

APPROACHING A NOMAD POETICS: EXILE, SPACE AND TIME  
IN LUISA FUTORANSKY'S POETRY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of  
Texas State University-San Marcos  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of ARTS

by

Katherine Handley, B.A.

San Marcos, TX  
August 2009

APPROACHING A NOMAD POETICS: EXILE, SPACE AND TIME  
IN LUISA FUTORANSKY'S POETRY

Committee Members Approved:

---

Dr. Sharon Ugalde, Chair

---

Dr. Catherine Jaffe

---

Dr. Miriam Balboa Echeverría

Approved:

---

J. Michael Willoughby  
Dean of the Graduate College

**COPYRIGHT**

by

Katherine Handley

2009

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Sharon Ugalde for her positive feedback and patient revisions. Thanks to Dr. Catherine Jaffe for her helpful counsel during my graduate courses and careful reading of my thesis; and to Dr. Miriam Echeverría for many semesters of fascinating classes. Thank you to Aquarena Center, whose Fellowship made graduate school possible for me. Thanks to my husband, Eric, who has been extremely supportive throughout graduate school. Thank you to my parents, who have always supported my endeavors in education.

This manuscript was submitted on April 7, 2009.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.   EXILE AND NOMADISM.....	8
III.  LANGUAGE.....	17
IV.  TIME.....	24
V.   SPACE, PLACE AND IDENTITY.....	30
VI.  CONCLUSION.....	36
WORKS CITED.....	39

## **I. Introduction**

Luisa Futoransky (Buenos Aires, 1939) has written three novels and fifteen books of poetry. She has received numerous awards, including an award for Poetry from the National Foundation for the Arts, Buenos Aires; the Carmen Conde Award for Female Poetry; and the Order of Arts and Letters, France's highest cultural honor. During the period from 1970-1981 she traveled extensively throughout South America, to the United States on a grant from the Fulbright Commission, and to numerous other countries, including China, Japan, Israel and Italy. After attending the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa in 1970, she went on to Rome, Italy, to continue her poetry studies. From 1976-1981 she lived in China and Japan, where she was a radio actor and announcer (Pfeiffer 67-8). In 1981 Futoransky settled in Paris, where she has lived for the past quarter-century. In all her years abroad she has only visited Argentina three times, yet the memory of her homeland permeates much of her writing. Perhaps because she lives in France, Futoransky's works are not as widely read in Latin America as they are in Europe. She writes in her native Spanish, and some of her works have been translated into French and German. A selection of her poetry has been translated into English by Jason Weiss, yet this captivating, incisive and sometimes humorous writer is not well-known in English-speaking countries. Futoransky is of Jewish heritage and considers herself a writer in exile.

The twentieth century has been characterized by emigration and exile. World wars, fascist governments, post-colonial clashes, famine, and ethnic violence have

brought about global displacement of people, across borders and oceans. During the latter half of the twentieth century, South American countries were hard hit by brutal regimes, and those who could, fled to other countries. Roday Oñate and Thomas Wright (ix – x) explore the historical and political realities of exile in *Flight from Chile: Voices of Exile*: “The military governments of Brazil (1964–1985), Uruguay (1973–1984), Chile (1973–1990), and Argentina (1976–1983) severely repressed the left in their countries, and among their strategies for destroying opponents was the institutionalization of mass exile. Thus, for nearly twenty-five years, hundreds of thousands of individuals left their South American homelands for brief or prolonged periods of asylum abroad.”

Journalists and writers pose a special threat to repressive, dictatorial regimes because of their ability to document abuse of power and the realities of living under a harsh regime. In 1972, Uruguayan writer Cristina Peri Rossi fled to Spain after the military dictatorship banned her work and threatened her life (Trevisán 2-3). In Spain, she was unable to publish under Franco’s fascist government, and later fled Spain for the freedom of France. Today, a citizen of democratic Spain, she continues to write and works as a liberal radio journalist. She published *State of Exile* in 2008, a book that would have been banned thirty years before.

On September 11, 1973, a military coup led by Augusto José Ramón Pinochet took control of the national government in Chile, resulting in the death of then president Salvador Allende. From Santiago, six weeks after the democratically-elected government had been replaced by strict military rule, Emma Sepúlveda wrote to her friend, Marjorie Agosín, about the terrible changes: “After the military coup of September 11, things have become difficult for all of our people. Along with the workers, peasants, political

activists, and other groups in the country, we young university students will pay a very high price for the support we gave President Salvador Allende” (Agosín *Amigas* 61). The threat to intellectuals, Jews, and artists caused Marjorie Agosin’s family to leave Chile for the United States. If Agosín had stayed in Chile, her writings would have been censored, whether self-imposed out of fear of persecution, or by the harsh government. Two months later, in December of 1973, in a letter to Sepúlveda, Agosín announced that her family was leaving Chile for the United States (Agosín, *Amigas* 65). Soon after, Sepúlveda left Chile for the freedom and uncertainty of the United States (Agosín, *Amigas* 66).

Like these other Latin American writers, Futoransky is no stranger to exile. Marcy Schwartz observes: “All of Futoransky’s fiction focuses on displacement. She has been living outside of Argentina since the late 1960’s, and in Paris since 1981. She states in an interview, ‘yo soy una persona que trabaja mucho con el exilio, porque hay mucho exilio detrás de mí’” (Schwartz 171-2). Futoransky’s exile status is part of a continuum that predates her birth: “Exile for her does not begin with her flight from Argentina during the Guerra Sucia, but with the pogroms in East Europe in the early part of this century” (Schwartz 187). Indeed, Futoransky identifies with her parents’ generation of Jewish émigrés, who, in the early twentieth century, crossed the Atlantic in search of refuge: “Pertenezco a la generación de los hijos de judíos que vinieron a la Argentina porque entre guerra y guerra y *pogrom* y *pogrom* se caían del mapa en barcos . . . los naufragos de siempre” (Futoransky, “Melancolía” 101). The phrase, “los naufragos de siempre,” underscores the historical and universal theme of exile, throughout time and across cultures. She likens this recent generation of exiles to the ones who wandered through the

desert with Moses, looking for the Promised Land (“Melancolía” 102). From their exile during biblical times, to their expulsion from Spain in 1492, to their modern day flight from Europe to escape Nazi persecution, Jewish history is synonymous with exile, and more specifically, Diaspora. The Diaspora, broadly defined as the dispersion of the Jews outside of their traditional homeland, has become a way of life (American Heritage). They have been a people without a homeland, constantly on the move, emigrating to all corners of the world. Exile and nomadism, inextricably linked elements of the Jewish Diaspora, form a lens through which to view the poet’s wanderings.

Luisa Futoransky left Argentina in 1970 to travel and live abroad. From roughly 1976 to 1983 the Argentine state carried out the kidnappings, tortures and murders of tens of thousands of people. The Dirty War, or “Guerra sucia,” was an attempt to quell leftist opposition, and resulted in the disappearance of up to 30,000 people (Dionis).

The mid 1980’s brought about a period of relative freedom and stability both in the Southern Cone and in Eastern Block countries. John Glad reflects upon the bad old days of intolerant regimes: “Not so long ago politicians preferred to imprison or kill writers who made them feel uncomfortable. Nowadays, such writers find themselves rushed off to the airport . . . . And then they’re gone – as good as dead and with no claim even to a pension . . . . Despite Victor Hugo’s claim that “exile is life,” politicians really prefer Ovid: “Exile is death” (vii).

