destruction, the relationship between its creators, Alba and Dídac, is very peaceful: their love seems to redeem the foundational violence of the alternative world they build.

### ***Typescript of the Second Origin and the Counterculture***

In this section, I want to explore the problematic connection the novel bears with the countercultural ideals of radical change. The protagonists of *Typescript of the Second Origin* move away from a dead civilization to found what seems to be a neo-rural utopia, although it is focused on survival rather than political and social reorganization. The monstrous alien they come across—a mixture of insect, animal and human being—remains as the grotesque, insane and corrupted body of the past, “They could then take a close look at the face which combined porcine and human features, even those of insects—the third eye, which remained open, had facets like bees’ eyes. The body, in contrast, resembled that of a marsupial since it had a pouch” (400). Aliens attack the Earth because they are searching for a new life in a different place to escape from the mortal epidemic that devastates their own planet (487). In consequence, it seems as if the entire debased and dying galaxy needed to start from scratch.

The novel differs from the counterculture in some respects. On the one hand, Alba and Dídac are younger than the members of the counterculture generation are and have a rural background. Counterculture was urban, which

explains that it is often aligned with other subcultures. Pedrolo may have chosen two rural youths to rebuild the world after the alien attack maybe because of the meaning of innocence and purity usually attached to children and the countryside in opposition to the urban corrupted environment. In consequence, in *Typescript of the Second Origin*, regeneration is brought about by these baby boomers of the 1960s, who grew up in an increasingly media-dominated and consumerist society. The political undertone of the story seems quite clear as Pedrolo points at that generation as the white hope for a country in need of a radical change, from dictatorship to democracy, from capitalism to socialism, from national oppression to independence. On the other hand, Alba, Dídac and their son Mar seem to reinforce the traditional nuclear family unlike the hippies, who founded communes as a new kind of social and economic organization<sup>11</sup>. According to the logic of the narrative, procreation is vital for the survival of humankind; therefore, the community they create has necessarily to be based on blood ties.

However, the revalorization of nature the novel depicts is linked to rural communes —though there were also communes in the city. This alternative system of social organization was the countercultural response to individualism and city life, although they were not originally a creation of the counterculture. Utopian socialist writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Charles Fourier (1772-1837) framed the concept, based on such principles as the abolition of sexist division of labor, self-sufficiency, self-employment, the elimination of private property and respect for the land (Rogan, 313). In like manner, communes sought a cultural revolution affecting all ways of life —education, social relationships and economy— most preferably, in what counterculture regarded, inaccurately and even offensively, as non-industrialized “semi-wild” places away from Western civilization such as Ibiza and Formentera, Northern Africa or India (Cano 9-10).

*Typescript of the Second Origin* reflects all these social and economic aspects: on the one hand, Alba and Dídac do not have specific jobs attached to their gender. On the other hand, according to communal farms and craft workshops, which addressed the basic needs of the community, the protagonists refurbish a farm, harvest, raise hens, collect fruit, fish in the river and hunt in the woods. In addition, they do not set up a hierarchical organization with a ruling boss and subordinated employees; on the contrary, they are self-employers who rely on self-sufficiency and a subsistence economy not seeking any kind of benefit. In fact, communes opposed competition to collaboration, centralization to decentralization, anonymity to contact, mass to individuality, standardization to originality and authority to freedom. Alba and Dídac even live in a camper, which reminds of one of the most prototypical images associated to hippies and their nomad life in the country, as opposed to life in a permanent place in the city.

Thereby, the two protagonists carry out the return to nature advocated by the hippies; they move away from a civilization dominated by the dead,



abandoning the city infected by thousands of decaying corpses and going into the wild: “Most bodies looked shriveled up like the ones in the petrol station; the others seemed to have decomposed quite quickly, as only the skeletons remained beneath the rags of clothes consumed by the winter cold” (391). The old barren, sick and devastated world —both the Earth and the aliens’ planet— is in stark contrast with the protagonists’ young and fertile bodies.

This neo-rural life is possible in a postpolitical world with no religion, national, class or ethnic borders and, consequently, with no need for repression and legal papers:

They were now past Sète, going down towards the place where the border used to be. Now no borders remained anywhere and thinking about this Alba came up with a trivial idea that made her laugh:

‘You know what, Dídac? We carry no papers.’

He didn’t even understand her as he had never had any documentation yet; he was too young when there were authorities that issued official papers (454-455).