For the semi-autobiographical figure of Futoransky’s novel, *De Pe a Pa*, returning home to Argentina was not a viable option, even in the mid 1980’s:

“entre volver a una Argentina aterrorizadora, carcomida por el videlismo y de consecuencias imprevisibles para alguien con un pasaporte tachonado por las

muchas estrellas de una residencia en una Patria Socialista y volverse a París, no había en verdad mucho para pensar” (15).

Unable to return to Buenos Aires, Futoransky is an exile. She becomes nomadic, finding in one country or another a new distraction from her homeland.

Nomadism is a philosophical theory adapted from the fields of sociology and anthropology that seeks to explain the identity of the non-conformist individual in a post-modern world. Futoransky fits the nomad description, both for her itinerant lifestyle, as well as her unorthodox approach to identity and power through the use of non-conventional language.

The Russian émigré poet, Marina Tsvetaeva, never overcame the longing for her motherland, Russia. Exiled to Paris during the communist revolution, she was unable to return home, and heartbroken in the end, committed suicide (Stock 775). Like Tsvetaeva, many displaced writers fixate on their homeland once they have left it. Is a writer doomed to measure all time by before- and after-exile? As critics, how do we approach the condition of exile in literature? In a post-modern world, is there another framework that provides an alternate interpretation of exile? Luisa Futoransky’s poetry provides an answer. The poet successfully balances a love for Argentina with a fondness for other countries. The key to this equilibrium is her understanding of nomadism. “Nomad thought” manifests itself in several ways in her poetry: the reinterpretation or recreation of home/nation, creative language that subverts traditional roles and realms, and linking herself temporally and historically to literary and cultural archetypes through the use of *mythopoetry*.

Mary Kinzie affirms, “poetry is language carried to the highest expressive power commensurate with clarity of representation” (ix). It is a highly personal endeavor that brings us close to the soul. Magdalena García Pinto reminds us that poetry is a search for the self (4). It is useful, then, to look carefully at the similarities between Futoransky and her poetic subjects.

In *The Dialectics of Exile*, comparative literature scholar Sophia McClennen applies dialectic theory, the union of two opposing but complimentary values, to the study of exile literature (36-38). For McClennen, any analysis of exilic literature must take into account a “unity of opposites” that can address the complexity of each situation (37). For example, exile is both a physical and a mental state; it provides creative freedom but also restricts the writer. Some degree of interplay exists between each of these binary opposites, and when fit together they equal a sum greater than its parts. One such dialectic relationship is the degree to which the author draws upon real experiences versus fictional creations in their work. Claudio Guillén believes that exiled writers use metaphor and alternate meanings to transcend the painful separation from origin (McClennen 40). The autobiographical fidelity varies with each author, and within individual works, from re-telling to metaphor, and degrees in between.

What is the level of affinity between the poet and the poetic subject? To Jorgelina Corbatta’s question of whether her works are autobiographical, Futoransky says, “Sí, pero no es. Yo lo pongo siempre en ‘un fuera de foco por un lente cóncavo o convexo’” (Corbatta 582-4). A line in the poem “Reseña” reinforces this idea: “Para que me entiendan para que no me entiendan demasiado escribo” (unpublished poem, cited in Corbatta 582). Her writing both clarifies and conceals her true nature yet provides

valuable insight into the author's self-concept. She is a foreigner and a wanderer "de otra parte, otro cuerpo / otro golfo. . . . Desentraizada como un tronco de plátano, a merced de la borrasca . . . nunca supe echar raíces. . . ." (quoted in Corbatta 582). Luisa Futoransky writes in a semi-autobiographical manner that corresponds with the coordinates she has traversed, yet the experiences are distorted, as if looking at the image in a fun-house mirror.

## II. Exile and Nomadism

Scholars and literary theorists utilize the term “exile” to describe different degrees of physical and emotional displacement. The spectrum of exile runs from self-imposed isolation to outright expulsion from a country. The most literal sense of the word is the physical movement of the body from the home country to another, owing to a variety of internal and/or external forces. The metaphorical sense of the word describes cultural and social disenfranchisement that groups or individuals suffer for their different ideals or codes. Some feminist philosophers and writers of Eastern European and Russian background are familiar with the notion of internal exile, *insilio*. These *in situ* exiles remain in their home country, isolated from society. The variations on the theme of exile are numerous, including colonial or provincial writers who migrate to the metropolitan centers, as well as modern African writers who write in the language of the colonialists, which can be considered a “mark of exile” (Gurr 11).

Amy Kaminsky rejects the use of the word “exile” to describe a metaphorical state, or anything not involving the relocation of the physical body away from the homeland, calling this mis-use of the term an “ethical breach.” “Exile and all the processes related to it have a material component, and that component is felt, experienced, and known throughout the body” (xi). Kaminsky wants to move away from metaphor and into the solid human body to reclaim the gravity of the term.

In a similar vein, McClennen (1) advocates for an end to the metaphoric use of exile in order to return, in her words, the history and material reality to the term. She

observes that some postmodern theories associate writing and cultural identity with exile, and that this metaphoric use ignores the loss and anguish that Kaminsky defines as part of the exilic experience (McClennen xi).

Within the category of physical exile, there are variations in motivation, from expatriates who choose to live abroad, like H.D. and Pound, and those who are forced to leave due to threats to their life, such as Peri Rossi. Perhaps the best way to unify the opposing views of exile is to look at the effect that it has on the subject. According to Martin Tucker, “[V]oluntary exit is [. . .] as much a form of exile as an involuntary move, if what follows is a pattern of exilic behaviour,” namely a sense of “separation, alienation, isolation, loss, confusion” (Tucker xiv-xv).

Futoransky is exiled both physically, separated from her homeland, and mentally, feeling marginalized and displaced. In *De Pe a Pa: De Pekín a París*, Futoransky explains her rationale for creating the novel’s protagonist. She says that Laura Kaplansky helps to explain “qué es ser poeta suelto por el mundo, con sus particulares agravantes; mujer mayor, pobre, judía, argentina y sola” (Futoransky 123-4).

Andrew Gurr’s analysis of the strong appeal of exilic writing is laid out plainly in *Writers in Exile*. The author views the state of exile as one in which constraints and liberties make for compelling artistic inspiration. Gurr’s exilic model is based upon a British post-colonial world where writers leave the conformist tendencies of a provincial home for a metropolitan center where anonymity and liberal values provide artistic freedom (7). Exiled writers are more compelling than their stay-at-home counterparts: “[T]he reason lies partly in the stronger sense of home which the exile has, and in the clearer sense of his own identity which his home gives him” (Gurr 9). The psychology of

identity comes mainly from our memories of events and places, and the search for identity leads the writer back, again and again, to those memories (Gurr 10). The search for identity, he emphasizes, “is probably the most characteristic preoccupation in twentieth-century literature” (10). Who better to contemplate identity than a writer who is separated from her homeland? For Gurr, the liberty of expression, coupled with an acute sense of identity, elicits some of the most-inspired work of the last century. Gurr’s laudatory view of post-colonial exilic literature is problematic for some literary critics. According to Edward Said, the stories that come from exile are nothing more than tonics to overcome the “crippling sorrow of estrangement” (49). “To think of exile as beneficial, as a spur . . . to creativity, is to belittle its mutilations (Said 50). How does Futoransky approach the issues of identity in her poetry?

In order to find a framework within which to evaluate Futoransky’s poetry, it is useful to look at some of the common approaches to exilic literature. A great deal of literary analysis focuses on the fractured ties between the exile and their homeland, culture and language. Nation is at the heart of the term exile, the displacement of a person from their country of origin. Modernist theories posit that the broken ties between the individual and the nation result in deep anguish and loss. As a result, the writing that results from displacement is generally evaluated in terms of creative/positive production versus nostalgic/negative production (McClennen 2). This binary perspective is too limiting and does not account for alternative modes of expression. Seeking a more comprehensive way to evaluate exilic texts, McClennen has developed a framework for analysis that takes into account the complex relationship between nation and exile, along with other prominent *motifs* treated in these works. When applied to Futoransky’s poetry,

the four components of nation, time, space, and language permit a broader analysis of her exilic texts.

Her discussion of exile points to a theoretic shift during the late twentieth century, which challenges the significance of nation to exiles. Modernist theories have given way to poststructuralist theories, specifically: the rise of global capitalism and the worldwide spread of instant communications has diminished the social relevance of the nation and replaced it with globalization (Robinson 563). In a broad sense, globalization is “understood as a process of cross-cultural interaction, exchange, and transformation” (Cooppan 15). A precise definition is as varied as the critics who try to capture it, but, according to Anthony D. King, they all share “at least two perspectives: the rejection of the nationally-constituted society as the appropriate object of discourse, or unit of social and cultural analysis, and to varying degrees, a commitment to conceptualising 'the world as a whole'” (ix).

Post-structural theories centered around “nomad thought” find that the dissolution of bonds between the state and the individual are a positive development. Christopher Miller describes the postmodern, fragmented individual as one who chooses to live independently, or in spite of, the nation-state (7). Futoransky’s work exhibits aspects of “nomad thought,” a theoretical departure from traditional identity constructs, that pioneers Gilles Deleuze and Pierre-Félix Guattari coined as “individuality free from the confines of Identity” (Deleuze and Guattari *back cover*).

Even as the ties between state and the individual have diminished, the importance of place and its effect/affect on the individual has grown. Since the early 1990’s, space has become a popular topic, and literary critics have adapted theories from the fields of

geography, anthropology, and cultural studies to explain the relevance and import of the individual's position and movement within space. Part of the relatively recent interest in space and place seeks to define the post-modern individual from a globalized, international perspective.

Susan Carvalho offers a significant theory of nomadism that helps to understand itinerant literature. The female nomadic model can be evaluated on the basis of: autonomous movement, subversion of traditional female roles, place, the re/creation of domestic spaces, and sexual independence. Some of these features, considered alongside McClennen's four-pronged approach, allow for a more comprehensive reading of Futoransky's peripatetic, exilic poetry.

Because modern novels place great import on setting, juxtaposing its qualities and influence against the human characters or against the mental or emotional state of the subjects, Carvalho proposes that we read novels according to their "*geoplots*: the discussion of places, and of character's literal situation in a given place" (97-98). The *geoplot* takes into account the spatial representation of power, as well as the character's interaction with and reaction to place. Geographer Liz Bondi concurs, stating that the question of "Who am I?" can be discussed from the starting point of "Where am I? (98). The place a subject occupies reflects her mental state, desires, and direction in life (Bondi 98). Does the subject occupy a sterile city in the U.S., a grand metropolis, or a remote, charming town? A popular theory expressed by geographers and philosophers, articulated by Carvalho, is that place not only helps to shape behavior, but also is the element against which the characters choose either to "conform to those expectations or to seek options – or sites – for counter-actions" (Bondi 97).

To interpret the significance of the journey through a *geoplot*, Carvalho suggests a two-pronged approach: evaluate the journey in spatial and symbolic terms. The journey takes on multiple and sometimes interchangeable meanings: spatially, the places visited inscribe the subject with elements of power and identity, while symbolically, the act of travel and exploration denotes an act of independence and self-creation. A primary component of the *geoplot* is autonomy, or the degree to which a woman determines her movement in space (Carvalho 98). Here, the female subject moves about in space that was traditionally controlled by patriarchal systems (Carvalho 98). Where is the subject coming from and going to? The second element of the *geoplot* involves Rosi Braidotti's concept of nomadism, summarized by Carvalho (98) as "the shedding of bonds, abandoning the constriction of women's traditional roles as wife, mother, and supporter." This is a metaphoric condition more than a physical act: "it is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of traveling" (Braidotti 5). An additional element of *geoplot* relates to the literal and symbolic creation of home. Having broken from the confines of the home, how does the nomad define her new place of refuge? "The issues of autonomy and of nomadism involve both the articulation of independence, and also a re-visioning of the concept of "home" " (Carvalho 98). By leaving home, a realm that has defined and been defined by women, a woman asserts her desire for independence and a non-traditional life outside the constraints of domestic responsibilities.

McClennen points out that some theories on nomadism are problematic. In regard to nationalism, some theorists like Deleuze and Guattari claim that the nomad is free of the bonds of nation, but McClennen finds exilic literature to have strong ties to nation. In

addition, she argues that the postmodern literary definition of a free-wandering nomad does not fit the anthropological nomad who follows a prescribed, seasonal route (McClennen 62). However, the nomadic ideal can be a mental state rather than a physical ambulation, as referred to earlier in this piece (Braidotti 5).

Returning to the modernist viewpoint, American Palestinian intellectual Edward Said clarifies the dialectic of nationalism and exile: “Nationalism is an assertion of belonging to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture, and customs; and by so doing, it fends off the ravages of exile” (Said 50). Exile is the absence of one’s cultural group, language and geography.

For Futoransky to successfully negotiate a new identity apart from that of her homeland, it is necessary to see Argentina objectively. The poem “Época de lluvia” (*El corazón de los lugares*, 1964) reveals Futoransky’s ambivalence towards and eventual dismissal of Argentina. While the title of the book underscores the importance of place – the heart of places - it will later become apparent that place is transmutable. By tearing down the nationalistic ideal and seeing the reality of Argentina, Futoransky begins to separate from her homeland:

El trópico se desliza.  
 Hendida en su equilibrio  
 la ciudad recupera el color de la muerte.  
 Yo  
 sin lugar donde ocultar el límite del temor. (11)

The poetic subject looks out over the landscape and pronounces:

Paso a paso me derramo por ciudades que debería amar.  
 Pero olvidará la piedra su contracción  
 antes de que podamos entendernos. (15)

Hoy todo ha fermentado  
 .....  
 América, primitiva, cruel e ignorante  
 Tiende aún sus brazos a quienes intenten comprender. (17)  
 .....  
 Tierra de nadie que yo he visto y me duele  
 hasta confundir el corazón de los lugares  
 Tierra de nadie de la que no quiero partir. (19)

Within the South American landscape, the poet searches for “una voz que sea la voz auténtica” (García Pinto 5). The poem, “El gigante” demands an answer:

Dame la voz  
 oh, América! (23)

Later she continues in a scornful tone:

En esta hora de aflicción sorprendo  
 confundida en sus cloacas fronterizas  
 el limitado vientre ciudadano:  
 palpo la traición.

Luego, me falta voz  
 para sobrevivir en los convites  
 y hablar de la buena tierra de promesas. (29)  
 .....  
 Gigante sin dientes,  
 América,  
 hasta cuándo? (43)

During this period, from the 1930’s through the 1960’s (and lasting until 1983), Argentina had been a country rife with political warring between the Peronistas and the opposition parties. Bombings, coups d’état, and kidnappings compound the social and economic problems that plagued the country. The promise of “buena tierra” is nowhere to be found, and she leaves.