Nevertheless, the novel is not fully countercultural because the protagonists accept technology, although they keep only the things that are useful for their purposes —a tractor, for instance—, as well as, most importantly, medicines, which are essential to survive. When ill, Alba and Dídac fetch medicines in the pharmacies of the ruined city. The young girl also insists on keeping a rigorous body hygiene as a “sign of good health” (380). Thus, Alba and Dídac are aware that technology belongs to a dead civilization that produced sometimes ridicule goods, although they do not utterly reject technological advances (471). As well as medicines, Alba reminds Dídac of their duty to preserve the artistic and intellectual legacy: “If there is no one else we need to save many things; we cannot let the efforts of so many people be lost... One day you’ll understand” (395, original ellipsis). The most evident fact is that capitalism is removed and a pre-industrial society of subsistence and self-sufficiency is restored. Therefore, this is not about turning back to prehistory to establish a “socialist utopia” without “unalienated” labor (Rogan 312). We must remember that the counterculture encourages not only an economic change but a whole cultural refounding of human societies based on love and respect.

In this regard, free love is practiced in hippie communes as a way of being in tune with the universe of living things. ‘Coito, ergo sum’ is the funny motto the writer Lluís Racionero creates from Descartes’ famous sentence to express this idea of universal fraternity<sup>12</sup>. To him, revolution is “a big intercourse, the penetration of a new mind in the new body of the world” (Racionero 5). Pedroló’s novel is rife with sensual descriptions of Alba’s adolescent body, having a bath or sweating: “And, stretching his hand, softly he caressed her dripping hip and thigh” (411). Usually undressed, she epitomizes the body of a new and productive world. Eroticism and sensuality

contrast with the dramatic landscape of corpses piled up to stress the death of the old world and the beginning of a new era:

And Alba, carrying the Mauser rifle in her hands and the lethal sphere in her shirt pocket, was crying; silent tears crossed her tanned cheeks and slipped down her neck, towards her breasts, quivering because of the clattering tractor. Nothing surprised her, yet she had lacked the imagination to picture the ruins stretching for so many miles, the bodies, the solitude (405).

Moreover, the counterculture advocates the suppression of social norms that repress sexuality and the body. Nudity is a 'natural' state close to that of the primitive societies free from the influence of religion or morals. The characters are not embarrassed because of their nakedness, since Dídac is just an innocent child and Alba has not been raised in hypocritical conventions by her parents, as she herself claims. In consequence, the novel clearly represents women's and sexual liberation. There are frequent allusions to the contact between the bodies of Alba and Dídac, who usually go to bed together:

And early in the morning, with no embers left, they could wake huddled up or holding each other. Then they stayed on in bed for a while as outside the birds shook themselves awake and the light grew stronger. Girl and child had got used to sleeping together from the very first moment and the contact between their bodies helped them to feel less lonely (369).

It is also worth noting that the novel departs from previous assumptions of what it means to be civilized, at least according to Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud claimed that human societies are based upon some taboos such as incest, a rule Alba cannot adhere to, since she must have sex with her own son once Dídac is tragically killed to perpetuate humankind:

The starting point for the Oedipus complex is the taboo on incest, viewed by Freud as the defining element in the promulgation of culture, the point at which the unbridled lusts of individual desire become constrained by non-biological forces [...] So what the incest taboo represents is the materialization of the contradiction between the total instinctuality of the infant and the demands of society; in other words, the structuring of desire into a socialized form. (Frosh 48)

Alba and Dídac's relationship is exemplary, even romantic, since they never argue as well as entirely trusting each other. Even though Alba is aware she needs a man to preserve the humankind, love naturally evolves from innocent fraternity to true romance:

Now, however, was not quite the same; the child of years before was becoming an adult fully aware that he was sleeping with a woman. Often he would touch her with latent covetousness yet still to delighted by the warmth of her skin and the sweetness of the female body for the caress to be anything but naïve and innocent (428).

The girl even feels guilty of her cheerfulness in a world that has become a cemetery. Both characters do not miss their previous lives:

‘I was thinking that if all this hadn’t happened, you would not be my wife. Of course, I suppose I would not have cared but, now, when I think about it...’

‘You would not return to the past, then, if you could?’

‘I don’t know, Alba, I don’t know. I know that what I’m going to say is very serious but... no, I would not go back.’

‘He looked at her almost timidly.’

‘You must think I’m a monster, right?’