García Pinto points out that the rupture between the individual and the nation continues in *Babel, Babel* (1968) in the poem “Llanos el sur” (reprinted in *Antología*

*Poética*, 1996). In this poem, Futoransky transforms the countryside, culture, and symbols of Argentina into a horrific site of secrets and crime:

los calmos bergantines las flores más sangrientas los  
 lienzos  
 de la discordia los panes del milagro

adjetivos y ritos profusamente iluminados  
 por la luz mala y fosforescente de la corrupto

.....  
 extensión de la condena soledad es tu nombre  
 los vientos fatigados se detienen a contemplarse en tus  
 riachos  
 pampa de la desesperanza

(Futoransky, *Antología* 18)

Although Argentina plays a role in Futoransky's psychic make-up, as she travels to foreign lands and lives abroad – in Israel, the Far East, Rome, Paris – new places take on greater significance. The importance of the journey and place is at the forefront of her poetry. Moving away from the stasis of nationalism, Carvalho's construct of nomadism explains Futoransky's approach to identity and power within an itinerant lifestyle.

### III. Language

Francine Masiello relates Futoransky's use of language to a nomad's poetics: "Restless, multivocal, mobile, with phrases built from the experience of displacement, her lyrics bring forward an aching reserve of feelings that express loss and betrayal, a constant movement from place to place. . . . Imagined poetic geographies convey this ongoing loss. Borders are opened, the map is decentered, and the cardinal points of the globe are purposefully confused." (42). In some ways, Futoransky's poetics reflect postmodern dilemmas and in others she critiques the "modernist insistence on a single law of desire" (Masiello 42). Recovery of the motherland is the modernist desire: an irrecoverable loss, many would say. Futoransky, however, chooses something different: a reinterpretation of home within a changing geography. Through language, Futoransky links herself to the places she has lived, a connectivity that respects both her past and present.

One salient aspect of Futoransky's work is the presence of words from Lunfardo, the regional dialect of the Buenos Aires/Río del Plata zone, which links her back to Argentina. Lunfardo remains basically unchanged since she left in the 1970's. It is not surprising that this poet would continue to employ a language that comes from the underworld of the *Puerto*, a patois virtually indecipherable to the outsider. As with any language formed by the influence of numerous tongues, many of the words have multiple linguistic influences, but some are formed through the use of metaphor (e.g. *ventana* 'eye') and *verse* (i.e. *revés*) to create new words. As John Grayson explains, *verse*

disguises a word from standard language by the displacement of its syllables (e.g. *diome* ‘medio,’ *estroma* ‘maestro,’ *choma* ‘maestro’) (55). Futoransky’s mother tongue creates a place of security amidst foreign lands and cultures: “el castellano en su variante dialectal porteña opera como suplemento ante la pérdida de un territorio, convirtiéndose en única residencia posible en el momento del des/encuentro con el “otro,” con las otras lenguas y sus respectivas geografías y culturas” (Sarabia 153). Perhaps this statement overlooks an important characteristic of Futoransky’s use of language, a mischievousness that explains the use of anachronistic words and phrases. The poet concedes that part of her linguistic style is motivated by play (Corbatta 593). The mixed heritage and pure inventiveness of Lunfardo adds another dimension to Futoransky’s cryptic and, at times, ironic work.

In addition to the Spanish of Buenos Aires, the poet incorporates words from French, English, Italian, Hebrew and Yiddish. This is the nomadic poetics that Pierre Joris describes: “A nomadic poetics will cross languages, not just translate, but write in all or any of them” (5). Futoransky creates a new poetic discourse through the incorporation of foreign words, evoking multiple voices and cultures.

The inclusion of foreign words and phrases can be seen as creative and rebellious. By breaking from the traditional mother tongue and writing in a variety of languages, the poet breaks the constraints of the familial and the nation-state (Joris 7). More than one critic has noted the anti-authoritarian style of Futoransky’s writing: “Es ante todo una insolencia ante lo heredado: la ineficacia de la palabra consagrada, las frases hechas, la gramática y sus reglas como lenguaje poético elocuente. Situarse en el presente. Acercarse más al ser y menos al parecer.” (cited in Horno-Delgado 29).

“Por la tribu,” from her 1972 *poemario*, pays homage to those who fought but are not celebrated. From the rebels to the fighters, the exiled and the disappeared - the young and vibrant people who were silenced by indifference, expulsion or death:

Aquí inicio mi homenaje ante la tumba del soldado desconocido,  
y continuar con todos los otros que no se cubrieron de gloria  
ni marchas escolares porque son de otro país,  
el país mío de héroes a la violeta; (Futoransky, *Regado* 88)

This group of outsiders, although loosely assembled, is tightly linked: “que nadie huye de su tribu, / el país habitado por los que estamos en el límite” (*Regado* 89). “Tribe” evokes Jewish and Ancient history, as well as modern anthropological models of primitive societies: the Twelve Tribes of Israel, thirty-five tribes of the Roman Assembly, a pre-state society based primarily on kinship, a mobile clan. Common to Futoransky’s work: the mystical and preternatural are part of the tribe:

La tribu también tuvo y tiene –background que le dicen–,  
derviches solitarios, como quienes defienden  
su capacidad de decir NO,  
o el que pasearon (ignoren aquí el resto) encerrado en una jaula  
y todavía se bebe toda la tristeza del mundo en las tardes de rapallo  
o el cesare de verá la morte que no pudo con ella  
al no encontrar letreros indicadores, tregua ni pecho fraterno,  
solo la cuerda floja para abrazarse el rencor. (Regado 90)

Che Guevara is emblematic of the struggle against evil: “los que cayeron juntos a todos los che de la historia / que exigen venganza, o al menos que continuemos el trabajo [. . . ] por eso ánimo” (*Regado* 90-91). Some of Futoransky’s poetic themes signal an identification with those on the fringes and non-conformists, and this affinity is reflected in a break from traditional discursive forms.

Futoransky's work is bound together by opposing forces of flight and rest (Masiello 42): the alternate use of punctuation and word spacing to create stops and starts in the sounds of the language. "Por la tribu" contains similar characteristics that Pierre Joris finds in Pablo Picasso's writing: "syntactic and grammatical manipulations [that] free it from a range of traditional constraints" (5). "Por la tribu" is comprised of long sentences, punctuated with commas and semi-colons to keep the momentum going, like a chant or a song, and the lines adhere to no formal structure. To use Joris's term, the poetry is "unhampered by the sedentarizing effects of normative grammar, syntax and discursive forms" (115). Another feature that destabilizes traditional poetry is the omission of capital letters for places such Rapallo, Madrid and Kamchatka or for people such as Marylin, Ernesto, Hendrix and Miguel. Rejection of standard nominal capitalization alters the perception of the words and confuses the reader. Futoransky also includes words and phrases from English: "and so one" and "background," as well as Portuguese: "pai do santo, dennos el corpo feichado simplemente" (*Regado* 90-91). She engages the reader in deciphering the meaning of words and phrases. For example, "los morituri hace tiempo que perdieron el / respeto / y no saludan más" (*Regado* 91). Morituri is a reference to an obscure passage in Roman literature wherein gladiators are saluted in the ring prior to battle: those not saluted are spared from death. The inclusion of arcane, pop culture and literary allusions creates a rich tapestry of meaning. It is poetry for a new millennium.

Connectivity and heterogeneity, characteristics that Joris links with nomadic writing (*Nomadic Poetics* 116), are common in Futoransky's work. In "Kriti", the island of Crete, she portrays visits to the cities of Chaniá and Rethymno and the Monastery of

Toplu, site of the ancient Roman civilization. She pays homage to the long-gone culture with a series of nouns heaped upon the island like gifts: “remonté palabras / joyas / lapizlázuli / esmeralda / uva pasa / esplendor de los olivares: / herida de belleza” (*La Parca* 10). It does not connote that one word is more important than another, leaving the reader to assign import to them. The listing of words, objects, feelings without hierarchical structures conveys a rhizomatic sensibility (Joris 116).

The distrust of the establishment and break with the nation-state that is found in Futoransky’s writing can be traced back to her childhood in Argentina. The poem “Nóminas” is one in which “Lo cotidiano provoca el recuerdo de lo político y la experiencia de los límites más inmorales del peronismo que ocupa el territorio de la lengua materna” (Nofal 79). Futoransky incorporates multiple voices and inscriptions to form a multilayered work that makes the past feel immediate. Someone whispers: “Shh miedo que te denuncien por decir lo que pensabas” (*Inclinaciones* 49), the crowd shouts, “¡Perón Perón muera!” (*Inclinaciones* 49), and the graffiti on a wall of the streetcar station says: “alpargatas sí libros no, y haga patria mate un judío” (*Inclinaciones* 50). Slogans like this one and variations such as “alpargatas sí libros no, haga patria, mate un estudiante” date back to 1946, part of the right-wing response to the anti-Peronist student uprising, as well as the anti-Semitic movement among German nationalists (*El ortiba*). Futoransky reinterprets these sites of power and conflict and recasts them in a sardonic tone: “el general de labio leporino y bigotito para / esconderlo, la suspensión de libertades, todo eso / Sin solución de continuidad / La ley más fuerte” (*Inclinaciones* 50). Again, the lack of commas and the hanging lines start and stop the sentence in a way that

defamiliarizes words and sentences. Futoransky's use of altered language and syntax, tone, and multiple voices in "Nóminas" challenges the seat of tyranny and power.

Beyond the natural tendency to represent opposing forces, Futoransky creates a new female lyrical voice by bringing to her writing women's perspectives and by using intertextuality to subvert masculine norms (Sarabia 101). She paints the familiar, everyday in a palette that allows us to see it anew, often incorporating household language into her texts. In Futoransky's poetic discourse, "sayings, refrains and set phrases are subverted through the process of de-familiarization" (Sarabia 101). "La vida cotidiana exige una gran concentración y gestos muy precisos para no / guardar las cartas de amor en la nevera, poner sal gruesa en el café" ("Amor de Omar – Ramo de mora en Roma" *Cortezas*, 23).

In another juxtaposition of traditional roles, the poem "Circería," imagines the perspectives of two female characters from the *Odyssey*. The reader is presented with alternative readings of the powerful witch, Circe, and of Penelope, the faithful wife of Odysseus.

A estos hombres  
 los transformé en versitos  
 y los confiné en libros y revistas  
 porque, con los tiempos  
 que corren, no es cosa  
 de andar encima procurándoles bellotas  
 ni margaritas, para los días  
 de guardar.

En cuanto a Ulises, ése, de Ítaca,  
 díganle que de áspides, sapos  
 y mastodontes como él  
 tengo llena la sartén.  
 Además, el juego (circense)  
 de las resurrecciones  
 no es más una especialidad mía.

Yo ahora, tejo.  
 Créanme. (Sanguina 52)

Contrary to the traditional reading of the *Odyssey*, this poem evokes a sense of empathy for Circe, and allows the reader to see the cunning side of Penelope. One thing the female characters both have in common is that they speak of men as objects to be reduced, transformed and contained. By supplementing and expanding the characterization of these two female mythological figures, Futoransky offers up an alternative reading of the *Odyssey*.

The role of writing in Futoransky's itinerate lifestyle is summed up by Rossanna Nofal: "El sujeto poético es, fundamentalmente, un sujeto inmigrante, despojado de las certezas de una permanencia e invadido por el recuerdo de un punto de origen, sus marcas y sus pesadillas. El mundo se ha convertido en un caos, sólo la escritura permanece en el lugar de las raíces, en el lugar de los significados subterráneos" (77) . The poet uses multiple languages and unconventional grammatical structures to create a new poetry. The break from straightforward constructs signals a rupture with her homeland of Argentina and an affirmation of her moveable home within a global geography.

#### **IV. Time**

Concepts and representations of time are altered upon exile. Certain critics note that geographic displacement results in a temporal displacement for the exile. The exile classifies time as before leaving – ideal or *ben temps* vs. after leaving – isolation and sadness (Gurr 11). The homeland is stuck in time, forever remembered as it was when the person left it, even though years have passed. Remembered events in the past may commingle with events taking place in current time, splicing time. In an effort to cope with the destabilizing effects of exile, writers often turn to alternate representations of time to “fix” their place in the world.

If the exiles have the opportunity to return to their country, the changes that have taken place in their absence alter it to such a degree that they may still feel that they do not belong, as Marina Tsvetaeva felt upon her return to the Soviet Union. McClennen notes that exiles are cast out of their nation’s present historical time (75). Suspension of linear time leads to consideration of cyclical/primordial time, linking exiles across the ages, as Futoransky does with her mythological references, and a sense of relative/fractured time.

Time takes on a different feel when interpreted by Futoransky. Masiello sees two forces at work in her poetry, flight and stillness, a contrast that plays out in spatial movement/stillness and temporal conceptions: “The horizontal time of being in the world – collecting and assembling feelings, voicing strongly disparate thoughts – versus the vertical time of reflection that brings stillness and order to events, situating them in

history and assigning them emotional depth” (Masiello 43). Present and remembered time parallel one another in “Guía aleatoria y sentimental de Fontainebleau.” In the grand French Chateau de Fontainebleau, the tour guide’s mention of “pasamanería” sends the lyrical subject into a memory of herself as a child, helping her mother assemble curtains in their home. “sí, solitaria, Ella, la / palabra *pasamanería* [que despierta a mamá, colocando cortinas / en la sala” (*Duration* 56). The poem returns abruptly to present-time, with the narrator in the map room, and then in the pavilion. The rapid jump in time and place induces vertigo in the reader. Multiple time frames run through the poem, from the narrator’s present time, to her imagination of future time, as well as her history and France’s history: “de tarde en tarde me relaciono contigo y con la historia previo pago del relativamente módico billete de admission” (*Duration* 56).

According to exiled Russian poet Joseph Brodsky, the writers removed from their home country often feel irrelevant (103). To justify their existence, they may identify themselves with “a triumphant ideology or a restored people” (Said 51). Removed temporally and spatially, does identification with the mythological and historical project Futoransky into timelessness?

The characters that populate Futoransky’s poetry are diverse: from Odysseus to Rigoletto to Casandra. Figures of Greek mythology, operatic personalities, and female archetypes lend universal themes to her work. The body of Futoransky’s work has multiple Odyssean and nautical references and tropes. Nofal observes a relation between Ulysses’ departure from Troy and Futoransky’s departure from Argentina in “Probable olvido de Ítaca” (Nofal 79):

Las pequeñas historias, los lugares, rostros, y olores  
se asesinan, los unos a los otros.

Un país se te encima al de ayer,  
 un rasguño puede escamotearte la gran cicatriz.  
 La palabra entonces, suele convertirse  
 en un vicio vergonzante de soledad.  
 ¡Y qué te resta, luego de tanta frágil arrogancia!  
 Descubriste el vacío en todo vértigo  
 y sin inmutarte cargas el sino que te corresponde:  
 tu sitio, ya lo sabes,  
 partió cuando llegaste.