‘No, Dídac... Rather, if you’re a monster then we both are.’ (476, original ellipses)

The dialogue between the characters hints at the ambiguous discourse on violence I mentioned in the introduction. Sacrifice is necessary for regeneration; therefore, the underlying discourse of the novel seems to align itself with radical politics of the 1970s, that is to say, the revolutionary anarchist groups that fought for a deep transformation of society through violence, moving away from more moderate options such as the cultural change promoted by the counterculture. Precisely the dilemma of violent or peaceful revolution was one of the reasons why the inner division of the counterculture led to its final dissolution. Stuart Hall (69) differentiates an “expressive” and an “activist” side as two alternative options in countercultural groups. Hippies, like beats, are expressive; they endorse the personal, psychological, subjective, cultural, private, aesthetic or bohemian dimensions of live. On the other hand, the activists, who emphasize the political, social, collective, militant and public aspects, are represented by revolutionary groups carrying out violent actions to produce a social change. Hall explains that the end of counterculture has to do with human inability to keep united to fight for a fairer and progressive society, which helps to understand why Pedrolo writes a story in which the humankind must vanish off as a previous and necessary step to regenerate itself.

The allusion to monstrosity of the previous quotation also underscores the ambivalence of the term when applied to human beings or the others, the aliens in this case: who is the real monster? Thus, the story is a pessimistic portrayal of humankind, as only violence will redeem a depraved world. The novel is clearly critical of the bourgeois society, something that Alba suggests

when she talks about the kind of life —an ordinary middle-class existence— she and Dídac would have led if the aliens had not attacked the Earth:

‘And to think that without this cataclysm we would never have seen this!’

Dídac replied:

‘Perhaps, when we grew up.’

Alba thought, though, that an adult Dídac would have been an ordinary wage earner, perhaps a car mechanic, and she... what would she have been?

She was distressed by the monstrous certainty that their happiness was built on a mountain of corpses (445, original ellipsis).

The “monstrous certainty” is another example of the ambivalence between humans and aliens, destroyers and destroyed, murderers and murdered; violence, in short. Pedrolo’s novel talks about violence, sacrifice and suffering, which carry ambivalent values of destruction and redemption. The characters’ feeling of guilt also reminds us of the biblical story of Adam and Eve, the parents of humanity. Trauma is also a consequence of violence and suffering, as the other survivors of the attack show, such as the man they discover who, having lost his children, commits suicide, or the Italian woman cradling the skeleton of her baby— and even the aggressive Italian men who want to kill the boy and rape the girl. Terribly shocked by their tragedies, Alba thinks that it is a “sign (...) that they were still human” (426). Violence is necessary to save humankind and to defend from others’ aggressiveness, like those three individuals who want to assault Alba during the journey through Italy, as mentioned before. In their case, they do not use violence to dominate or exert control over others; they are not either victims of paranoiac violence in the wake of the alien attack even though they are fully aware of their weakness and helplessness. Feeling in tune with the nature, they represent just a tiny part of the existing: “That calamity made them feel smaller than ever” (407).

The universal harmony between people of all races that counterculture encourages is clearly epitomized by Dídac, the ‘father’ of the new humankind, who is mixed race. The novel anti-racist discourse also echoes the emancipation movements of the former colonies taking place throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is Mar, the son of Alba and Dídac, the first subject of the reborn humanity, who puts an end to the separation between the races and the genders: he is neither white nor black; his name is both male and female in Catalan language: “After us, people will no longer think about their skin color” (374).

The new origin Pedrolo tells in the novel is a melancholic object, like all utopias. Unlike Freud, who regarded melancholia as lingering sadness and obsession with the past, contemporary views of it stress its active and transformative power, oriented to future possibilities<sup>13</sup>. Eng and Kazanjian (2003) argue that the remains of bodies, spaces, ideals, psychic and material

practices of loss are productive for history and politics. In their introduction to *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, they allude to Giorgio Agamben's understanding of medieval melancholia that applies to utopia as "the ghostly remains of an unrealized or idealized potential —the unreal image of an unobtainable object that never was and hence was never lost" (13). The dream of a different world based on pacifism, spirituality, social justice, freedom and ecology imagined by the counterculture or the revolutionary left was one of these unattainable objects that, however, left a literary, cultural and political legacy. Those remains can emerge as "constricting forces or motivating ideals" (Eng and Kazanjian 13). In other words, what *Typescript of the Second Origin* and other utopian and science fiction novels have bequeathed for the future generations is the longing for change.