(*Duration 50*)

Ulysses eventually reaches land, but Futoransky's poetic subject is unable to do so because the destination continually departs upon arrival. Memories are fleeting, each new place erasing memories of the old one, as Nofal (79) underscores: "Rasguño y cicatriz, resta y arrogancia, partida y llegada son dicotomías perturbantes. La palabra, en tanto "vicio vergonzante de soledad" remite a dos posiciones, a dos formas del contenido: la cabeza erguida y la cabeza agachada, el fatum y la derrota." The words that Nofal uses to summarize the poem, *derrota* and *fatum*, represent the essence of the poetic subject's voyage. *Derrota* has two distinct and relevant definitions: "rumbo o dirección que llevan en su navegación las embarcaciones" and "destruir, arruinar a alguien en la salud o en los bienes" (*Diccionario Real Academia Española*). Ocean voyages conjure up vestiges of centuries past, linking Futoransky with the travels of Ulysses as well as with her Jewish grandparents who made the transatlantic journey for the relative safety of Argentina. *Derrota*: memory is destroyed. The experiences of a new country erase those of the one before. *The fatum*, or destiny, of Ulysses and the subject of "Olvido" are fated to wander in search of home.

A poem that marries the everyday with the mythical, "Casandra: Veinte años después, tus ojos son como tigres," is based on the mythical persona whose beauty so charmed Apollo that he granted her the power of prophecy. The tragedy of Cassandra is

that no one believed her predictions, due to a curse that Apollo applied after she did not return his love. The lyrical subject, grounded in the monotony of everyday life, is inspired by the seductive qualities of the “she-tiger,” Cassandra, and compares them ironically to her own:

La fiera de estirpe sabe esperar  
 aprendo  
 me esmalto las uñas con laca amarronada de Mary Quant  
 tomo somníferos con cerveza  
 – por si alguna vez me dan un resultado espectacular – (Duration 44)

Forgetting is often a welcome occurrence, for its power to temper the pain of nostalgia:

un color dulce de olvido y de nostalgia por el estuario del río llamado  
 de la Plata  
 .....  
 Por tus ojos, Casandra, pasa el fuego del olvido  
 y es la venganza;  
 la venganza que buscaste, obstinada, por la geografía  
 para desmentir / te que eras tan sólo  
 una perseguidora de ayer y de viento. (Duration 46)

Identification with the mythical female figure links her with a long historical tradition and an eternal significance. This serves as a counter-balance to spatio-temporal displacement.

In “The Concrete and the Metaphoric Discourse of Exile,” Ute Stock explores the tension between exilic memory and imagination in the work of exiled Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva. She cites Elisabeth Bronfen’s definition of a dual discourse in exilic poetry, which aptly describes Futransky’s style: “the concrete confrontation of the individual experience and the simultaneous transposition of exile to a metaphoric plane, which draws on myth in order to sublimate displacement” (quoted in Stock 673). Stock’s term, *mythopoetics*, when applied to Futransky’s work, unifies intimate and collective concepts in her poetry.

Nofal explains that Futoransky “construye un culto a la memoria” (77). According to the critic, the poetic subject lives a past that is not integrated with the present. Her writing is dominated by memory that she cannot control. Involuntarily, she condemns herself to the anguish of a rambling eternity without remedy (Nofal 77). I find that Nofal’s assessment of the author and memory is problematic. Rather than an uncontrollable trap, memories, more precisely, exist in a parallel world to that of present action and real and imaginary places. This unique interfacing is a realistic reflection of the “infinitely complex effects of displacement” (Stock 776).

As in the fore mentioned poem, “Casandra,” the theme of forgetting is just as common in the poet’s work as the theme of remembering. Masiello confirms that “Futoransky refuses the turn to nostalgia; she rejects any containment or longing for place” (50). “Tremenda caperucita” reveals the subject’s view of the dubious nature of memory:

La memoria, la vejez  
 son países de inviernos excesivos,  
 vastos  
 monocromos  
 de ruinas y naufragios  
 sumergidos  
 en mares encrespados

países de ciudadelas  
 fortines  
 circos  
 murallas  
 colosales  
 des/construcciones

*(Inclinaciones 14)*

. . . .

*Abuelita*  
*¿lobo*  
*estás?*

*(Inclinaciones 15)*

Memory, like old buildings, is slowly eroded over time. Like old age, the destruction of memory is inescapable, and the poet accepts this reality.

## V. Space, Place and Identity

Spatial theories abound in the fields of Anthropology, Geography and other social sciences. The impact of space on humans has been a popular topic since the 1970's, and a growing body of work points to its relevance in everything from politics to consumers to literature. Theories from the field of Geography help to decipher the meanings bound together with space and place and their implications for the individual and for literature. Place is prominent in Futoransky's writing, both as muse and destination.

In Michel de Certeau's influential book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, the French philosopher explores the way in which people navigate their daily activities and *environs*. Certeau views place as a fixed configuration of stable objects, and space as a populated area alive with "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables" (117). In his view, people give life to inanimate place, creating space. Geographer Doreen Massey suggests a definition for place that is akin to Certeau's definition of space: instead of "thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent" (154).

Edward Soja calls for greater scholarly attention to the significance of space: "the spatial dimension of our lives has never been of greater practical and political relevance than it is today" (1). Soja's theory, which serves as inspiration for Carvalho's *geoplot*

model, proposes a reading of space on par with societal and historical interpretations, the two most commonly utilized perspectives (2). This *Thirdspace*, or spatiality, allows a reading of political, social, geographical, authoritative and environmental themes on a scale ranging from intimate to global (Soja 1). The implications of place, once recognized, become an indispensable tool for deciphering meaning.

Futoransky's work is rooted in spatial relationships. Buenos Aires, Paris, New York City, Peking, Rome, Tokyo, Dublin, Lisbon, Bali, Switzerland, the islands of Crete and Ithaca are some of the numerous *loci* that Futoransky has journeyed: "She composes her stories around international itineraries with historical, religious and literary landmarks in which Paris figures always as a desire and often as a destination" (Schwartz 171).

Paris, Futoransky's chosen home since 1981, is featured prominently in her work. It is the subject of numerous poems, a poetry collection titled *París, desvelos y quebrantos* and is the destination of her second novel, *De Pe a Pa: De Pekín a París*. Nofal states that Futoransky's obsession with Paris is a parallel to her obsession with Buenos Aires (77). Futoransky confirms the influence of Buenos Aires in her introduction to *Inclinaciones*. "Es de Buenos Aires, mi ciudad, de donde me viene lo mejor de mí que son mis palabras y el modo de ovillarlas" (9). The Arrogant City is present as an inspirational and defining character for Futoransky. "De ahí también nace la manera que tengo de ser y de no ser feliz. . ." (9). The fixation may also reflect an attempt to find identity in home in accordance with Nicholas Entrikin's view of home as source of identity, or a "re-visioning" of home as suggested by Carvalho's nomadic theory, in which the nomadic subject asserts her independence and re-creates the concept of home.

Futoransky's relationship to Paris is complex and contradictory. Schwartz explores how the author confronts the myth and the lived reality of Paris: "Futoransky's work positions Paris as a cultural and geographical hub but refutes its promise of 'cultural' prestige and sensual pleasure" (171). The poem "Paris, la impostura," reveals her frustration with the City of Lights:

Tacaña, negligente, estreñida  
 envidiada,  
 La más grácil sin esfuerzo  
 ninguneadora, bella de lejos  
 parís encubridora  
 recluida en su propio delirio de grandeza  
 .....  
 no sé si te quise o quiero, todavía. (*Inclinaciones* 59)

In other poems about Paris, Futoransky seems to appreciate the dirty, insipid reality of Paris: "Insomnia en la Rue de Charenton" is an homage to the early morning noises of her street. It ends with the line, "oh Paris la nuit" (*Duration* 38). This may be what Masiello refers to as "a sense of fulfillment in the tiniest realm of quiet that is momentarily claimed as home" (42). In the titular poem that follows, the poetic subject enjoys the seedy aspects of a sleepy Paris:

qué hermosas las ciudades cuando despiertan  
 ingobernables  
 lagañosas  
 adormiladas  
 negociando borrando  
 latrocinios  
 los grados todos del gris  
 al amarillo violento del neón (*París, desvelos y quebrantos* 15)

There is an implicit importance of place, as defined by Soja, along with relative interpretations of space based upon nomadic and exilic criticism. According to Entrikin, for exiles, place, which "represents both a context for action and a source of identity," is

crucial to identity and action, because they are separated from it (12). In absentia, the home left behind levies perspective and influence upon the author's work.

One of the problems with her new home is the sense of 'otherness.' The poem continues:

soy tierra prometida  
 en París, la impostura  
 soy rosa estaqueada y a la merced  
 de las Corrientes  
 instrumento marino  
 me llaman la blancura de Jutlandia [a Danish ship]

(*París, desvelos y quebrantos* 16)

The ambiance of Paris seems to reinforce the sense of otherness or foreignness that the poet feels.

The poem "Soportales" addresses the search for a utopic space, referencing Old Testament narratives: "Todos tenemos un Egipto que abandonar / y un prometido Edén / para esperar / tiritando / la vana primavera" (*Inclinaciones*, 64). Jewish history is echoed in the individual flight from one place in search of another. The poetic subject shivers in the cold spring of Paris, indicating an imperfect or, as yet unrealized Eden.

What Schwartz says about Futoransky's novels holds true for her poetry: "Futoransky's novels continually expose the particularity of place through ethnographic observation. She interprets an array of cultural practices – from ancient sacred rites to contemporary international tourism and petty office politics – to analyze modern urban nomadism with an ironic social relativity" (Schwartz 172). One of the features of her narration is what Michel de Certeau identifies as the walking tour. This way of writing about space involves "transmuting communication into a visual journey" (Certeau xxi).

Futoransky chronicles her visits to tourist sites with biting commentaries. In “Crema catalana,” Futoransky searches for her roots in a Hebrew cemetery in Cataluña: “En Gerona delectré nombres de pila / en antiguas lápidas hebreas” (*La Parca* 14). Later, she drinks and eats to excess with her hosts, “con quienes cambiamos fugaces nomenclaturas / de muertos que remiten inexorables a otros muertos, / más podridos, feroces y privados” (14). The self-loathing and disappointment this produces is reflected in the glass as she rides out of Girona on a bus: “... la visión del filme, cartilaginoso e / informe que produzco siempre en las fatigosas paralelas / de las autorruas (*La Parca* 14). She is alone with her visage and “con la dolida y perfumada vara de la palabra / *desconegut*, desconocida, palpitando en el regazo” (*La Parca* 14). In Catalán, *desconegut* means “unknown.” She feels both the pain and the sweetness of being an unknown, rootless nomad.

She clearly sees herself as an outsider, at once a part of the thronging masses but with a self-awareness that allows her to see her own voyeuristic presence. Masiello notes that “the tourist is tired from looking at so much history” (Masiello 46).

Gurr draws parallels between home and history, as a way in which we define ourselves. Our sense of self is often tied up in our set of experiences, and so it makes sense that the search for identity would start with remembering the past (10). But Futoransky’s work is much more a work of immediacy and re-creation. The places she visits are always replacing and erasing the ones before them (as in “Probable olvido de Ítaca”). “The nomad does not stand for homelessness, or compulsive displacement; it is rather a figuration for the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity” (Braidotti 22). Futoransky does not dwell on the past, but is

permanently marked by it. The *geoplot* that she charts is an affirmation of global culture and life and a search for meaning in the religious, historical, and literary sites of the world. Place inscribes upon the subject the multiple meanings associated with the cities and sites that she visits. By reading Futoranksy vis-à-vis the *geoplot*, we find a subject who has created herself polyglot, global and universal.

## VI. Conclusion

García Pinto (5) claims that Futoransky's journey begins in South America with *Lo regado por lo seco* (1972) and ends in Jerusalem, in the poem "Jerusa de mi amor" from *Cortezas y Fulgores* (1997). The poem's narrator visits Israel, a land that attracts her heart, but in the end, she rejects the senseless bigotry of the Holy Land (Futoransky, *Duration* 86-95). Her journey does not end here:

ay jerusa de mi corazón, la de Jesús y de Jesús, la de anémonas  
violentas y viejos que divagan doloridos de incoherencia en el asilo  
tan soleado

.....  
y qué decir del concepto de 'elegido'  
fuente donde abreven las sinrazones todas  
las injusticias  
los cuadriculados, los pozos  
los dameros envenenados, los duelos sin consuelo,  
dalia te aparto, te compadezco, suavemente  
y agito mi pañuelo de me voy

(*Duration* 90)

The ceaseless search for identity or for home found in Futoransky's poetry is a universal and eternally relatable theme. Asunción Horno-Delgado affirms that "la herida/la pérdida es una de las metáforas relevantes del imaginario judío, así como el nomadismo y la función primordial del conocimiento en aras al cambio y la cercanía a la divinidad" (29).

The search for home may be a metaphor for the search for wisdom, contentment and self-healing. Thus, the following poem, "Plena primavera," should be read not as a return to an actual house, but as a figurative sense of self and security:

Cuando sepa  
 qué es casa  
 qué es volver  
 voy a  
 volver a casa

mejor  
 en plena primavera  
 pero si tiene que ser ya  
 dejo de lado la exigencia  
 sol perfumando azahar y brisa tibiecitos  
 bastan

que yo lo vea

(*Inclinaciones* 11)

Perhaps the most trustworthy geography of all is the human body, what Adrienne Rich would call the “geography closest in” (212). The reader is drawn in to the poet’s exploration of and acceptance of self, in the poem, “Arrugas”:

la piel de las manos concibe enrevesados ideogramas  
 que descifro con paciencia

desmañada  
 brillante  
 loca de exaltación y de soberbia  
 o avasallada de dolor hasta el espanto

soy la que soy

(*El diván* 11)

By looking to her own body for identity, the narrator finds ‘home.’ For the reader, this portrait is an example of one of the compelling features of Futoransky’s work: the revelation of a person at her most human and vulnerable.

In “nomad thought” the exile is free of the bonds of nation. Outside of the nationalistic discursive framework, how does the nomad define self? City dweller, woman, Jewish, traveler, nomad, poet, writer. Chantal Mouffe affirms that “we are in fact always multiple and contradictory subjects, inhabitants of a diversity of communities . . . constructed by a variety of discourses and precariously and temporarily sutured at the

intersection of those positions” (44). Indeed Futoransky is not anchored by a single identity or community, but by a multiplicity of times and places.