### **Conclusions: Pedrolo's Melancholic Second Origin**

In this article, I have explored the relationship that *Typescript of the Second Origin* has with the counterculture and radical politics of the 1970s. The novel reflects some of the values attached to these anti-establishment movements such as women's liberation, anti-racism and environmentalism. On the other hand, it also echoes the debate held within counterculture at the time as whether the use of violence is legitimate in politics to fight against oppression and promote social change. Pedrolo had written a novel in 1961, *Acte de violència (Act of Violence)* which he could not publish until 1975 due to censorship. Unlike *Typescript of the Second Origin*, this novel presents a peaceful struggle for freedom; it tells a story of solidarity between citizens who can shut the city down in a general indefinite strike. Civil disobedience and collective liberation challenge the tyrannical power that oppresses the city. This is, like the story of Alba and Dídac, an example of political change. Nevertheless, whereas *Act of Violence* is an optimistic account of resistance without bloodshed, civic engagement and fight for social rights, *Typescript of the Second Origin* cannot clearly be described as either an optimistic or a pessimistic account of the rebirth of humankind. In other words, sacrificial violence is ambivalent in the novel: on the one hand, it redeems humankind by giving rise to a new world; on the other, it provokes destruction, suffering and trauma. Violence exists as a means of control over people but also as self-defense. The aliens attack the Earth to find a better planet to live as an epidemic is quickly decimating their species; however, their survival means destruction for the humans. In the context of the counterculture, antiauthoritarian movements and revolutionary political groups in 1970s Spain, the novel could be regarded as an extremist solution to force a political change because of the use of violence. Nonetheless, although the novel focuses on the protagonists' fight for survival and does not fully develop the new world they create—in other words, it is a post-apocalyptic rather than utopian narrative—we can assume that they promote a better non-sexist and non-racist society in harmony with nature. Therefore, Pedrolo's novel, despite

the violence giving rise to a second origin, is a melancholic example of an unfulfilled possibility in the real life —the transition to democracy thwarted most of the expectations of the pro-independence movement and the radical left. However, it still can be a motivating ideal to promote change.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> John R.R. Tolkien considered much of his literary work to have been inspired by the reading of William Morris (1834-1896), who could be regarded as a forerunner to back-to-nature counterculture.

<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that current countercultural movements such as Anonymous or 15M have Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta* (1988) —and the cinematic adaptation by James McTeigue in 2005— among their main symbolic references.

<sup>3</sup> As I explained before, there is no consensual meaning for counterculture. For Sans (134), it is a marginal alternative culture that means dropping out of culture, rather than fighting against it.

<sup>4</sup> All translations from Catalan and Spanish are mine.

<sup>5</sup> Amat (2009a) and (2009b) maps an interesting timeline of the counterculture from 1964 to 1972; he provides information about both the United States and United Kingdom.

<sup>6</sup> Although it can be acknowledged that counterculture was mainly based in Barcelona, writers and scholars do not consider it as an exclusively Catalan phenomenon; as a matter of fact, they regard it as a general Spanish movement because, for example, underground magazines such as *Ajoblanco* and *Star* were published in Spanish. That is why some Catalan authors such as Jaume Vallcorba (1976, 1978) or Quim Monzó dropped out of the movement because they identified it with Spanish culture. Therefore, although perhaps the best option would be to talk about Barcelona's counterculture, I will refer to it as either Spanish or Catalan.

<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, now 'underground' means also 'cool', which hints at the depoliticisation of the original term.

<sup>8</sup> Ordovás (51) also brings to the fore the heterogeneous composition of counterculture in Spain. He specifically refers to manifold trends, interests, attitudes, ideologies, cultural manifestations and names.

<sup>9</sup> Vilarós ("Banalidad y biopolítica", 38) holds that national-catholicism had died long before 1976, specifically in the 1960s, when Francoism adopts a capitalist economy as demanded by the United States. The new system did not need the traditional repressive apparatus; mass media provided more innovative ways of production and consumption that supported the hegemonic ideology. Vilarós's analysis hints at a natural evolution from dictatorship to democracy, a fact quickly observed by counterculture.

<sup>10</sup> Some Catalan novels tell stories about Anti-Francoist revolutionaries who were affected by trauma because of the change from dictatorship to what they regard as a fake democracy (Maestre).

<sup>11</sup> The family as an institution underwent an important crisis in post-industrial societies because of several processes: female access to the labour market, disappearance of small businesses, due to the rise of multinational firms and big companies and social fragmentation because of rugged individualism and urban agglomeration.

<sup>12</sup> Racionero's pun plays with 'coito' —the Spanish word for intercourse— and 'cogito' — 'I think' in Latin.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, historical memory shows how the past can influence the current politics.

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