What many consider to be the crisis of identity brought on by migration “may lead to real catastrophe or just the opposite: successful, creative development and its deeper significance, the enrichment of ‘rebirth’” (Grinberg 3). Rabi David Wolpe has said, “What loss cries for is not to be fixed or to be explained, but to be shared and eventually, to find its way to meaning. Making loss meaningful is not making loss disappear. The loss endures, and time will not change that truth. But now it has some purpose” (quoted in Horno-Delgado 30). By sharing herself through poetry and prose, Futoransky allows the loss to have a transformative affect. Futoransky’s poetry is an affirmation of a self that is defined by loss, travel and reinvention. A few lines from Ezra Pound that Futoransky included in “Casandra: Veinte años después, tus ojos son cómo tigres,” summarizes her approach to identity:

What thou lov’st well shall not be left from thee  
 What thou lov’st well is thy true heritage

*(Duration 44)*

## WORKS CITED

- Agosín, Marjorie. *Amigas: Letters of Friendship and Exile: Marjorie Agosín and Emma Sepúlveda*. Trans. Bridget M. Morgan. 1st ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- American Heritage*. "The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language." Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- Bondi, Liz. "Locating Identity Politics." *Place and the Politics of Identity*. Ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile. London: Routledge, 1993. 84-101.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Brodsky, Joseph. "The Condition We Call 'Exile.'" *Literature in Exile*. Ed. John Glad. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990. 100-09.
- Carvalho, Susan. "Going Home Again: Space and Place in Marcela Serrano's *El albergue de las mujeres tristes* y *Lo que está en mi corazón*." *Letras Femeninas* 33.1 (2007): 97-118.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven F. Randall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Cooppan, Vilashini. "World Literature and Global Theory: Comparative Literature for the New Millennium" *smyploke* 9.1-2 (2001): 15-43.
- Corbatta, Jorgelina. "Reportaje a Luisa Futoransky (París, Junio 2, 2002)." *Revista iberoamericana* 70 (2004): 581-96.
- Deleuze, Félix and Gilles Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Diccionario Real Academia Española: Diccionario de la lengua española*. Ed. Real Academia Española. Madrid, Espana: Real Academia Española, 2001.

- Dionis, Margarita Lacabe and Gregorio. "Argentina: Derechos Humanos". 2009. Derechos humanos/ Human Rights. Equipo Nizkor. February 21 2009. <<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/arg/eng.html>>.
- Entrikin, Nicholas. *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity*. London: Macmillan, 1991.
- Futoransky, Luisa. *Babel, Babel*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones la loca poesía, 1968.
- . *El corazón de los lugares*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Perrot, 1964.
- . *Cortezas y fulgores*. Abacete, Spain: Barcarola, 1997.
- . *El diván de la puerta dorada*. Madrid: Editorial Torremozas, 1984.
- . *The Duration of the Voyage: Selected Poems*. Ed. Trans. Jason Weiss. San Diego: Junction Press, 1997.
- . *Inclinaciones*. 1st. ed. Buenos Aires: Leviatán, 2006.
- . *Lo regado por lo seco*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Noé, 1972.
- . *Luisa Futoransky: Antología poética*. Buenos Aires: Fondo Nacional de las Artes, 1996.
- . "La melancolía de las panteras negras." *Verba hispánica* 5 (1995): 101-08.
- . *La Parca, enfrente*. Buenos Aires: Libros de Tierra Firme, 1995.
- . *París desvelos y quebrantos*. New York: Pen Press, 2000.
- . *De Pe a Pa: De Pekín a París*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1986.
- . *La sanguina*. Barcelona: Ediciones Taifa, 1987.
- García Pinto, Magdalena. "Las moradas del exilio: La poesía de Luisa Futoransky." *Confluencia* 14 (1999): 3-11.
- Glad, John. "Preface." *Literature in Exile*. Ed. John Glad. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990. vii-xiii.
- Grinberg, León and Rebeca Grinberg. *Psychoanalytical Perspectives on Migration and Exile*. Trans. Nancy Festinger. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989.

- Grayson, John D. "Lunfardo, Argentina's Unknown Tongue." *Hispania* 47.1 (Mar 1964): 66-8.
- Gurr, Andrew. *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981.
- Horno-Delgado, Asunción. "Luisa Futoransky: llamada urgente." *Luisa Futoransky y su palabra itinerante*. Ed. Ester Gimbernat González. Montevideo, Uruguay: Ediciones de Hermes Criollo, 2005. 29-40.
- Joris, Pierre. *A Nomad Poetics*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.
- Kaminsky, Amy. *After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- King, Anthony D., ed. Introduction. *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System*. Binghamton, N.Y.: Department of Art and Art History, State University of New York at Binghamton Press, 1991.
- Kinzie, Mary. *The Cure of Poetry in an Age of Prose: Moral Essays on the Poet's Calling*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Masiello, Francine. "In Search of the Nomad's Shadow." *Luisa Futoransky y su palabra itinerante*. Ed. Ester Gimbernat González. Montevideo, Uruguay: Ediciones de Hermes Criollo, 2005. 41-56.
- Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- McClennen, Sophia A. *The Dialectics of Exile: Nation, Time, Language and Space in Hispanic Literatures*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2004.
- Miller, Christopher. "The Postidentitarian Predicament in the Footnotes of a Thousand Plateaus: Nomadology, Anthropology, and Authority." *Diacritics* 23.3 (1993): 6-35.
- Mouffe, Chantal. "Radical Democracy: Modern or Postmodern?" *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism*. Ed. Andrew Ross. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 198. 31-45.
- Nofal, Rossanna. "La Mano Fértil: La Poesía De Luisa Futoransky." *Luisa Futoransky y su palabra itinerante*. Ed. Ester Gimbernat González. Montevideo, Uruguay: Ediciones de Hermes Criollo, 2005. 75-83.
- Oñate, Roday, and Thomas Wright. Introduction. *Flight from Chile: Voices of Exile*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

- El ortiba. "Cantitos De Los '70". N/A. a collection of posters, slogans, art, and songs from the human rights groups in response to the dictatorship and los desaparecidos. El ortiba. January 10 2009. <[www.elortiba.org/cantitos.html](http://www.elortiba.org/cantitos.html)>.
- Pfeiffer, Erna. "Mis Bienes Raíces Son Mi Lengua." *Exiliadas, Emigrantes, Viajeras: Encuentros Con Diez Escritoras Latinoamericanas*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1995. 53-70.
- Rich, Adrienne. "Notes toward a Politics of Location." *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985*. New York: Norton, 1986. 210-31.
- Robinson, William I. "Beyond Nation-State Paradigms: Globalization, Sociology, and the Challenge of Transnational Studies." *Sociological Forum* 13.4 (1998): 561-94.
- Said, Edward. "The Mind of Winter." *Harper's* 269 (1984): 49-55.
- Sarabia, Rosa. *Poetas de la palabra hablada: Un estudio de la poesía hispanoamericana contemporánea*. London; Rochester, NY: Tamesis, 1997.
- Schwartz, Marcy E. "Paris under Her Skin: Luisa Futoransky's Urban Inscriptions of Exile." *Luisa Futoransky y su palabra itinerante*. Ed. Ester Gimbernat Gonzalez. Montevideo, Uruguay: Ediciones de Hermes Criollo, 2005.
- Soja, Edward. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and Imagined Places*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Stock, Ute. "Marine Tsvetaeva: The Concrete and the Metaphoric Discourse of Exile." *The Modern Language Review* 96.3 (Jul 2001): 762-77.
- Trevisán, Graciela. "Interview with Cristina Peri Rossi." Ed. Cristina Peri Rossi. San Francisco: City Lights, 2008.
- Tucker, Martin, ed. Introduction. *Literary Exile in the Twentieth Century: An Analysis and Biographical Dictionary*. Greenwood Press, 1991.

## VITA

Katherine Handley was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, on November 11, 1976, the daughter of Don and Laura Handley. After graduating from Clear Lake High School in 1995, she entered Texas State University-San Marcos, then called Southwest Texas State University. During the summers of 1999 and 2000, she completed study abroad courses in Guanajuato and Monterrey, Mexico, respectively. Kate earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas State in December 2000. After five years of teaching, Kate returned to Texas State in 2006 to pursue a Graduate degree in Spanish. She currently works at the Hays County Food Bank.

Permanent Address: 1238 W. MLK Dr.

San Marcos, TX

This thesis was typed by Katherine Handley